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**CBS News**

# **FACE THE NATION**

**Sunday, August 7, 2005**

**GUESTS: Senator JACK REED, (D-RI)  
Senate Armed Services Committee**

**Representative DUNCAN HUNTER, (R-CA)  
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee**

**FRANCIS "BING" WEST  
Former Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Author, "No True Glory: A Frontline Account  
of the Battle of Fallujah"**

**MODERATOR: BOB SCHIEFFER - CBS News**

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**FACE THE NATION - CBS NEWS  
202-457-4481**

BOB SCHIEFFER, host:

Today on FACE THE NATION, the war in Iraq. US generals are talking about a possible US troop reduction, but with 27 fatalities last week, some are asking: Is the insurgency getting stronger?

For the American military it was one of the costliest weeks of the war. Fourteen of the 27 who died were US Marines killed by one huge new bomb that exploded under their armored vehicle. With these latest developments, is this talk of a possible troop drawdown realistic? We'll talk with Senator Jack Reed, Democrat of Rhode Island and a member of the Armed Services Committee; Congressman Duncan Hunter, Republican of California, who's chairman of the House Armed Services Committee; and Francis "Bing" West, who has written a book about the battle of Fallujah.

Then we'll shift to space and talk to Bill Harwood, the CBS News space analyst, about tomorrow's scheduled flight home for the shuttle and its crew.

Then I'll have a final word on defining right and wrong.

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.

We're going coast to coast this morning. And joining us: from Lompoc, California, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter; moving across the country, in Aspen, Colorado, Senator Jack Reed; and as we move to the East Coast, from Boston, Francis "Bing" West, the author of the upcoming book "No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle of Fallujah."

Thank you all for coming this morning. Chairman Hunter, who I should also add--his son has served two tours in Iraq as a Marine officer. Chairman Hunter, let me ask you about all this talk that we're suddenly hearing. We heard it from, I think, General Casey a couple of weeks ago when the secretary of Defense was in Iraq. We're seeing a big story on the front page of The New York Times today that says General Abizaid, one of our top generals, has briefed various commanders about drawing down the number of troops, American troops, in Iraq. They're talking--most of these reports say about--removing as many as 30 or 40,000 of them next spring. With the heavy casualties that we took last week, do you think that kind of talk is feasible?

Representative DUNCAN HUNTER (Republican, California; Chairman, Armed Services Committee): Yes, I do, and I've--I think all of us have been thoroughly briefed on that catastrophic bomb that took out those great Marines close to the Syrian border. But we're standing up the Iraqi military. The exit strategy for the United States is to stand up the Iraqi military, hand the ball off to them, hand off this responsibility for defending this country and defending this new government that also is being stood up. And the reports that I have received and the analysis from people, who are pretty tough people and pretty tough critics like Barry McCaffrey, have been to the effect that there is a growing strong core of strength in the Iraqi military, that it's standing and fighting, that it's doing its share of the load when we give it a particular area of operation to protect, to defend. And so as we stand up that Iraqi military,

that allows us to draw down the American forces. There's always going to be bombs going off in Iraq. If money and resources could keep bombs from going on, there wouldn't be any bombs going off in Israel. That's a very tough neighborhood.

SCHIEFFER: Well...

Rep. HUNTER: But the key is, can this military defend its civil government and be accountable and responsible to it? I think they're going to hold, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: OK. Well, let's ask Senator Reed. I think, as far as I know, you've probably been to Iraq more than any other member of the Congress. I may be wrong about that, but I know you've been a lot of times, Senator Reed. Do you agree with what Chairman Hunter just said?

Senator JACK REED (Democrat, Rhode Island; Armed Services Committee): Well, I think what's forcing a re-evaluation of our position in Iraq is a growing concern among the American public about the ability to be successful, and second, the wear and tear on our land forces, our Army and military. What concerns me is I don't think we're paying close enough attention to what's happening on the ground. This is still a very dangerous situation. Duncan Hunter is very right about talking about the progress we've made in establishing Iraqi security forces, but they're not quite there yet. And we don't have that political-military background that we need to complement our military operations. We only have one Foreign Service officer in Anbar province. We don't have the kind of outreach in the reconstruction, the redevelopment, the economic progress that has to be part of this battle.

One of the conclusions that everyone has reached is we--this war will be won not by military terms alone, but by a combination of economic and political development, and that's going to take a long time. And my fear is that there's a--pressures in the United States that are forcing us to re-evaluate our position rather than what's happening on the ground in Iraq.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me just go back to Chairman Hunter because David Martin, our Pentagon correspondent, who's very well informed on military thinking, if I do say so, reported this week that the military is no longer trying to win this war in the sense of trying to defeat this insurgency. He said basically what's going on now is they're trying to hold things together until, as you say, we can build up this Iraqi security force and get this constitution approved and get the National Assembly elected this fall. Is that correct?

Rep. HUNTER: Well, I think he's defining this mission in the wrong way. There are always going to be insurgents in Iraq. There's a porous border with Syria and with other nations, and there's always going to be bombs going off and that's the nature of that neighborhood. The key is as we stand up this free government, which is elected by the people, will we have a military which is strong enough to protect that government and to be accountable to that government? And I think that's going to happen. I think this idea of requiring the standard to be that we're going to have a nation which is free of violence is unrealistic and nobody has ever posited that as a goal.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Rep. HUNTER: I think we're going to--this is a balancing act. You don't want to hand this responsibility off to the Iraqi military too early as we did early in the war when we had troops who wouldn't go into battle. You've got to train them up to the right point. On the other hand, you don't hold their hands. You have to make sure that they pick up that responsibility

and the very tough critics, guys like Barry McCaffrey who haven't been friends of the administration in terms of their policy have come back and said there is a growing core of strength in the Iraqi military that these guys are mad at the insurgents, they're going to hold on, they're tough, they're disciplined and they're gaining leadership. And when we have that force stood up, nobody guarantees a life free of problems in the Middle East.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Rep. HUNTER: That country is going to have lots of bumps along the road. But I think the Iraqi military's going to hold.

SCHIEFFER: Let's bring--I take your point, Congressman. I take your point.

Let's call in Bing West who has just written a book about the battle of Fallujah. He knows a little something about ground combat operations. He was an officer, a Marine, in Vietnam, later was in the Reagan administration, I believe, at the Pentagon. What about this balancing act that the congressman is talking about here, Mr. West? How far along are we on that? And how difficult is this going to be?

Mr. FRANCIS "BING" WEST (Former Assistant Defense Secretary): Well, at the end of the battle for Fallujah in November, the Iraqi soldiers that had been with the Marines--and I was standing there with the advisers and they were going to go back home on leave--and the first thing they did was take off their uniforms and they put on civilian clothes because the intimidation factor was such that they didn't dare be seen on the buses as soldiers of the new government of Iraq. And we're going to know that we turned the corner in Iraq when those same soldiers will stay in uniform and go into their marketplaces, and we're just not there yet. So it's--what Mr. Hunter did say, it's a balancing act. And until they get there, the role of our military is to be the bulwark that doesn't allow the insurgency to grow.

But our soldiers can't win the insurgency. We don't speak Arabic. We don't know which among the Sunnis are the insurgents who are looking at us. And only the Iraqis can win their own insurgency. What the United States' forces do is prevent episodes like Fallujah where the insurgents grow to the point in the cities that they believe they have a stronghold. The insurgents today do not have strongholds in the city. Some of the Marines refer to it as Whack-A-Mole. They go one place after the insurgents. The insurgents get in their cars and drive somewhere else and they have to go to the next city. So it's a balancing act.

SCHIEFFER: Well, what--it is a balancing act. I would agree with both of you on that. How close are we, in your view, Mr. West, to being able to hand this responsibility over to the Iraqis?

Mr. WEST: Oh, we're not--all of the people that I know in the military and many of the different battalions, we can't rush there yet.

SCHIEFFER: OK.

Mr. WEST: It's a matter of intimidation. It's will--the question becomes: When will the government soldiers feel when they walk into a marketplace that they're confident enough to walk through just like our policemen would walk down a city street? They're not there yet.

SCHIEFFER: They're not there yet. Well, let's go back to Senator Reed.

Senator Reed, regardless of what went right or what went wrong or how we got there, what, in your view, should we do now?

Sen. REED: Well, we have to continue to provide this training for the Iraqi security forces. We also have to provide the military and political complement, military and economic complement. That's going much slower. We're hoping that we can use elections, we can get more popular support for the government, but it's a long, long process. and I think Bing's insights about the intimidation factor and the other factor I pointed out in terms of security forces, it takes a long time to develop senior leadership. You can train soldiers in tactical matters in matters of months. But to develop leaders, it takes a long time. So we have a long road ahead of us.

The other point I'd make is that the insurgents are thinking in terms of years. It took 10 years in Afghanistan to evict the Soviets. We're thinking in terms of months, and that causes problems. We have to be prepared for a long involvement. We have to do it not just rhetorically, we have to have the resources. We have to expand our Army, our Marine Corps. We have to provide them with the best equipment possible. We have to counter the new IEDs that they're bringing across the border, which takes more research and more support. So there's lots of things we can do. And my concern is that we would leave there early not because the situation on the ground dictates that but because of concern here because of public concern, frankly, that's growing and also because of the pressure on our military forces.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me just ask you because that leads to the point that I was going to ask you about. Some people would say that all this talk about being able to draw down these forces next spring has more to do with the congressional elections that will be coming next year in this country than it does with the situation there in Iraq. What is your response to that?

Sen. REED: Well, my response is that that might be an indirect factor. But the more direct factor is the growing concern across the country by rank-and-file Americans about our role there, how we got there, what we're accomplishing, what we will in the end create or at least help the Iraqi people create. That concern is growing. And that ultimately translates, of course, into elections. But I think the primary issue now is the American public's growing concern, growing apprehension.

SCHIEFFER: Do you think that support is fading for this war, Mr. Chairman, because obviously that's what Senator Reed is talking about here. He says people are beginning to question why we're there and is it working.

Rep. HUNTER: Well, Bob, I think Senator Reed talked correctly about the right issue. And the answer is that we in Congress, House and Senate, and the Executive Branch have to do one thing. We have to remain strong. And that means we have to do something which is tough to do sometimes, that means perhaps remain strong in the face of political pressure. We should ensure that there are no political decisions that affect the substance of what we're doing. We should draw down at the right pace, and we should only follow the battlefield recommendations of our leaders who are on the field in Iraq.

And that means when our leadership in the 1st Armored Division in Baghdad or the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force in the western area of operations, when they say this Iraqi unit is ready to take over, that's when they take over. And so it's our job to be strong.

And you know something? I think the American people are with us on this one. I think they understand that if we don't change the world, the world is going to change us. And to some

degree we're changing that neighborhood by implanting this free nation right in the middle of a major source of hostility and a potential platform for future terrorism.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Rep. HUNTER: So our job as politicians is not to sway with the political wind on this one. Follow the battlefield commanders.

SCHIEFFER: Let me ask you about the battlefield, Mr. West. We had what seemed to me something new this week. We had this enormous bomb that went off and killed those Marines in that personnel carrier. There's talk now of some of these people building 500-pound bombs. That's the kind of bomb that you drop out of an airplane. Have we entered some sort of new phase here?

Mr. WEST: This insurgency is inherently a different kind of war. If you look back to the tradition of an insurgency, it was that the insurgents would come from the countryside and encircle the cities. In Iraq, the insurgents are already in the cities, and everyone drives cars everywhere. In Vietnam, we all walked. The North Vietnamese walked, the insurgents walked, we walked. In Iraq, everyone drives because it's a vast country. The Marines are spread thin over an area the size of Wyoming. So occasionally you have these great tragedies like this week because it's inherent in the nature of this battlefield that you have to drive. And when you have to drive, the other side can see us driving by, and they know we're Americans and we're in those Amtraks and we're in those Humvees. But they're driving, too. But we don't know which of the five million cars has the Iraqis in it. So we are at a disadvantage on those highways. And for as long as this kind of an insurgency goes on--and I think we're going to see this model in the future--we just have to, as Mr. Hunter indicated, recognize that this is inherent in the nature of this kind of a war.

SCHIEFFER: Is this harder than Vietnam was?

Mr. WEST: It is of a much smaller scale, but in any firefight, it's just as hard. In the battle for Fallujah, those Marine and Army battalions that went through that battle, they had a ferocious fight. But what came out of that was a recognition throughout the ranks of the insurgents in Iraq that you don't stand up to the Americans in a firefight. They went into this concept in Fallujah that it was going to be like Grozny and Chechnya and they were going to be able to do to us what happened to the Russians. And instead they learned that the real strength of America still lies in its soldier and in its marine out there with a rifle, and they were hunted down. So the role of the Marines and the Army in keeping this shield prevents the insurgency in Iraq from growing.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Mr. WEST: But in order to end it, only the Iraqi soldiers themselves can do that.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, let me ask you about the public opinion in this country, Senator Reed. The president says we're in a state of war, but I'm not sure all Americans really recognize that. What do you think about that?

Sen. REED: Well, we're in a conflict, a global conflict, and we're committed heavily in Iraq. But the administration is talking in one sense of sacrifice by soldiers, but there's no real sacrifice among civilians, frankly, and life goes on sort of normal as we go forward. And that's, I think, a discordant note because we're not asking for a sacrifice. We're not asking Americans to literally

dig into their pockets and pay for this war. We're running a huge deficit. And the administration continues to push further tax cuts, frankly, for the wealthiest Americans.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. REED: That's not the sacrifice you need in a time of war.

SCHIEFFER: All right. I'm sorry. The clock ran out on us. Thanks to all of you for being with us this morning.

I'll be back in a moment. We'll get an update on space shuttle Discovery.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Well, the shuttle is expected to re-enter the Earth's atmosphere and land very early tomorrow morning at the Kennedy Space Center. Our CBS News correspondent Lee Cowan talked to the astronauts out in space early this morning. This is what Mission Specialist Charles Camarda had to say about their mission this week.

Dr. CHARLES CAMARDA (Shuttle Mission Specialist): I think as a test flight, it was very successful. We evaluated several different sensor systems. We've even done a repair. I think we've far exceeded what we would have expected for this flight.

SCHIEFFER: And our CBS News space analyst Bill Harwood is back on Earth with us. He joins us now from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Bill, is NASA at this point as happy as the astronauts are with this flight?

WILLIAM HARWOOD (CBS News Space Analyst): Well, yes and no, Bob. I think what Camarda just said is absolutely true. The mission itself has gone off without a hitch. The astronauts resupplied the space station, which was critical, and they also tested all of these post-Columbia safety upgrades, in terms of being able to inspect the space shuttle, learn the condition of its heat shield like they've never known it before, and I think they're extremely happy with the way the mission has gone. But there is a cloud hanging over it because of the foam insulation that came off the external tank during launch. They've got to resolve that problem before they can fly again, and that's still an unknown.

SCHIEFFER: Well, how do they know it is safe? I mean, I guess nobody can know 100 percent, but what--why did they make the decision that it was OK to come back?

HARWOOD: Well, really, they used all these cameras and sensors they developed after Columbia to inspect every square inch of this spacecraft. You know, they were able to look at the heat shield tiles on the belly of the shuttle, those leading edge panels that take 3,000 degrees of heat when it re-enters the atmosphere. They looked at that very closely indeed, saw hardly any blemishes of any kind, and they say that, basically, that heat shields looks six times cleaner on average than any of the previous flights they've launched. So a lot of those upgrades they did after Columbia to reduce debris off the tank obviously worked. But they still have to figure out what caused that one-pound piece to come off during launch. That is a big issue, and that's--remains to be seen.

SCHIEFFER: What do you think--and let's all hope and pray that everything goes as you think it's going to go and they come back here safely. What happens after that to this whole program?

HARWOOD: Well, really, the focus shifts over to that foam. Now we learned late last week, Bob, that that part of the tank that came off, that big piece of foam insulation that fell away had been damaged in repair and--while the tank was being built. So obviously they're looking into that to see, could that have played a role with this piece of foam coming off. If it did, that would be a good thing, or something like that, because it would say that the problem is not generic. It doesn't spread out across the fleet. And that might be something that they could fix relatively easily. But that's the focus. As soon as Discovery gets on the ground, I think all eyes are going to turn to Michoud, where Lockheed Martin in Mississippi--outside New Orleans--builds these tanks to come up with a way to fix this problem.

SCHIEFFER: I think it's fair to say, as you say, all eyes will be on this, but I think it's fair to say the entire future of this program rests on what they find out here. Do you think that we will see another shuttle fly?

HARWOOD: I do, Bob. I think they will fix the problem. But you're right about one thing. It depends on how long it takes. You know, they're going to retire the shuttle fleet in 2010 at the president's direction to replace it with a newer spacecraft. Obviously, if it takes too long to fix this problem, people are going to question, 'Is it worth it to spend money and time to get the shuttle back in space?' But they seem fairly confident, or at least optimistic, that they can get this problem fixed. I don't think they can make September, which is their current next launch window, but they've got a theoretical chance, anyway, at November, and if not then, early next year. That's what they're hoping but, again, we're going to have to wait and find out what the problem was.

SCHIEFFER: And we shouldn't forget, we do have two astronauts, one a Russian one an American out there in space on the space station. If for some reason they decide you can't fly this shuttle again, what happens to those people?

HARWOOD: Well, they're always OK in that context, Bob. There's always a Russian Soyuz spacecraft docked to the space station that could be used as a life boat. The Russians, of course, have supported the space station ever since Columbia went down, carrying up supplies and rotating these two-man crews in and out, and they say they can continue doing that. One good thing about Discovery's mission is that they really re-stocked the station in terms of fresh water and supplies, things they really need. So they think they can keep operating it in this fashion for quite a while.

And, Bob, I have to tell you this morning, very early before the sun came up, I stepped outside here and watched both of those spacecraft fly overhead, and when you see the shuttle and the station tracking across the sky, moving in that orbit at five miles a second, and realize there are people up there, it really--it comes home to you just how dramatic this is and what a difficult task it is, not just to get up there, but to get back down again.

SCHIEFFER: OK. Bill Harwood. Bill, thanks a lot.

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

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally today, this weekend marks the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, the historic legislation that gave all Americans, not just white people, the right to vote. The act followed by a year of the breakthrough legislation in 1964 that had outlawed segregation in public places.

For those who did not grow up under segregation, it must be difficult to understand just how much has changed since then. Most remarkably to me, how we have redefined right and wrong. Consider this. When I was a child in Ft. Worth, African-Americans could go to the zoo only once a year, Juneteenth, the holiday that marked the day Texas African-Americans learned that they had been freed from slavery. The rest of the year, only white kids could feed the ducks.

Ours was a hard-working, church-going, middle-class family and I was a child, but in a society that had always been segregated, we saw nothing odd about that arrangement. Yet in less than my lifetime, a nation that had once sanctioned segregation made it a crime. Perhaps only during the enlightenment in Voltaire's time had there been such a change in what people considered good and evil. Until Voltaire, religious intolerance was thought to be a virtue. People were put to death if their religious views did not conform with those in power. Yet in one generation and in large part because of Voltaire, opinion reversed. Intolerance became a sin, not a virtue, and freedom of religion became part of the American bedrock.

Are we there yet on equality for all Americans? No. But we're still moving down the road, still learning as we go.

That's it for us. We'll see you next week and I'll see you tomorrow on the "CBS Evening News." Good day.