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*CBS News*

# ***FACE THE NATION***

*Sunday, August 27, 2006*

**GUESTS: Governor HALEY BARBOUR (R-MS)**

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Director, Federal Emergency  
Management Agency

**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, one year later: Is the US ready for another Katrina? What have we learned from the costliest disaster in American history? Does your city have a credible evacuation plan? And what is the situation today in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast? We'll go first to CBS News correspondent Harry Smith in New Orleans. Then we'll talk with Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour. Finally, we'll talk with FEMA director David Paulison. Is he ready to say FEMA is doing a heck of a job these days? Then, I'll have a final word on what really scares me when it comes to our national security.

But first, one year after 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 good morning. We begin this morning with some tragic news. A Comair passenger jet bound from Lexington, Kentucky, to Atlanta with 50 people on board crashed this morning and caught fire about a mile from the Lexington Airport. At this point, we know only of one survivor who is in critical condition. Comair operates a fleet of those regional jets. It is a subsidiary of Delta Airlines. Eyewitnesses said the plane was intact but there was a fire on board before rescue workers could get to the people inside the plane. We will, of course, have more on all of this as the day progresses and details become available.

But now we go to New Orleans on this weekend that marks the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Our friend Harry Smith from the CBS "Early Show" has covered this story from the very beginning, and this morning he is there.

Harry, I must say that when I was in New Orleans in February, I was shocked at how little seemed to have been done. And looking at that scene behind you there, it makes me ask, has--is it gotten any better since then?

HARRY SMITH reporting:

Well, I tell you what, we're standing right in the middle of the lower Ninth Ward, this is one of the hardest hit areas, one of the poorest parts of New Orleans. And as you can see, it looks a lot like it looked in the weeks right after the storm. This neighborhood in particular is like a ghost town. There is almost no rebuilding going on here whatsoever. People are caught in red tape, they're waiting for directions from the city, from the state. Can they come back, will they be able to come back? So this is one of the worst places you'll see.

Now, in neighborhoods where there's more money, there's a hum of activity. You can hear the hammers and you can hear the saws, and there's a--there's a sense of, 'We're going to get this back.' But the poorer the neighborhood, the worse off it is.

SCHIEFFER: How are the people of New Orleans coping with this?

SMITH: I tell you, talk about heartbreak. You know, I was in a guy's office about a week ago when we came back down here for the whatever, sixth or seventh time. And this guy turns to me, and he says, 'Harry, this is like the movie "Groundhog Day." We get up every day, and it just doesn't feel--it's the same bad movie day after day after day.' We were with a woman in St. Bernard Parish, just southeast from here, where it was--that one neighborhood was struck with a Murphy oil spill, 1700 homes inundated by more than a million gallons of oil. And this woman stood in her front yard, and she just cried for 45 minutes. And she just feels like she's being strangled by red tape. 'What's the city say? What's the parish say? What does the state say? What does the federal government say? What does the insurance company say?' These people--the psychic load is just--it's taking a terrible toll.

SCHIEFFER: Well, now, Mayor Ray Nagin said again this morning that he has a plan to get people out if there is another hurricane. Do the people down there believe that?

SMITH: You know what? I think if there's a lesson in any of this for anybody, it's you're on your own. I mean, who in their right mind is really going to rely on a local, state, federal entity in a situation like this? I--you know, fool me once, shame on me. This is--people been fooled too many times down here. I think if an evacuation order comes, people will get out. But the mayor has said if there is a mandatory evacuation, you don't have transportation, at least now they say there will be buses at the convention center to get folks out of here.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, Harry Smith, thank you very much.

Of course, New Orleans got the bulk of the publicity and the attention because so much of the damage was concentrated in a fairly compact area there. But the truth is that the state of Mississippi got enormous damage; it was spread over a much larger area; something like more than 300,000 homes along the coast were destroyed. And so we want to bring in Governor Haley Barbour of Mississippi to talk about what has been going on in his state over this last year.

Governor, thank you very much for joining us. What would you say would be the state of your state this morning?

Governor HALEY BARBOUR (Republican, Mississippi): Well, most of our state is way past the recovery stage into rebuilding. Even if you go down to the three coast counties, the--largely, recovery is over and we're into rebuilding. Now, there's some little pockets, particularly in the southwestern part of the coast, the further west, the further south, where we haven't begun much rebuilding.

It's interesting. I heard Harry talk about poor neighborhoods/rich neighborhoods. Some of the richest neighborhoods on the coast have not started rebuilding. They're right on the beach and a lot of the utilities are

not back there. But if you go inland a few blocks or particularly a few miles, then people are back in their houses, people are building on their houses. We got a lot to do, Bob, but we're much further along than what Harry described.

SCHIEFFER: Well, I noticed in The Washington Post this morning, they report that seven of the nine gambling casinos in Biloxi are about to be opened for business and will be open for business, but in that report, they say if you go a couple of blocks inland, as you're talking about, where some 6,000 homes and small businesses were destroyed or badly damaged, that the recovery is not going as quickly there.

Gov. BARBOUR: Well, the area they're talking about, the east Biloxi, and there is a huge--there is a large concentration of casinos there, and a huge amount of progress has been made. We've had more than 10,000 people have gone back to work in those casinos. And in east Biloxi, the volunteer effort has just been phenomenal. But you're right, they're--there, they're not as far along. If you go to a poor neighborhood in D'Iberville or other parts of the coast area, they're very far along. But the closer you get to the beach, rich or poor, less has been done for a variety of reasons.

SCHIEFFER: There's been a report that actually, fewer than 5 percent of the destroyed homes are being rebuilt. Would that be accurate in Mississippi?

Gov. BARBOUR: I don't--no, I don't think so, and I'll tell you why. We have nearly 100,000 Mississippians that're still living in FEMA trailers, campers, about 37,000 families. Eighty-two percent of those are located on the lot where their house was, which indicates that they're going to rebuild. But now, some of them are waiting for insurance money or state grants. And I can tell you, Bob, nothing goes fast enough. I mean, everything about this is too slow to suit me. However, the people whose houses can be repaired--and there are tens of thousands of severely damaged houses that are being repaired--a lot of that is started.

But new construction, there's not a whole lot of it in the residential side, and it's because of lack of labor. We have a labor shortage on the coast. We did have about 300,000 houses that were damaged statewide, but in the coast counties, we lost 70,000 units of housing. To rebuild that, we've got to have so much more labor, and we don't have that yet. The labor is being attracted to the big projects. And our big employers, to their credit, most of them were open by October. We've had a labor shortage since last year.

SCHIEFFER: Governor...

Gov. BARBOUR: Our schools have been open since October.

SCHIEFFER: Governor, what do you make of the talk that Mississippi got better treatment because you and your two senators are both Republicans, while most of the politicians in Louisiana are predominantly Democrats?

Gov. BARBOUR: Well, that's very flattering to me, just unfortunately not

true. We are the people, in Mississippi, who came up with the idea that the federal government could use community development block grant money to allow us to rebuild housing. We proposed that to Congress, yet Louisiana has received more than twice as much of that money as we have. They're a larger state than we have. But it was our idea, our concept, and they got more than twice as much of that money. That doesn't sound to me like they're being treated unfairly.

SCHIEFFER: Governor, we have another hurricane brewing out there in the ocean. They're saying it might become a Category 3. Now you've got a whole bunch of people in Mississippi, as you just said, living in those trailers. Obviously they can't withstand a hurricane--a Category 3 hurricane. What are you going to do if a hurricane hits Mississippi? Are you ready?

Gov. BARBOUR: Well, we are ready. Of course, we were--we had a great plan last time, but we got hit by the worst natural disaster in American history and we didn't have 100,000 people living in travel trailers. If Ernesto goes back to the track it was on yesterday, then we will start evacuating on Tuesday. We have to start earlier. We have to provide more people with transportation through buses, which we are prepared to do, but we will move earlier. The storm, as you know, has kind of taken a northern track overnight and maybe is going to come in east of us. But I can tell you, we're praying for the best, but we're preparing for the worst.

SCHIEFFER: So what you're saying is--what would you do? Declare a national disaster...

Gov. BARBOUR: We'd declare disaster...

SCHIEFFER: ...a disaster or what and mandatory evacuation? How would you go about that?

Gov. BARBOUR: Yes, sir. We would have mandatory evacuation of all the travel trailers. We would have mandatory evacuation of certain low-lying areas. But all the travel trailers will have to be evacuated and that would have to start a couple of days in advance. We cannot wait as late as we would have waited a year or two ago because we've got all these people under these special circumstances. And it is a hundred thousand Mississippians.

SCHIEFFER: All right. And you would be--you would make a decision on that tomorrow, is that what you're saying?

Gov. BARBOUR: Well, if the storm goes back on the track or if it had stayed on the track it was on, I was prepared to issue the emergency order tomorrow. If it is, the weather service now seems to think it's going east, so we may take another look at it, but if we're in danger, we will move much earlier than we ever have before.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, governor, thank you very much, and good luck to you, and certainly we hope it doesn't hit Mississippi or anyplace else this time. Thank you, thank you a lot, governor.

Gov. BARBOUR: Thank you, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: We'll be back in a moment with FEMA Director David Paulison.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And with us now here in the studio, David Paulison. He is the director of FEMA.

And I must say, Mr. Paulison, welcome to the broadcast. And unlike your predecessor, you do have credentials for the job. People may not know it, but you were a fire chief, for what, about 10 years...

Mr. DAVID PAULISON (Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency): Yes sir.

SCHIEFFER: ...in Miami-Dade County, which is one of our biggest population centers. Let me start by just reading to you what Senator Mary Landrieu, the senator from Louisiana said. You've been on the job now since September, but she said, "Too often federal agencies have been slow to move and have been encumbered by red tape over the last year." She says, "FEMA, for example, is but a shell of what it once was only six years ago. Stripped of authority, denied resources, it is often unresponsive, inept and badly managed."

Mr. PAULISON: Well, I--I--and I have a lot of respect for the senator, but I disagree with that assessment. I have--I have received a tremendous amount of support from Secretary Chertoff and quite frankly, the president himself. I have the tools I need to do the job, and we are doing that. We are rebuilding this organization. It's not something that can happen in a few months. It takes a long time to get in the shape it was in. It takes--it's going to take a while to fix it, but we are ready for this hurricane season.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let's talk about that, because Ernesto is out in the Atlantic. Governor Barbour said if it goes back on the path, it looks like it's headed toward Mississippi, that he probably tomorrow will declare a national emergency, or a state emergency. What do you think? Can the New Orleans people and the Mississippi people, can they survive a big one if it--if it turns out to be that? Because they're saying that this one may be a Category 3.

Mr. PAULISON: Max Mayfield said this is going to be a very--could be a very dangerous hurricane, what they call a major hurricane. So we've been--we're being prepared for that. We've been working very closely with Louisiana to make sure they have good, solid evacuation plans in place. We all know, as the governor said earlier, that people cannot ride out these storms in a travel trailer or a mobile home, they have to be evacuated. And Mississippi has a good evacuation plan in place. The governor is doing the right thing. He is going to call for a mandatory evacuation, it's exactly what he should do.

SCHIEFFER: Well, now, our friend Byron Pitts on "60 Minutes" tonight has a

piece on New Orleans, and Byron asked Ray Nagin, the mayor down there, what he would do differently this time. Here's what he said.

(Excerpt from "60 Minutes")

BYRON PITTS reporting:

How would you evacuate people differently this time?

Mayor RAY NAGIN: We're getting everybody out, and we're going to use every medium available. No shelter of last resort. Buses, trains, planes, everybody's got to go.

(End of excerpt)

SCHIEFFER: Well, you just heard Harry Smith, who reported from down there this morning. Harry's take on it is people are not really--don't really believe it, that kind of the general view down there: Everybody's on his own.

Mr. PAULISON: Well, I--everybody should take responsibility for their own actions. However, the federal government, FEMA, is providing buses, we are providing planes, providing trains to move people out. We've been working with the state of Louisiana to make sure we have a very robust evacuation plan in place, make sure there's shelters available, make sure the people have staffed these shelters, and making sure there's not only security but supplies in those shelters. It's been an ongoing effort for the last three months. It's a lot of work, and we put it together very quickly, but I'm very pleased with the plan we have in place, and I think it's a sound one.

SCHIEFFER: Are you sure you have a good handle on the plan that is in place? A lot of people say that while Mayor Nagin says he has a plan, that nobody's quite sure what it is. Do you think that--are you confident that there is a good plan in place here?

Mr. PAULISON: I am confident for Louisiana, because we've worked on it with them. It is a good, solid plan. I--Katrina was a wake-up call for everyone, and not just the Gulf states or the East Coast, but everyone across this country--every emergency manager, anyway--they're asking themselves, 'What would have happened if that would have been my city or my state?' And people are starting to rethink what we're doing. We had become complacent, and we have no room for that anymore. Now's the time for action, now's the time to get our states and our communities and our individuals ready for these types of hurricanes. There is a personal preparedness piece of this also that we've often missed, making sure that we take care of ourselves and our families, we prepare ourselves to survive after a storm. Not too difficult of stuff, have a plan in place. I just read a report today that--from the--from Mason-Dixon, a report, survey they did that over 60 percent of the people say they don't have a plan in place, and they don't have a kit ready to survive a storm, or any type of a disaster. That scares me.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let's talk about the possibility of floods, if there is a

big one. They have repaired the levees, they've got them back up, but nobody says that they--they're ready and would hold if you had another Katrina. Is that right?

Mr. PAULISON: Well, I don't know if--whether they'd hold or not. It really doesn't matter, because that whole area's an evacuation zone, and people should evacuate if they're asked to evacuate. They should not be riding out a storm in that area inside those levees. Whether they hold or not, if people--if nobody's there, then nobody loses their life. So the mayor's right, we have to call for an early evacuation; Governor Barbour was correct when he said the same thing. We have to pay attention to our local emergency managers and respond when they've asked to do so.

SCHIEFFER: Mr. Paulison--and not all of this, obviously, is your responsibility--but why has it taken so long? I mean, why is it that these billions of dollars that are in the federal pipeline just don't seem to be getting to people in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast?

Mr. PAULISON: Well, the American taxpayers and the Congress have allocated \$110 billion to rebuild the Gulf Coast, so the commitment is there. We have released probably 77, 70 percent of that money to the states, and it takes a while to get down to the local communities. This is not something that's going to happen in a few months. The experience that I went through in Hurricane Andrew, it was a very devastating hurricane, but it only affected a quarter of one county. Here we have an area of 90,000 square miles.

This is not something that's going to be rebuilt in a few months. This is going to take years to do. It takes a very methodical plan to be put in place, to make sure we follow that plan. New Orleans has to decide what it wants to do. What is that city going to look like? Are they going to be smaller, are they going to be the same size, is it going to be bigger? Those types of decisions have to be made before that money's going to start flowing.

SCHIEFFER: Well, do you have any kind of idea when they're going to come up with the idea, as you say, of what they want to be?

Mr. PAULISON: Well, some states already have. Haley Barbour's state of Mississippi's doing an outstanding job. You know, Louisiana is a little bit different. I think Louisiana's different. The mayor has some difficult decisions to make. But they need to go on about making those decisions so that money can start flowing because the money's there. The money's in the state, ready for the city to draw it down.

SCHIEFFER: From a practical standpoint, do you think New Orleans should be smaller?

Mr. PAULISON: That's a local decision; that's not a federal decision. Those residents, the elected officials, they're the ones that have to decide that. That's not--that's not something the federal government should be involved in at all. That's their decision of what they want their city to look like.

SCHIEFFER: Mr. Paulison, I mean, one kind of, I guess, metaphor or example of how basically the federal government fell dead last time around, and--as did the state and local governments, I think that's fair to say--are those 10,000 FEMA trailers that are still up there in Arkansas, that they can't seem to figure out what to do with them, they're paying \$250,000 a month, I think, in rent just to keep them there. People need homes, and yet here these trailers sit up there. What is the deal on that?

Mr. PAULISON: Well, we have about 9,000 trailers in Hope, Arkansas. We have over 150,000 families across this country in FEMA travel trailers and mobile homes and we have a prediction by the National Hurricane Center that we're going to have a heavy storm season. Having nine or 10,000 trailers in reserve is not unreasonable at all. We need to have those there. We need to keep a reserve. If we lose--if we lose travel trailers and mobile homes in the Gulf Coast to another hurricane, we don't want to wait for a manufacturer to have to produce them. We want to have a stock to draw on. So that--the trailers are there, they're safe, they're dry, and we want to keep those there. Again, that's not unreasonable to have that small amount, considering we have 150,000 of them out there.

SCHIEFFER: When you look at what happened the last time, and surely, you have, because that's how, in any--any organization learns what they've done wrong--our military does it as a matter of routine--when you look back at what happened the last time, what lessons did you learn?

Mr. PAULISON: There were several lessons. Communications or sharing information; logistics; supplies, having the right things at the right--there--in the right place at the right time; being able to track those supplies, which we could not do; victim registration, doing a better job of knowing where people are and what their needs are. But if I had to pick one, if I had to pick one, the most important, it was the communication piece, the sharing of information. We did not have a good system in place to be able to do that.

Yeah, there was some equipment issues there, but that wasn't the big issue. The big issue was--is working, making sure, having discipline, to have a unified command system set up where we're all planning together, we're sharing information together, so we--and we know who's responsible for carrying something out. If that had been in place, you wouldn't have had the issue with the Superdome with buses not showing up when they were supposed to, you wouldn't have people being put in there without other people known they were there. So that's the most important piece for us...

SCHIEFFER: That's the most important.

Mr. PAULISON: And we've been working on that for the last several months to fix that.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Mr. PAULISON: And we have done that.

SCHIEFFER: Mr. Paulison, thank you so much for joining us.

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

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally today, I love the news, but Friday night it made me sick. I had talked all afternoon with Dr. Norman Francis, the head of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, and he had told me that he thought New Orleans is probably more vulnerable today to a hurricane than it was a year ago. Say what you will--and you heard a lot of views expressed this morning--New Orleans is still a mess. Officials at all levels are still groping with how to get federal funds to washed-out homeowners, how to get FEMA trailers in Arkansas to people who need them, how to get more schools open. More than half the schools in New Orleans are still closed.

Byron Pitts asked New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin about that on Friday's evening news, and basically, he said, 'Get over it,' noting that New York still hasn't covered up what he called "the hole" caused by the 9/11 attack.

Arrogance is galling enough, but it was the next story by Allen Pizzey that really set me off. He reported that Hezbollah agents are on the streets of southern Lebanon, handing out US dollars to people whose homes were bombed out.

One year after Katrina and we can't figure out how to get money to people who lost their homes in New Orleans, we're still not sure if it can survive another hurricane, but a terrorist group has figured out how to get American money to the homeless in Lebanon? Talk about threats to our national security. How about a government so big, so complicated and so unmanageable, it can't seem to get out of its own way anymore? That's what scares me.

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