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**CBS News**

# **FACE THE NATION**

**Sunday, October 31, 2004**

**GUESTS: Senator JOHN McCain, (R-AZ)**

**Senator JOSEPH BIDEN, (D-DE)**

**NORMAN ORNSTEIN  
American Enterprise Institute**

**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, we're down to the last weekend and it's still either candidate's to win or lose.

The campaigning has been fierce and non-stop, but neither candidate has been able to break away. Every indication now is that it will come down to a few battleground states. We'll hear first from our correspondents Bill Plante with the president in Miami and Byron Pitts with John Kerry in Ohio.

Then we'll check in with some veteran election watchers, Democratic Senator Joe Biden and Republican Senator John McCain.

Presidential scholar Norm Ornstein will offer analysis and I'll have a final word on Osama bin Laden's advice to America on election eve.

But first, heading toward the final hours of Campaign 2004 on FACE THE NATION.

Announcer: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now from the CBS News election headquarters in New York, Bob Schieffer.

SCHIEFFER: Well, good morning again.

They said in the beginning it would come down to Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania, and it looks like they were right. And here's the other part. No one can say with any certainty on this last weekend which way any of these three battleground states will go. The general view, Florida is still too close to call. Senator Kerry seemed to be gaining in Ohio, but a new poll shows President Bush with a very narrow lead there. The Democrats carried Pennsylvania last time but neither side is taking it for granted this time.

In addition to those three states, seven other states remain in the toss-up column and that's the picture as we begin our coverage this morning, and we start with Bill Plante who is with the president in--Guess where?--Miami.

Well, Bill, I'm sure the Bush people are predicting victory down there, but how does it look to you this morning?

BILL PLANTE reporting:

Well, you're right, Bob, they are predicting victory, but I'll tell you something. They're blowing smoke. They don't have any better idea than we do. Their internal polls go up one day and down the next. So they're concentrating on Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania very hard, several stops in those states in the next few days, but they're also working on an insurance policy in Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota just in case they lose. They know that if they get two of the big three that it'll be pretty hard for Kerry to put the arithmetic together to beat them. So that's the concentration. Focus on the big three and have the three other states in reserve in case something happens.

SCHIEFFER: And, Bill, what about this tape from Osama bin Laden? How do they view that and how are they handling it?

PLANTE: Well, you know, they think, although they won't put it in these words, that the Osama bin Laden tape only reinforces the president's main message, and the president's main message, what you'll hear him stress over and over again for the next two days is, 'I can keep you safer than John Kerry. It might be dangerous to elect John Kerry to the presidency.' He isn't much more subtle than that, a little bit but not much more. That's what he's running on.

SCHIEFFER: OK. Well, let's go to Byron Pitts now, who is with John Kerry this morning, and guess where he is? Ohio, of course.

Good morning, Byron.

Let's pick up right there...

BYRON PITTS reporting:

Good morning.

SCHIEFFER: ...where Bill Plante left off, the Osama bin Laden tape. How did the Kerry people--how are they handling it? What do they make of it?

PITTS: Sure. Well, Bob, publicly the Kerry campaign says this plays into their argument that if President Bush had focused on Afghanistan in the beginning instead of diverting attention to Iraq, perhaps Osama wouldn't be around. Privately, though, they're very concerned. The reality is this is that they understand with human nature people, when people are frightened they pull back. They hold on to things they know. At this point, right or wrong, the nation knows President Bush. People are still deciding on John Kerry.

So in these last 48 hours, John Kerry in many ways has two opponents, the 5'11" President Bush and the 6'4" Osama bin Laden. Both--he has to make an argument against both men at the same time not appear to be politicizing the Osama bin Laden issue. They're very concerned about that videotape, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: And as I said to Bill Plante, I'm sure the people with your campaign are predicting victory for John Kerry. How does Ohio look to you right now and what are they doing?

PITTS: Well, Bob, Ohio, as you said is very tight. It's an interesting contrast in styles. The Kerry people believe they have about 45,000 volunteers in Ohio. They're depending greatly on paid staff to come and organize those people, give get them to the polls on Tuesday. The Bush campaign, they have about 100,000 volunteers. The Bush people view these last few days as almost like a knife fight. You want people who believe in you personally who are committed to you, volunteers do that. The Kerry people see it more like a chess match. They need professionals in there to organize their people, to get them to the polls and to organize in early fashion on Tuesday. We'll know in a few days which style works.

SCHIEFFER: All right, Byron Pitts. Thank you, Byron.

And joining us now from Philadelphia Senator John McCain, with us in Wilmington, Delaware, Senator Joe Biden, two men who have obviously watched a campaign or two in their time.

Senator Biden, let me start with you and let's pick up right where Byron Pitts left off and that is this tape that we got over the weekend from Osama bin Laden, does it make a difference? Is Senator Kerry handling it the right way and how is Senator Bush--or how is President Bush handling it?

Senator JOSEPH BIDEN (Democrat, Delaware): Well, I think both men are handling it the best way for them. Obviously President Bush has to deal with the fact that Osama's still there, and three years later he's still there. And John has to deal with the--John Kerry has to deal with the problem that Osama is there and that whether or not John can--John can take him out. I think they're both doing it the best way for them. I think--look, the people who are already for John, I think, will conclude that this helps John. The people who are already for Bush will conclude it helps Bush. What it does to those few people left in the middle, I don't know.

SCHIEFFER: Senator McCain, what do you--what do you think about this tape? Will it just make people furious, as it made me furious, or will they actually--will it have some impact on the race?

Senator JOHN McCAIN (Republican, Arizona): Well, first of all, I think it makes us furious that evil incarnate would presume to give us advice as to how we should handle our nation's security. But in addition to that, I think what it does is it focuses the undecided voter's attention on the transcendent issue of this campaign. For the first time it's not the economy, it's the war on terror. I think it focuses their attention on it, and I think that President Bush's commitment and leadership will probably have some impact there.

So does it, quote, "favor" President Bush or not? I don't know if that's the right description, but I do believe it focuses all our attention back on the transcendent issue, which is the war on terror, and that's where I think any polling data will show you the president has an advantage.

SCHIEFFER: Senator, you are obviously out there campaigning for President Bush. You have said you're with him all the way, but you're also a friend and you've observed Senator Kerry for a long time. Do you believe that Senator Kerry would handle the war on terrorism any differently than President Bush would?

Sen. McCAIN: Well, you know, I disagreed with the \$87 billion vote when John Kerry voted against the funding after authorizing the issue on a war in Iraq. I could only view that as politically motivated. But I also believe that President Bush has a vision and a view that the war on terror is not going to be over until we have some democracy in the Middle East, and I don't think he means by imposing that at the point of a bayonet. But I do believe that he's correct that the issue of radical Islamic extremism is not going away until those countries have some kind of freedom and democracy, and I think that's his long-term goal.

SCHIEFFER: Senator Biden, if John Kerry is elected, how would the war on terrorism and how we approach it and fight it be different than, say, the way that President Bush has led it?

Sen. BIDEN: Well, I think there's two or three things that would happen right away. You'd see a lot more emphasis on homeland security. You'd see a lot more money going into protecting of nuclear power plants, chemical plants, rail. You'd see more focus directly on--instead of, for example--and this is--I'm not trying to get in a fight here, but instead of spending \$10.5 billion on a Star War program, you'd see John spending half of that money

on homeland security. Secondly, I think you'd see a lot more focus on the way in which we conducted the war in Iraq.

I mean, look, the president had a choice and it was a tough choice when he came--when 9/11 occurred. He could either listen to the advice Colin Powell and Shinseki and most of the uniformed military, and John McCain as well, and Dick Lugar and others, or choose the advice of the vice president, secretary of State--the secretary of Defense and others, and he chose the wrong advice, and this--I think we need a fresh start to be able to gain any momentum on this war on terror, and I don't think we're going to see any change--I'd feel a lot better if I knew that President Bush was going to be elected--and I'm not being solicitous--if I knew he was going to start to listen to John McCain instead of the secretary of Defense, because they have totally different--no, I shouldn't say totally--many--have very different views of how to proceed.

And so I think you'd see a difference in the way how you prosecute the war in Iraq. I think you'd see a difference in how you dealt with homeland security. And I think you'd see a difference in terms of the cooperation with other nations in terms of getting the consensus on how to deal with controlling chemical, biological, nuclear weapons.

SCHIEFFER: OK. Let me just ask you this. A lot of people think that it's going to come down which man the American people think is the best leader. Now you have dealt in the Oval Office. You've been there in a key position on the Foreign Relations Committee during the time that President Bush has been president. Do you think he's a good leader?

Sen. BIDEN: I think he's a good man. I think he has been a flawed leader in the sense that he's picked the wrong advice. Look, like all governors who became president, he came to the office with very little knowledge of foreign policy. And I think what he did is when it came time to have to deal with something he didn't anticipate or no one did, that foreign policy had been the main emphasis of his campaign and his strategic doctrine and the military, I think he chose the wrong side, not side good-bad; side in terms of how to proceed. And so I think he's decisive. But, as I kid him sometimes when he says, 'Well, Joe, you know, I'm decisive,' I once said to him--I said, 'Turn around, Mr. President. See who's following. You're leader, but who's following you? There's not many people around the world following this.' And I think it's because he's chose the wrong advice.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me ask Senator McCain about that. Do you think the president's gotten a lot of bad advice, Senator McCain?

Sen. McCAIN: No, I think that the president, like most presidents, calls in all the smart people he knows on specific issues and discusses it with them and reaches a conclusion. Look, there's up and downs in wars. The war--usually a war plan lasts about as long as the first contact with the enemy. And have mistakes been made? Of course. Mistakes have been in other wars that--probably far more serious than some of these. The key is to fix those mistakes and shape it within the overall strategy and vision for the future. And this war in Iraq, whether some agree or disagree, I believe is part of this whole war on terror, as Afghanistan was. And, by the way, Afghanistan--there's significant success. They had an election not too long ago where millions of people voted, contrary to the predictions of many. I believe in January we will have an election, somewhat flawed, in Iraq. And I believe we can prevail, and I believe we must prevail.

SCHIEFFER: Was this a bad plan, Senator McCain, the plan we had to go into Iraq? Because clearly what we were being told we could anticipate there simply did not come about. And I

think there's an increasing question about whether we had enough troops in the beginning, and because we didn't have all that many troops, a lot of these ammo dumps that Saddam's people abandoned, we didn't even have the troops to guard them. Should we have gone in with more people? And I guess the bottom-line question, I'd say: Did--was this a good plan?

Sen. McCAIN: Well, I think the initial phases of it were so spectacularly successful that it took us all by surprise. Obviously, some mistakes were made, to say the least, in allowing some of the looting. We have more troops there now. We probably should have had more troops. But the fundamental point is whether we're going to move forward and have the elections and have a government that the Iraqi people can support, which I believe that we will. The problems that we encountered are serious, but I also believe that we can and will--and they have to fit into the overall vision of the future of the Middle East. And I believe that it will have also a positive impact on the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

SCHIEFFER: Let's get back and talk just a little bit about the campaign. Senator Biden, I think it's generally agreed Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania are what it comes down to. What do you think? Where do you think this election is going to turn in the end?

Sen. BIDEN: Well, it's a little bit above my pay grade, but I think in those three states. And I've campaigned, like John has, extensively in two of those three states. I'm willing to bet you on the air he wins Pennsylvania. I am not all that certain about Florida. I didn't come back with any sense, one way or another. And I don't know about Ohio, not having been there. But I think he wins Pennsylvania. I think it comes down to whether John wins one of the other two states. If he does, I think he's president because he'll win Pennsylvania.

SCHIEFFER: Let me ask you just one thing. You--the London Times...

Sen. BIDEN: Although John McCain hadn't been there yet, so John's there now and that may change things.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just--before I get to Senator McCain, London Times reports that Senator Kerry's already asked you to be his secretary of State if he wins. Do you want to comment on that?

Sen. BIDEN: You talking to me or John?

SCHIEFFER: I'm talking to you.

Sen. BIDEN: Talking to me.

Sen. McCAIN: I'm undersecretary, undersecretary.

Sen. BIDEN: No, John Kerry has not asked me to be secretary of State. No one in his campaign has asked me to be secretary of State. There's been no discussion of secretary of State with John or his campaign.

SCHIEFFER: And if asked, what would your answer be?

Sen. BIDEN: I would--let's get him elected first, and we'll worry about that later.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Senator McCain, there have been reports that you might be asked to be in either person's Cabinet the next time around, depending on who wins. Do you have any desires to be in somebody's Cabinet.

Sen. McCain: No. Could I mention your question to Joe Biden...

SCHIEFFER: Sure.

Sen. McCain: ...about the outcome? Every election we say it depends on voter turnout. It really does this time. And we have no clue as to how much of that very large new-voter registrations are going to turn out, and that's why I think a lot of the polls may be not--they're good people, but I just don't think we've ever seen anything like this. And it's good. It's good. We always want people to vote, and that's good. And could I just add one more comment, Bob?

SCHIEFFER: Mm-hmm.

Sen. McCain: On November the 3rd, we'd better call a truce and stop this and sit down together, no matter who wins...

Sen. Biden: Absolutely.

Sen. McCain: ...and start talking about national unity and addressing these issues. I deplore this kind of bitterness and anger. Why can't we have a dialogue like Joe and I are just having on this program? We've got to stop this, and we'd better have some national unity. And we'd better reject those that continue this bitter partisanship because there's too many issues. The future--the enemy is al-Qaida. The enemy is al-Qaida, not Democrats or Republicans.

Sen. Biden: I agree.

SCHIEFFER: Senator McCain, I seldom agree or disagree with our guests with they make a statement, but I want to tell you I agree with you 100 percent on what you've just said. And I could hear Senator Biden in the background also agreeing. Thank you both very much, gentlemen.

We'll be back in just a minute.

Sen. Biden: Thank you.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And joining us now with some analysis and perspective: Norm Ornstein, who is a presidential scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He always joins us on election eve to offer his advice and counsel.

It seems to me, Norm, we have a real paradox here. We have only 1 percent of the people out there saying that they're undecided, and yet nobody knows what's going to happen. What does this mean?

NORM ORNSTEIN (American Enterprise Institute; CBS News Consultant): We haven't seen anything like this, Bob. We have voters pretty much entrenched in place, very small numbers of people who are undecided, stability for a long time but the most volatile, event-driven

environment we have ever seen. And that's why none of us really have a clue what's going to happen here. As both Senator Biden and Senator McCain said, turnout is really going to be the key here. We know where voters are; they know where they are. The question is: Will they be at the polls, and have they already gone to the polls, in many cases?

SCHIEFFER: And you also have mixed into this all these young people who have cell phones who really haven't been polled yet. If they turn out in the numbers, it seems to me, that they signed up and in which they registered, they may well decide who wins this election.

ORNSTEIN: That's for sure. And because we can't poll them--you can't call cell phone numbers--we don't even exactly know how they break down politically, although the odds are if they're like other young people, that they'll be a little more supportive of John Kerry than of George Bush.

SCHIEFFER: And this whole business of early voting, is that significant?

ORNSTEIN: We've seen this dramatic trend. It's been building for 10 years. Last time somewhere around 16 percent of Americans voted before Election Day. This time it may get up over 20, perhaps to 25. It means Election Day is much less significant than it was. Probably 30 percent of Iowans, one of the swing states, will vote before Election Day; maybe a third of those or more actually voted before the debates took place. So events even now don't mean as much. But what it also means is that we've got a level of fluidity here that isn't captured very easily, and it's going to make it harder for us to determine on election eve as well.

SCHIEFFER: So it may be that we'll have enough raw vote to think that we could call this election one way or another in a state, but until they can count these absentee votes, we won't know.

ORNSTEIN: We've got the combination of absentee votes by mail which in most states don't get counted until after the election. It means you have to open each envelope individually and count it by hand and this new provisional balloting, part of the election reform of 2002 so that people are not going to go to the polls and be told mistakenly, 'You can't vote.' They'll cast a ballot provisionally. We may have in a number of states a clear outcome seemingly on election eve but more than enough votes with provisional ballots and votes cast by mail and overseas absentee votes that we aren't going to really know what's happening in these states and in the election overall for weeks.

SCHIEFFER: One thing occurred to me, Norm; as you know, a lot of Democrats think that Gore conceded too soon, that he gave up too soon. Do you think we'll see anything like that this time?

ORNSTEIN: I don't think we're going to get anybody conceding until they're absolutely certain and we may get both individuals declaring victory on election eve. We're braced, of course, with thousands of lawyers around the country, some of whom have already filed lawsuits about these provisional ballots, ready to step in after the election. That's a huge nightmare that we have but...

SCHIEFFER: So we may well have two men declaring victory before this night is over and we still won't know which of them won.

ORNSTEIN: And I've got to join all three, you and your two guests, in saying we sure hope that it's clear and decisive enough that we don't end up with simply sitting on tenor hooks for weeks or having this tremendous dispute that ends up in the courts again.

SCHIEFFER: Norm Ornstein, thank you very much.

We'll be back with a final word in a just a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally today, during every election that I can remember, someone said, 'This is the most important election of our time.' Sometimes that's right. Sometimes it's wrong. The election at the moment always seemed more important than the last one, but we do know one thing about this one: It is about something.

If I ever figured out what the last one was about, I've forgotten; lock boxes or some such. This time, there is some serious business on the table, a war for one thing, and as if we needed reminding, there was Osama bin Laden on our television sounding as if we would take seriously whatever he said. Thanks but no thanks to Osama. We'll handle this without your advice.

The part you don't seem to understand is that we fight and argue among ourselves but it makes us better. We had a nasty row over ratifying our Constitution back in the beginning, much nastier and more personal than even the current election, but we got a pretty good document out of it and what we think is the best country that ever was.

We're not arguing about what to do, just how to go about it. The thing for you to understand is that no matter who wins the argument here, you lose. So spare us the videotapes and the advice. We've got some voting to do.

That's it for us. We'll see you right here on Election Night. I'm Bob Schieffer. Good morning.