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CBS News

FACE THE NATION

Sunday, September 19, 2004

GUESTS: Senator **CHUCK HAGEL, (R-NE)**
Foreign Relations Committee

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LEE HAMILTON
Vice Chairman, 9-11 Commission

Senator Jon Kyl
Republican - AZ

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, hostages, car bombs and more US casualties. Can Iraq get any worse? What is the answer to this growing chaos?

Unidentified Man: All hell's breaking loose, sir.

SCHIEFFER: More US troops or elections even possible come January? Today we'll have a roundtable on where we go from here with Republican Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, 9-11 Commission Co-chair Lee Hamilton, Kerry adviser and former UN Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and Republican Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona. Our FACE THE NATION Flashback focuses on flip-flops, and I'll have a final word on the war voters want to forget. But first, the war in Iraq 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 good morning again. All of our guests are in the studio this morning: Senator Hagel of Nebraska, Senator Kyl of Arizona, former Ambassador Holbrooke and Lee Hamilton, the vice chair--or I should say the co-chair of the 9-11 Commission.

Gentlemen, I want to begin by showing you what the president has been saying out on the campaign trail this week.

President GEORGE W. BUSH: (From videotape) Despite ongoing acts of violence in Iraq, that country has a strong prime minister. They've got a national council. And they are going to have elections in January of 2005. The world is becoming a better place because freedom is on the march.

SCHIEFFER: What we now know is that while the president was saying that, he was already aware of an intelligence report, a National Intelligence Estimate, that is our best take, the intelligence community, what they think the situation is. And in The New York Times, they broke part of that story this week. They said that report paints a very bleak report of what is ahead in Iraq.

Yesterday there was another terrible day in Kirkuk; 19 people were killed, 67 people were wounded in a car bomb. That took place north of Baghdad. There was another bomb today that took more lives. It was one of the worst days yesterday we've seen in the war.

So, Senator Kyl, let me just start by asking you, do you believe that the president is talking straight with the American people about what the situation is in Iraq right now?

Senator JON KYL (Republican, Arizona): Absolutely. He began by pointing out to the American people that this would be a very long and very difficult war and that we were going to have to have the confidence and the perseverance to see it through. I find it shocking that some people are surprised by the fact that it is a long and difficult conflict. So that should not be a surprise. What's important is that you have a leader who recognizes that there are difficulties but who is committed to prevailing, who has a firm idea of what he wants to accomplish, confidence in his commanders in the field, and who doesn't send mixed messages to the troops or to our allies, most importantly to our enemies. And I think that's one reason why...

SCHIEFFER: But what is he using as a measure or a yardstick of success? We have now had ei--we're averaging 87 attacks a day, our troops are. We have these large cities under insurgent control. Obviously, we--it's more violent than it was in all the time since the invasion began.

Sen. KYL: Bob, hand-wringing does not win wars, and 50,000 casualties in Okinawa just before we won against the Japanese, the Battle of the Bulge in December of '44, in January of '45 before we prevailed against Nazi Germany, war is tough and there are casualties. And just before victory, sometimes it gets most violent. And this is what Prime Minister Allawi has said, that he expects that the violence will escalate before our elections and before the elections in January in Iraq, but as the president has said, freedom is on the march there. And I think we'll hear that message this week from Prime Minister Allawi.

SCHIEFFER: Do you think, Senator Hagel, that we're winning?

Senator CHUCK HAGEL (Republican, Nebraska; Foreign Relations Committee): No, I don't think we're winning. In all due respect to my friend Jon Kyl, the term hand-wringing is a little misplaced here. The fact is a crisp, sharp analysis of our policies are required. We didn't do that in Vietnam, and we saw 11 years of casualties mount to the point where we finally lost. We can't lose this. This is too important. There's no question about that. But to say, 'Well, we just must stay the course and any of you who are questioning are just hand-wringers,' is not very responsible.

The fact is we're in trouble. We're in deep trouble in Iraq. We need more regionalization. We need more help from our allies. We need the Iraqi people to come around us in a more supportive way. That means more jobs, more development. The hearings we held this week in the Foreign Relations Committee were an eye-opener on the long side of this. We've spent a little over a billion dollars over the last year in helping get jobs and economic development.

Now I know the twin pillars of this are security, development, and the third pillar, of course, is an independent Iraq governed by Iraqis but hope and a destination of where the Iraqi people are going, where they believe they're going and confidence in us is a big part of this. And I think we're going to have to look at some re-calibration of policy. As a matter of fact, I'm going to send over to Secretary Powell and to Dr. Rice some suggestions I have tomorrow. I talked to Dr. Rice on Friday about this, but I don't think we can just shove this to the side.

SCHIEFFER: Can you share with us what those recommendations are?

Sen. HAGEL: Well, I'm going to talk about a number of things. They aren't all mine. They're issues that have developed before. For example, things like: What are we doing to get our regional allies more involved in the investment of the country of Iraq in the way of economic development? Why not, for example, have King Abdullah of Jordan or other leaders in that area convene an economic summit to get these countries more invested in the country of Iraq? What about this? What about taking--this is not my idea. It's been around. Others have talked about it. Taking oil revenues, investing the people of Iraq with sending out checks, what they do in Alaska and some of these areas.

SCHIEFFER: Right.

Sen. HAGEL: What about taking our allies in that region's military advisers, assign five to 10 per unit American unit in Iraq? I'm going to deliver about 20 to 25 suggestions.

SCHIEFFER: OK. Let me go to Chairman Hamilton. You, of course, as the chair of the 9-11 Commission, you focused in on intelligence. One of the things that struck me, Mr. Hamilton, was last Sunday when we saw this attack on the Green Zone which is the place where US offices are, where the Iraqi government is, they were heavily mortared and the mortaring went on for more than five hours before they could figure out where it was coming from. It turned out it was coming from everywhere. That suggests to me that our intelligence is no better today than when we went in there. We didn't know who was doing this or where these people were. It took five hours to get it stopped. What's your assessment of that?

Mr. LEE HAMILTON (Co-Chairman, 9-11 Commission): Well, my assessment is that security remains the overwhelming problem in Iraq. Intelligence is certainly one of the keys to getting better security and we've got a long way to go before we have excellent security. I think you have two major problems, as I would see it in Iraq. One is getting security in the country. We all know how difficult that is. And it seems to me to be getting worse, not better. The other, I think, is legitimacy in the government.

If you look at all of the metrics of measuring where we are in Iraq today, governance--I think the president is right. We've had some progress on governance. Security--I think it's gone downhill and it's a very serious situation today. Economic reconstruction--languishing, probably because of the security problem. The well-being of the Iraqi people--an awful lot of them are being killed. And some other metrics they just don't measure up very well.

On the positive side, I think you can say that the Iraqi people support their government. They want the Americans there because they think it'll help on security, but overall, I find this situation, like Senator Hagel, one of very deep concern, maybe not despair, but very deep concern and certainly dispiriting.

SCHIEFFER: Mr. Holbrooke, and let's make sure people know exactly who you are, you're advising Senator Kerry. Most people think that if Senator Kerry is election, you'd be on a very short list to be considered for secretary of State. Prime Minister Allawi said this morning that, number one, he did not think the insurgents were getting stronger. He said he thought they were getting desperate. He also said that Saddam Hussein is going to be put on trial later this month. Give me your thoughts on both those subjects.

Mr. RICHARD HOLBROOKE (Former UN Ambassador): Well, first of all, in the dispute between two Republican friends of mine, I should side with Senator Hagel, and Prime Minister Allawi's comments remind me of Groucho Marx's great line, 'Who do you believe? Me or your own two eyes?' The fact is that although the original intent in Iraq, which I supported, to get rid of Saddam Hussein is a worthy goal--the way it's been carried out has created a catastrophe. Not catastrophic success as President Bush has said, but he's half right. It's a catastrophe.

The security situation is worse today in Iraq than it was when Senator Hagel and I served in Vietnam a century or two ago. It is--we could walk around the cities of Vietnam freely day and night. In the Green Zone, as you just mentioned, in the Green Zone they're getting mortared. In the Green Zone they wear helmets and flak jackets in their inner, inner sanctum. The situation is not as Allawi portrayed it.

We have two points here, one, we have a classic mismatch between resources and mission. President Bush outlined in his acceptance speech in Madison Square Garden the mission for the United States in Iraq, but he doesn't give the military the resources. That is what happened to General Westmoreland and his command in Vietnam and the military--Colin Powell said in his memoirs we'd never allow this to happen again and for some reason it has. You were there. You covered it, Bob.

Second point, the next president of the United States, whether it's John Kerry or George Bush, is therefore going to face a fundamental problem. The current course within the current resources is not achievable. If you want to achieve that course, you're going to have talk about additional forces, and they're not going to come from our allies, or you're going to have to look for a way to get the political settlement that Congressman Hamilton talked about moving.

SCHIEFFER: I would note that Senator Kerry has talked about reducing the forces there.

Mr. HOLBROOKE: Well, he has talked about the fact that he wants to turn the responsibility over to the Iraqis and make them--and force them towards a political solution, because the current mismatch is not tenable.

SCHIEFFER: Quickly, and what do you think about this announcement that they're going to put Saddam Hussein on trial next month? Is that good news, bad news? Is that going to have an impact there?

Mr. HOLBROOKE: I think it's very...

SCHIEFFER: Will it have an impact here?

Mr. HOLBROOKE: I don't know the details of this trial but I think that it is extremely good for world and the Iraqi people to be reminded of the fact that Saddam Hussein was a monster, worse than Milosevic, who is on trial in The Hague. He gassed his own people, and we should always remember that the original goal, which I think all four of us at this table supported--I testified before Senator Hagel and Senator Kyl in favor of that resolution--was the correct goal. It's the implementation of it. And Bob, as all of us know, a good goal badly carried out becomes a bad and controversial policy and that is the problem we're now in. But trying Saddam, showing the world that he was a monster who gassed his own people, I'm all for it.

SCHIEFFER: Senator Kyl, I think we should come back to you and give you a chance to respond to some of what's just been said here.

Sen. KYL: Well, just a couple of points. First of all, when Senator Kerry talked about waging a more sensitive war, I was one of the people who didn't really jump on him for that because I think what he was trying to say is that we had to allow the Iraqi people to be involved in the decisions about how that war is conducted. And if that's what he meant, allowing the Iraqis to make the decision not to go into some of these sanctuaries I think turns out to have not been a good decision, which we're going to have to correct now by going in with our Marines and Army divisions and cleaning those sanctuaries out. That's going to be tough. Nobody denies that this is a difficult, difficult proposition, and that's going to have to be done.

And secondly, my comment with regard to the question of where we go from here is not that everything is just fine and that we don't have to change course. As I noted with regard to going into some of these sanctuaries, we're going to have to do it. But we also are trying to do it with the Iraqis, and I think one of the reasons that we've delayed some is that we're trying to get the Iraqis trained up so that they can go in with us.

SCHIEFFER: Well, how long is that going to take? What would your estimate be by the time that the Iraq security force is able to stand on its own?

Mr. HOLBROOKE: Too long.

Sen. KYL: You've got--well, it's too long, then what's the alternative? Do we just do it all ourselves and have no Iraqi face on this. As, Richard, you noted, we're not going to have--our allies are not going to get involved in this regardless of how we might wish that they would. So the choices may not be good. We've got to do it is the bottom line, but it would be very helpful if we had Iraqi soldiers train people with us so that they could hold the territory that we end up taking.

Mr. HOLBROOKE: What I meant...

SCHIEFFER: But, Senator Hagel, how long do you think it's gonna take to get the Iraqi army and police forces up to speed?

Sen. HAGEL: Well, Senator Kyl is right. The focus must be on getting an Iraqi army and security force in place because only then will we win in Iraq. We can't impose a victory. History is replete with that, not just from Vietnam, but every war ever fought in the history of man. It's probably two years. One of the thoughts I had, and I'm going to suggest this to Rice and Powell, why not start ringing Iraq with training camps like what we're doing to a certain extent in Jordan, with regional allies in this area. That doesn't mean they put troops in. Gulf states, for example, and certainly our friends in Jordan, others, where we could intensify the training component, at the same time start working more border patrol and work and security. These are the kinds of things that we should be focused on. There is no question that the Iraqi people will make the ultimate decision about the outcome of this.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask Mr. Holbrooke about that because Senator Kerry has talked about international cooperation. Thus far I don't see very many people out there who are volunteering to help us do much but hold our coat or offer advice. How would he go about getting foreign troops? And I guess the second part of that question is: Is it too late for foreign troops? I mean won't they be seen as occupiers just as our troops are being seen as occupiers?

Mr. HOLBROOKE: Bob, none of us expect President Chirac of France to call up President Kerry on January 21st of next year and say, 'How many divisions should I send to Iraq?' What Chuck Hagel has just discussed is, in fact, something that I think is doable. You do the training, you do it outside of Iraq. You get it as a NATO-authorized mission. The issue that Jon Kyl has raised is critical, and you asked can we get the training done, and will the troops not defect and will they take on the responsibility for their own country in time? This is a race between a tortoise and a hare, and so far, everything in Iraq for the last year has gone worse than the administration predicted. Everyone I've talk to has said that the situation in Iraq will be worse on Election Day than it is today, and worse on Inauguration Day than it is on Election Day. No one I know, except Allawi, thinks things are gonna get better.

SCHIEFFER: Well...

Mr. HOLBROOKE: And that election, Bob--one last point. The election that President Bush talked about in your soundbite, very few people I've talked to believe that will be able to take place.

SCHIEFFER: Do you think it can take place in January, Mr. Hamilton?

Mr. HAMILTON: Well, it could not take place today.

SCHIEFFER: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Mr. HAMILTON: We can't really tell about January. But even if it does take place in January, if you have a large number of areas in which you cannot have the election, then you undermine the credibility of the election and the legitimacy of it. Look, you've got these three big groups there, the Kurds, the Sunnis and the Shias, and you've got a lot of tribes in addition to that. Bringing together a country with that kind of diversity and difference is an enormous task. And I'm not sure a single election will do it, frankly, but I want to work towards an election. I would have...

SCHIEFFER: Would you favor delaying the elections under any circumstances, I mean, other than it was just too violent to hold them?

Mr. HAMILTON: All I can say at the moment is you could not have an election, a legitimate election in that country today. Now this business of training Iraqi troops ties in here. Everybody wants to train Iraqi troops. We've been very slow getting that off the ground, very slow, but it is the solution. There's no doubt

about that. I think all of us agree on that. But can you possibly get those troops trained? Can you possibly go into these no-go areas that we have around Iraq today by January?

SCHIEFFER: Let me...

Mr. HAMILTON: I think it's problematic.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask Senator Kyl, quickly, because we're running out of time, was there any basis in fact that you know of for Senator Kerry to say that the president plans to call up the reserves after the election?

Sen. KYL: No, I inquired yesterday and I think it would be--that people should be careful about going with that story. I'll just put it that way. No basis for it.

SCHIEFFER: Senator--Mr. Holbrooke?

Mr. HOLBROOKE: Senator Kerry based it on information he had received which he believed was reliable. But I want to match up that issue with the New York Times story today about planning to attack Fallujah after the election. And I would submit to you that the current force levels in Iraq are not sufficient to do that job so there--the issue ought to be discussed publicly. The administration ought to make a formal response.

SCHIEFFER: All right, gentlemen, very enlightening for me and I hope for our viewers.

I'll be back with another FACE THE NATION 50th anniversary Flashback in just a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: We've been hearing a lot about political flip-flips this year, but 28 years ago when President Ford was running against Jimmy Carter, the president's man said candidates ought to be able to change their minds every once in a while. That's our FACE THE NATION 50th anniversary Flashback.

(Excerpt from videotape, September 12, 1976)

President GERALD FORD: He wavers, he wanders, he wiggles, and he waffles, and he shouldn't be president of the United States.

Unidentified Man #1: All right.

(End of excerpt)

SCHIEFFER: Flip-flop charges were flying as summer ended and the campaigns headed toward Election Day; so much so that FACE THE NATION moderator George Herman wondered if that was all the candidates wanted to talk about.

(Excerpt from previous FACE THE NATION)

GEORGE HERMAN (Moderator): Flip-flop's going to be one of the code words of this particular campaign, it seems to me the charge that's leveled by both sides. Is consistency one of the important things that people have to prove in this campaign or are they entitled to change their minds under political expediency?

Unidentified Man #2: I think that anybody ought to be entitled to change their mind, George, when it's a well-reasoned and honest change of mind.

HERMAN: Well, is that...

Unidentified Man #2: And I think--excuse me, but I think that the term flip-flop, at least as we've used it, refers to something else, and that refers to the capacity of the opponent to say one thing to one political group one day and something quite different to another political group the very next day.

(End of excerpt)

SCHIEFFER: Whatever it means, accusing an opponent of flip-flopping is the charge every politician loves to hurl. Another FACE THE NATION 50th anniversary Flashback.

I'll be back with a final word.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally today, historically, when polls show that voters feel the country is headed in the wrong direction and that they are worried about the president's handling of the economy, that president, whoever he is, is going to have a tough time getting re-elected. Add on voter worry about this president's handling of the war in Iraq and you would think that that would make it very hard for him to win re-election.

Yet, the new CBS News-New York Times poll suggests all of the above, but it also reports something else, that George Bush has now opened a 9-point lead over John Kerry. You don't have to be an expert to figure that out. Voters may be less than enamored with President Bush but they are even more uneasy about John Kerry whose plans for the country remain a mystery to them according to this poll.

For that, Kerry and his people must take most of the blame. I can remember how they told me at the Boston convention that if they could beat George Bush on the national security issue, they could beat him which may have been true in theory, but they chose the wrong example, it seems to me, to argue their case. Instead of Iraq, they focused on Vietnam, a war that came out badly nearly three decades ago before many voters were even born. Now they have discovered the sad and dirty secret about Vietnam: It is the one war that too many Americans want to forget, not remember. Vietnam brought down many a man. It threatens now to bring down another.

From FACE THE NATION in Washington, I'm Bob Schieffer.