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**CBS News**

# **FACE THE NATION**

**Sunday, September 18, 2005**

**GUESTS: Vice Admiral THAD ALLEN  
Director, Hurricane Katrina Relief Operations**

**Senator ARLEN SPECTER, (R-PA)  
Chairman, Judiciary Committee**

**Senator PATRICK LEAHY, (D-VT)  
Ranking Member, Judiciary Committee**

**Senator BARACK OBAMA, (D-IL)**

**LARA LOGAN  
CBS News Correspondent**

**MODERATOR: BOB SCHIEFFER - CBS News**

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**FACE THE NATION - CBS NEWS  
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BOB SCHIEFFER, host:

Today on FACE THE NATION: a week of big stories--Katrina, Iraq and the Supreme Court. We'll begin from the disaster zone and the man heading the relief operation Coast Guard Vice Admiral Thad Allen. We'll ask Illinois Senator Barack Obama for reaction to President Bush's vow to confront the racial divide exposed by all of this. We'll check in with Lara Logan on the deadly week in Baghdad that has gone all but unreported. And finally Senate Judiciary Committee leaders Pat Leahy and Arlen Specter will talk with us about the John Roberts confirmation hearings.

I'll have a final word on changing priorities. Should the emphasis be Iraq or Katrina? We start this morning with Katrina on FACE THE NATION.

Announcer: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent, Bob Schieffer. And now from CBS News in Washington, Bob Schieffer.

SCHIEFFER: And we begin this morning from New Orleans and the man who is now running the recovery operation down there, Vice Admiral Thad Allen, director of Hurricane Katrina relief.

Good morning, Admiral.

And let's get right to the point here. The mayor of New Orleans said last week that he was going to begin reopening parts of the city this weekend. You immediately said you didn't think the city was ready to start having people come back. What's the situation this morning and what are you going to do here? When people try to come back, will you tell them not to?

Vice Admiral THAD ALLEN (Director, Hurricane Katrina Relief Operations): Good morning, Bob. Well, let me say first of all that the mayor has a re-entry plan for the city of New Orleans and we don't object to that at all. New Orleans needs to be restarted. The mayor's in charge of that and we fully support it. What we've been trying to talk to the mayor about is the timing of the re-entry and making sure the conditions are set, that it's done successfully and without undue hazard to the people that are coming in.

Yesterday and today, business leaders are being allowed in to take a look at their businesses, assess damage and where they might want to go ahead. There are plans to have people come on to the east bank, the out--excuse me, the west bank, the Algiers area. That was less impacted by the storm. The real issue is bringing the general population into the east bank area of New Orleans that has been severely impacted by flooding. There are issues about lack of potable water. There are basic services that are not in place. We are still trying to constitute a 911 service. And it's not so a matter of how you repopulate New Orleans or the desire to do that, it's when you should do it and when those enabling structures are in place to make sure it's done safely. And it's my responsibility as a primary federal official for this event to work with the mayor to make sure he understands that. I'm scheduled to meet with him tomorrow.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, at this point, though, you just don't think the city's ready to start taking people from the general public back in.

Vice Adm. ALLEN: Well, those conditions that would provide a safe and orderly re-entry into the city are not in place, Bob. And one of the things we're also concerned about is the weakened state of of the levees. If there's another severe weather event, we could have serious

flooding into the city. If we're going to bring people into the city, we need to understand how we will evacuate them if we need to do that and how we will notify them. As I said earlier, there's not a 911 system in place yet and there's significant issues regarding communications, power that would allow people to understand that there was a threat coming. Those are all things that are doable but take time to work through. And that's what we're trying to do with the city.

SCHIEFFER: Admiral, there's no question that things are going a lot better now than they were in the beginning of all of this, but the mayor's announcement followed by your announcement does beg the question: Is there still a disconnect between federal and local officials on the scene there?

Vice Adm. ALLEN: Bob, I don't think there's a disconnect. We all agree on the destination. There may be some discussion about the speed in making sure we get things right.

SCHIEFFER: Reporters on the scene are reporting and The New York Times for one reported--it says nearly three weeks after the hurricane cut its devastating path, FEMA is still faltering in its effort to aid hundreds of thousands of storm victims. They can't handle the flood of calls that are coming in, thousands of people are still unable to get help day to day. What is that situation in your view right now?

Vice Adm. ALLEN: Well, Bob, I can tell you that the FEMA people that I see around are working extremely hard, whether it's in New Orleans or up in Baton Rouge, over in the Gulf Coast of Mississippi and Alabama. They are applying significant effort to addressing all the problems that you indicated. One of the problems associated with this event has been the widespread dispersion of evacuees where you can't get to everybody that needs help. Previous natural disasters in the past have been concentrated in a geographical area. Trying to get out and find everybody that was evacuated and where they went to offer them individual assistance is a challenge.

The other thing is trying to establish disaster centers where you can provide those services into areas that are still recovering and may lack power. And the adequate infrastructure to establish those centers is also challenging. But I have met with FEMA officials over the last several days in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. And we requested that any available FEMA personnel from around the country that are not engaged in other duties be directed this way. And I've been in personal contact with the director of FEMA, David Paulison.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, Admiral, I want to wish you the very best of luck. We're all pulling for you, it's needless to say. Thank you very much for being with us this morning.

Vice Adm. ALLEN: Thank you, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: And we turn now to Senator Barack Obama from the state of Illinois. He's in Chicago this morning.

And, Senator, let me ask you about something, first, I had really not thought about, but I found very disturbing. When the admiral said, 'Look, we're still worried about these levees, and if there's another storm, those levees might give way.' Are we putting--or are the officials putting too much emphasis on getting people back into New Orleans so quickly?

Senator BARACK OBAMA (Democrat, Illinois): Well, I think it's understandable, Bob, that people want to see the Crescent City rise as quickly as possible, but I think Admiral Allen was

exactly right. We want to make sure that we get it right this time, that people are safe, that the situation there is secure, that we have basic infrastructure in the event that there was another hurricane. We're still towards the tail end of hurricane season. So I think that Admiral Allen's caution is appropriate.

I'm glad to see that people who have businesses in New Orleans are able to get in, start making some assessments, start making preparations for the rebuilding process.

SCHIEFFER: Senator, there is no question that this hurricane exposed us to a racial divide very much in the same way that the O.J. trial did. African-American people just saw it one way, and it seems that white people saw it another, especially on the slowness of the federal response.

Do you believe that racial discrimination played a part in that? The president tried to confront that the other night, and I guess the question I would ask you: Do you think he made any headway in turning that around, that perception?

Sen. OBAMA: Well, I've said before I think that the incompetence in the federal response was color-blind. And I think that what you had in terms of the immediate aftermath of the hurricane displayed an unwillingness to acknowledge that some people can't load up an SUV, fill it up with a hundred bucks' worth of gas and drive and check in to a hotel. So there seemed to be a lack of awareness with respect to poverty and the isolation that many folks experience in a place like the Ninth Ward of New Orleans.

I do think there was a broader racial element. The fact is in this country that issues of poverty and issues of race have always been tied together. The president acknowledged this, I think, for the first time, that I can recall, in his presidency, when he gave his speech from New Orleans. And the question now is whether, in fact, there's been an awakening on his part, and his administration, to that intersection of race and poverty, and whether we're finally going to see the compassion in the compassionate conservatism that he announced when he was first running for president.

SCHIEFFER: What do you think the first thing is he ought to do on that front?

Sen. OBAMA: Well, there are a couple of things that I think are a priority. We've already allocated in Congress \$62 billion so far to the reconstruction effort. And one of the heartening things about this tragedy has been the enormous wellspring of donations and support from the American people across the board. They also don't want to see that \$62 billion or \$200 billion wasted. And so this past week, for example, I worked with a Republican colleague, Tom Coburn, to try to institute a CFO, a chief financial officer, to oversee this \$62 billion. Make sure that that money is well-spent.

The second thing I think we have to prioritize are putting people in the region back to work. We should be training them to do the environmental cleanup. We have an opportunity to take folks who didn't have skills before and potentially have them participate in the rebuilding of their own communities. And I think that's going to be absolutely vital.

And then I think we have to have a long-term plan to think about how do we create better schools than existed before, how do we create greater economic opportunities than existed before? And, you know, one of the things that I've said is that Democrats should not presume insincerity on the part of the president. I think we should, you know, hold out a hand to him and say, 'We're willing to be partners in this process.' But...

SCHIEFFER: Well, on that front, let me just ask you what I think is a key question here. The president says he can do all of this, and he's promised to do everything that it takes without raising taxes. Do you think that's realistic?

Sen. OBAMA: Well, this is where I think the problem comes in. You can't fight a war in Iraq that's costing upwards of \$200 billion and rebuild New Orleans and respond to the aftermath of Katrina and try to deal with all the other domestic needs that we have and then cut taxes for the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans. I mean, there was talk right immediately after the hurricane that the Republicans in the Senate were still going to push forward with the repeal of the estate tax, which is mind-boggling, I think. We need some adult supervision of the budget process...

SCHIEFFER: OK.

Sen. OBAMA: ...and we need to take responsibility for this process. That's something that we need from the president as well as our congressional leaders.

SCHIEFFER: Senator, thank you so much.

Sen. OBAMA: Thank you very much, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: By any measure, last week was one of the worst weeks ever in Iraq. So we want to turn to that now. More than 250 dead, more than 600 injured by the end of the week. At any other period of the year, this would have been all over television all week, the lead story most nights, but, of course, because of the hurricane, it was not. So we want to bring in CBS News correspondent Lara Logan, who's been there through all of this, and ask her: Lara, I guess the question I would have for you is this. The administration talks about this country plunging into civil war if the United States leaves but has a civil war already begun?

LARA LOGAN reporting:

No, Bob, I don't think it's already begun. In fact, it's something of a miracle that it hasn't because the Shias have endured the brunt of the violence in the last two-and-a-half years since the fall of Saddam Hussein. And, of course, they were the most terrorized population here under his regime for several decades. And I think you can really put it down to two reasons that they haven't reacted and taken bloody revenge against those who've been perpetuating violence against them. And the most important reason would be the Shia religious leadership down in the holy city of Najaf have called on the people to become and to not retaliate. That's one thing.

The presence of American troops is a factor because there are undoubtedly people in this country who are determined to create a civil war here. In fact, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the al-Qaida in Iraq leader, made his intentions very clear a week ago by declaring all-out war against the Shia people. And this week, I just interviewed a young man from a neighborhood in Baghdad who had with him a pamphlet that he was given by a group of terrorists in broad daylight which said that they were ethnically cleansing this area of all Shias and that all Shias left there would be killed. It's very chilling to think that these kind of people can operate at will and freely in this city. So there is a determination to try and create a civil war here, and it really will be a huge testament to the Shia people if they can resist that.

There is, however, sectarian violence that is going on. There have been death squads operating on both sides and young men have been abducted from their homes and turn up dead in cities

across this country bound and executed, you know, and no one ever seems to be held responsible for that. But at the moment, I think it's fair to say that civil war has not yet happened. It does remain a threat.

SCHIEFFER: Well, thank you very much, Lara, for that summary and thank you also from all of us back here. We recognize that the men and women of CBS News are going out there and putting their lives on the line every day to cover this story even on those days when it doesn't get on television. Thank you very much.

We'll be back with more in just a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And we turn now to the John Roberts confirmation hearings. Joining from Philadelphia, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Arlen Specter; here in the studio, Senator Patrick Leahy, the ranking Democrat.

Two of the leading newspapers in this country, gentlemen, took opposite sides on this today. The Washington Post said that John Roberts should be confirmed. The New York Times said he shouldn't. I want to ask you, Senator Leahy, about what The Washington Post said, and I will read from their editorial. They said: 'If a president cannot predictably garner confirmation for nominees with unblemished careers, they--then the presidents will gravitate to nominees of lesser qualities who might excite their base.' In other words, he's saying you may not agree with him, but he's the best you're going to get. What's your response to that?

Senator PATRICK LEAHY (Democrat, Vermont; Ranking Member, Judiciary Committee): Well, of course, what that is saying--and I think it's really not being fair to whoever is president. What they're saying is the president should just make a political appointment. The fact is, the--a justice of the Supreme Court, especially the chief justice, is going to be there long after the president is gone, no matter who the president might be; actually, probably long after the members of the Senate who vote on him or her are gone. So I don't think--I would hope that the president would ignore that kind of advice. He should appoint whoever's going to be the best person, not somebody who's going to be a political appointment.

SCHIEFFER: But what The Post is saying, the point of the editorial is, that he won't continue to appoint the best person; if the Democrats...

Sen. LEAHY: Well, that's a--yeah. That's suggesting...

SCHIEFFER: ...don't vote...

Sen. LEAHY: Yeah.

SCHIEFFER: ...for someone who's eminently qualified...

Sen. LEAHY: That's...

SCHIEFFER: ...that he'll turn to somebody who can get his base excited.

Sen. LEAHY: Yeah. Well, that's suggesting that the president just wants to play politics with the Supreme Court. And I've urged him, and Senator Specter's urged him, we all have, 'Don't play politics with this. But you can play politics with Cabinet appointments that may last for

two or three years, or heads of FEMA or something like that. Don't play politics with the Supreme Court. It's far too important.'

SCHIEFFER: OK.

Sen. LEAHY: I read both those editorials. They reflect the two speeches I'm writing, one for and one against.

SCHIEFFER: All right. You haven't decided yet?

Sen. LEAHY: No.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, let me turn to Senator Specter and ask him about what The New York Times said this morning. They find John Roberts qualified, but they say he should not be confirmed, not because he isn't qualified but because he has not met the heavy burden of proving that he is qualified. What's your response to that?

Senator ARLEN SPECTER (Republican, Pennsylvania; Judiciary Committee Chairman): Well, Bob, there are some questions that Judge Roberts did not answer with respect to the Supreme Court's denigrating the power of Congress that I would have liked to have seen him answer, but I think he did answer many, many important questions, such as he solidly affirmed the right of privacy. When it came to the question of whether he would uphold Roe vs. Wade, I did not ask that specifically because I do not believe it's appropriate to ask the nominee how he or she would decide a specific case.

But when he discussed precedent and Casey vs. Planned Parenthood, as--I asked him about a superprecedent, and then I pointed out that there have been 38 cases since Roe where the Supreme Court had the opportunity to overrule Roe. Wasn't it a super-duper precedent? He stayed away from those characterizations, but I think he gave very, very strong assurances on fulfilling reliance and expectations. You still don't know for sure, but I think that Judge Roberts went about as far as he could go.

SCHIEFFER: Following my rule to never overlook the obvious question, are you going to vote for him, Senator?

Sen. SPECTER: I'm going to announce that tomorrow on the Senate floor. I had hoped, frankly, to do it on Friday, but the Senate was not in session. I have a statement prepared, and I think the best practice is to do it in my role as a senator on the floor.

SCHIEFFER: Well, if you change your mind on that before this broadcast is out--over, just interrupt and we'll hear what you're going to do.

Sen. LEAHY: Does that apply to both of us?

SCHIEFFER: Yes.

Do you believe, Senator Leahy, that Mr. Roberts is not an ideologue? He said, 'I am not an ideologue.' Do you believe that?

Sen. LEAHY: Well, that's what I--that's what we have to figure out when we--from his statements. It's--certainly, some of his writings when he was a young lawyer in the Reagan administration were, I thought, very ideological. It could well have been a young lawyer

ingratiating himself with the people he was working for. He says he's not an ideologue. And he said that under oath. So I assume you have to take that. I wish we could have seen the writings that were withheld by the White House from the solicitor general's office. I think that would have helped a great deal. But I asked him a lot of questions. No, I don't see him as an ideologue in the--similar to a couple of the members of the Supreme Court. I don't see him that way at all.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask both of you--you're going to go up and meet with the president, I think, on Wednesday, to talk about the next nomination that's coming down the line, to replace Sandra Day O'Connor. What do you want to hear from the president, Senator Specter? Do you want him to give you a list of preliminary names that he's thinking about? What do you want the president to tell you in that meeting?

Sen. SPECTER: I'd like to hear that the president is going to maintain balance, that you have a very evenly divided court, and that there are a great many issues that many people are worried about on both sides of the political spectrum. And I hope that we'll have somebody who is modest, like Judge Roberts says he is, and someone who will promote stability so there are no sharp turns, upstarts. Expectations and being able to rely upon the law is very, very important, the rule of law and stability.

SCHIEFFER: OK. Let me ask Senator Leahy. This one some people say is more important than Judge Roberts' confirmation because this could be the swing vote on Roe v. Wade, the most important issue to many people. What do you want from the president, Senator?

Sen. LEAHY: Well, you know, the president said--one of his big, big campaign promises, in both campaigns, was, 'I want to be a uniter and not a divider.' I would hope that he would give a nominee that would unite both Democrats and Republicans because that would be important as a swing vote in the Supreme Court. And I would hope that as Senator Specter and others said during the confirmation hearing, that we could see the court have less 5-4 decisions, speak with more clarity.

SCHIEFFER: Do you want to hear some names or...

Sen. LEAHY: And I--I would. I think if the president wants, this time, us to suggest some names, I think with the four of us who are there, he may well get some response of what we think about those names.

SCHIEFFER: Senator Specter, we're about out of time here, but when do you think the vote in the Senate--you'll vote in the committee this week, I'm told--when do you think the vote will come in the Senate on Judge Roberts?

Sen. SPECTER: I believe a vote will come during the week of September 26th. I think that's when the floor leader will bring up--Senator Frist--the matter, and I would expect that we would vote on the--by Thursday, the 29th.

SCHIEFFER: All right. There's no question in your mind that he's going to be confirmed, is there, Senator?

Sen. SPECTER: Well, that's certainly the conventional wisdom. And while I'm not always with convention, and certainly not wise, I wouldn't dispute that.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Thank you.

Sen. LEAHY: We will vote him on Thursday.

SCHIEFFER: Thank you very much. Back with a final word in just a second.

Sen. SPECTER: Thank you, Bob.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And finally today, to the list of casualties from Hurricane Katrina, should we now add the president's dream for Iraq? American has been rightfully focused on the hurricane, but these have been the worst deadliest days in Iraq since the invasion, 250 dead, more than 600 wounded. But as bad as it is there, the storm has caused many Americans to ask: Is the worst problem here?

A new CBS News-New York Times poll shows that 83 percent of Americans are now concerned the war is draining money and resources needed back home. To understand the turnaround in thinking, consider this. The poll found 62 percent of us are ready to pay more taxes to help victims of the storm, but only 20 percent favor more taxes to pay for the war. I am among those who believe we could not just walk away from Iraq, but staying now may be easier said than done. For the first time, a majority of Americans favors pulling out of Iraq as soon as possible, not when the job is done. Less than a third believe the war has made us safer. Sixty-three percent are uneasy about the president's ability to make the right decisions. On this one, a CNN poll says even the famous bearers of bad news, the hated news media, get higher marks than the president.

What's next in Iraq? The answer, my friend, may be blowing in the wind, the wind that was Hurricane Katrina.

CBS News has begun a special effort to help the hundreds of children separated from their families by Hurricane Katrina. Here's one of the missing: Santiago Florez. He is five years old and from New Orleans. If you recognize him, call 1 (800) THE-LOST or log on to [missingkids.com](http://missingkids.com).

That's it for us. We'll see you next week right here on FACE THE NATION.