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TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "CBS NEWS' FACE THE NATION. "*

CBS News

FACE THE NATION

Sunday, April 11, 2004

**GUESTS: Senator PAT ROBERTS, (R-KS)
Chairman, Select Committee on Intelligence**

**Senator JOSEPH BIDEN, (D-DE)
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee**

**EVAN THOMAS
Assistant Managing Editor, Newsweek**

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, has a second war begun in Iraq? Every day the news from Iraq gets worse, more fire fights, casualties, the taking of hostages. Is the situation spiraling out of control? Are more troops needed now? We'll have a report on the latest there. Then we'll talk with the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Joe Biden of Delaware, and the head of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Pat Roberts, Republican of Kansas. Evan Thomas of Newsweek joins in today's questioning. Then our FACE THE NATION 50th anniversary flashback will feature Ross Perot. Finally, I'll have a word on taking unfair advantage of the very people who are putting their lives on the line to defend us, our military.

But first, the mess 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 first to Baghdad. It's been another terrible week in Iraq: kidnappings, American casualties. CBS News correspondent Allen Pizzey is standing by.

Allen, what's the latest this morning?

ALLEN PIZZEY reporting:

Well, Bob, it seems--it seems that things have quieted down a little bit. There is a--a cease-fire that sort of is pretty much holding in Fallujah. Other areas of the country have been relatively quiet although coalition authority spokesmen do admit that this war is not over. The Muqtada al-Sadr militia seems to have gone to ground in a lot of places. They've not been beaten, they've merely gone into hiding. And the coalition spokesmen say--you know, they admit that these guys will be a threat for some time to come.

Then there's the unresolved issue of the hostages. We thought those three Japanese were going to be released this morning. There's been no sign of them. The American that's been held and who was photographed on Friday was supposed to be killed if there was no withdrawal of US forces from Fallujah by 6:00 local time this morning. There's been no word on him. The hope, I think, is this the cease-fire that's holding at the moment and the ongoing talks about extending that will keep him alive and maybe they can negotiate him out.

The problem is nobody knows who to negotiate with. This is a new tactic that's being used to put pressure on members of the coalition to back off from supporting it and you're dealing with perhaps splinter groups and nobody knows how to get to them, so it's--it may be quiet, Bob, but it's kind of an ominous quiet.

SCHIEFFER: Allen, you talk about the cease-fire holding. And I know US officials say they want to get back to giving the political process a chance to work, but--but what does that really mean?

PIZZEY: Well, it doesn't mean very much actually because it--even if they do get it quiet, and that's going to be a heck of a process, they're basically back to square one, which is where they were when this thing started. And they actually have to be a lot further along the line than that. They had hoped that this political process would be in train. Remember, you've got a June 30th deadline, which the administration in Washington insists it's going to hold on to. You're trying to get people into a political process, win their hearts and minds. And

people are busy blowing each other's heads off. So it's hard to see how they're getting anywhere at all. This is a process that's not just stalled, it's been sent backwards. And even if they get rid of all the chaos, where are they? Not very far, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: Allen Pizzey, thank you very much.

And we're back in the studio now and we turn to Senator Pat Roberts, who's chairman of the Select Intelligence Committee, and Senator Joe Biden, ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, who is with his family this Easter weekend. Evan Thomas of Newsweek joins in the questioning today.

Senator Biden, let me just start with you because Allen Pizzey seems to give us a place to start this. He says even if they get the fighting stopped now, we're almost back to square one, that this has been a setback in this whole process. What's your comment on that?

Senator JOSEPH BIDEN (Democrat, Delaware; Ranking, Senate Foreign Relations Committee): Well, I think it has been a setback but it's still salvageable, Bob. I think it requires some presidential leadership here to lay out for the world and for the Iraqi people what the plan is. I mean, to whom are we going to turn over power? Who is going to be the intermediary once power is turned over as we prepare for an election six months later? And--and, quite frankly, no one really knows that.

There's still some division within the administration as to how to go about that but there's still time. The president can, in fact--I think the president should be assembling a meeting, quite frankly, of the major powers, deciding what political part--role they will play in this process and give the Iraqi people, the vast majority of whom we still presume want to see a rational hand-over of power and are not looking for a civil war--give them reason to come forward, knowing that they're surrounded by, in effect, an overall plan that's been embraced not just by us but by the major powers in the world.

SCHIEFFER: Well, considering what has just happened, that's--that's almost a fairly optimistic statement. Do you--do you agree with that, Senator Roberts?

Senator PAT ROBERTS (Republican, Kansas; Chairman, Select Committee on Intelligence): Well, I would--in the first place--in the first place, Joe, I want to wish you a very happy Easter. I must use this Easter time to see if we can't really unify in this country in regard to the goals that certainly Joe has outlined. That's a very optimistic view, if we can do it. But in terms of the realism of that, in terms of our allies, what part of 'No' don't you understand? Hopefully, now that we've seen the consequences of what could happen in Iraq and what could happen to the well-being of the national interests of our allies, that would be, I think, very appropriate and I think the president and his advisers are doing just that in terms of contacting our allies, and the UN as well. Although I think you have to be very--you know, very realistic in regards to the UN.

I think the emissary there now in trying to talk to the Ayatollah Sistani--I don't know if you can do that with Sadr--is making their very best effort. But the UN is very good at peacekeeping where there is peace to be kept, and then when they become targets, as they have been in Iraq, there's a lot of hesitation in regards to them getting involved. This is a very difficult situation. It has turned for the worse. But perhaps this is what we have to go through to get there from here, to achieve stability and achieve some progress in Iraq.

SCHIEFFER: Evan?

Mr. EVAN THOMAS (Newsweek): Senator Roberts, do--do you think that the

administration is being straight with us about how bad things really are over there?

Sen. ROBERTS: Well, I think they've said it's going to be a long, hard slog, and I think that, as you talk to the commanders in the field, if you--if you talk to Secretary Rumsfeld, although a choice of words might have been a little--a little difficult. If you--if you go down the list, you know, the people doing the attacking now--and they are attacking and staying; they're not attacking and fleeing. They're a very professional military. They are shooters, not expo--you know, they're not using explosives. Now you have the unique situation of the Sunnis and the Shias simply coming together. Then you have this business of hostages, and then you have this business of using terrorism to affect elections in current events. Some--some of that's new, but basically, that goes back to the nature of asymmetrical warfare by non--non-state terrorists and they use chaos to achieve their goals. This is going to be very, very difficult. It already is.

SCHIEFFER: Well, you know, Senator, Secretary Rumsfeld says this is just a gang of thugs. You seem to think it's a little more organized than that.

Sen. ROBERTS: Well, I don't--I don't remember the exact term that the secretary used. I know that we had a briefing up on Capitol Hill this past week and we had a briefing in the Intelligence Committee by the Defense Intelligence Agency and the CIA and the military. The difference here now is that when they attack, they stay and fight. And in addition, it's just not explosives and leaving. These people are shooters. Now by--now what I mean by that is they know about the color of our jackets and they're taking aim where the color of our jacket isn't. And so this is a very professional force. I think it's probably members of the Republican Guard, foreign jihadists, that they are more professional than thugs. They are thugs and murderers. Don't misunderstand me.

SCHIEFFER: Yeah.

Sen. ROBERTS: But it's certainly more professional than that.

Mr. THOMAS: Sen--Senator Biden, from what you know, from what you're hearing, does this feel like a general uprising--generalized uprising all through the south or does it just feel like it's just little pockets?

Sen. BIDEN: It feels like something just in between, Evan. Let me say that I don't think the secretary of Defense has leveled with us. I think he continues to operate under the misunderstanding that somehow this notion of the Shia and Sunni dislike for one another trumps nationalism when, in fact, historically nationalism and the nationalism has always trumped the differences that exist within Iraq. What we see now is some cooperation between Sunnis and Shias, and if we don't nip this in the bud very quickly, this is going to get out of control.

We did have that briefing with Secretary Rumsfeld up in S-407. That's the secret room we meet in. One of the most senior and outspoken members of the Republican Party chastised the chairman of the--of--of the--the secretary of Defense for saying that this was a quote, "flare-up." This is much more than a flare-up. We've understandably made mistakes and we should learn from those mistakes. And the commanders I've talked to, both present commanders and former commanders, say we don't have enough forces in there right now. Rumsfeld insisted that we have all that we need. I don't believe that for one split second and it's about time we--we level with the American people. This is not only going to be long and hard. This requires a change in tactic and a change in policy. And it requires bringing in the international community.

By the way, the UN never keeps the peace. We're not talking about UN peacekeeping; we're talking about a high commissioner or a special representative of the United Nations reporting directly to the Security Council. So the Security Council has an out--has a say in what the political outcome will be. If they do that, they will begin to supply NATO forces here. There won't be many initially, but they're prepared...

SCHIEFFER: Well...

Sen. BIDEN: ...to turn this operation over to NATO...

SCHIEFFER: ...let...

Sen. BIDEN: ...and this is a misnomer here.

SCHIEFFER: Well, the--turning it over to NATO--and--and many people have said that--but, Senator Biden, let me ask you this question: Do you think that NATO forces will be willing to come into Iraq? Have you talked to any foreign leaders, for example, who are members of NATO, who said, 'If you'll give us a chance, we'll send some troops in there'?

Sen. BIDEN: Absolutely I have. I've spoke tone the president of France. I'm spoken to the permanent representatives in Brussels. I've spoken to the secretaries of defense in Great Britain. I've spoken to a number of European leaders. Now what's happening though is the window's closing very rapidly. It's like that old bad joke I've told you before, Bob, about the center fielder who makes four errors in the first inning. The coach calls him out, puts in Pat. Pat's first play makes an error. He comes out, calls timeout and says 'Pat, what's the matter with you?' And he says, 'George has screwed up center field so bad no one can play it.' They're beginning to think we're screwing up center field so bad no one can play it. So that's why the president...

Sen. ROBERTS: You could have used a different name.

Sen. BIDEN: Well, no, but I think it's appropriate. I really do. Look, I promise you, the meetings I've had with these heads of states and the leaders of these European countries are saying we are willing to come in. Now let me make it clear. They're only willing to come in if they have genuine political input in what Iraq is going to look like, not--not under some super embassy ambassador or under Mr. Bremer. They have an equal input in what the country's going to look like.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let--let me just ask you, because I'm intrigued by you said you talked to the president of--of France. The president of France told you he would be able to send troops? He wanted to sent troops? How many troops did he want to send...

Sen. BIDEN: He--he--he--he--he...

SCHIEFFER: ...and under what circumstances?

Sen. BIDEN: He said two things. One, if there is a--a reso--he--he said it didn't even have to be the Security Council. He said it could be the permanent five members of the United Nations, if they had a say in the political outcome and a representative on the ground taking the place of Bremer on Ju--on July 1, he would vote for NATO being able to come in. And then if that occurred, he would gradually induce--in--in--put in French forces. There is no question there's only going to be able to be somewhere between 5,000 and 20,000 NATO forces at the front end of this operation. But when I spoke to General Jones, our supreme allied commander, that amount of force would allow NATO to take over the responsibility of

guarding the borders, NATO take over the north, and/or take over the Polish division in the south, freeing up roughly 20,000 American forces in there. But the most important part of this, Bob, is once the American people know we're not alone, once NATO says they're in the deal even if it's with 2,000 troops, it means every major power in Europe has a stake in the outcome. Right now the American people know there's only one nation that has a stake in the outcome, and that's the United States.

Mr. THOMAS: Senator Roberts, how sanguine are you that we're going to get international help here that's really meaningful?

Sen. ROBERTS: Well, I might a--I--I must admit I'm a little stunned by the Biden plan in regards to settling this very difficult issue. I did not know that he had talked to the president of France, and--and he's known, you know, all over Europe as being a very positive and, you know, very important person in regards to the Senate, you know, Foreign Relations Committee, has a--a wide background. I--you know, I've talked to Jim Jones. He is a former Marine. I'm a Marine. We really have been trying to figure out how we could get NATO in. Again, I'm not sure under the UN situation whether it's possible to achieve all of that, that the allies would want to achieve. If, in fact, that is the case and the president of France is certainly willing to do that, that is a real breakthrough, and you know, Joe certainly deserves a lot of credit for that.

But I--I--you know, once again each one of those countries have a significant Muslim population, which is one of the reasons that they didn't want to get involved. Secondly, it isn't so much I think who's going to take over after us, although that's a very important matter. What we have here among the Shias and Sunnis is really a very fervent desire to form an Islamic state, and if it's the Wahabi Islamic state, we're in for a long, hard slog and you wouldn't have stability. I think this is ma--I think from one standpoint certainly Joe is correct. It is more of a nationalistic kind of thing. That happened, by the way, in 1921 with the Brits. You know, they went in for six months as liberators and all of a sudden became occupiers and then Winston Churchill said they were an ungrateful volcano. They put in King Faisal. He lasted 10 years and then had some very bad things to say in regards to Iraq because it was a collection of tribes and not a nation.

Well, now, you know, the consequences are much different. So I will take certainly Joe at his word. I hope we can. I think that the administration is certainly working with the UN trying to accommodate by talking to the individuals that--you know, that he mentioned, more especially the cleric Sistani. What you do with Sadr, though, I think is a different equation.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me just ask you this, Senator Roberts. Do you think we have to put more troops in there now, whether they're NATO troops or American troops, in order to get this thing under control?

Sen. ROBERTS: Well, you know, I've got a problem with that. I--I--I--I know you need a very robust--that's the favorite word they use--a very robust series of troops, but it isn't so much how many troops, but the troops that are trained to do the job in the urban warfare and the asymmetrical warfare used by the terrorists. I think there's been a suggestion by Senator McCain to simply cancel the F-22 and put more troops in there. If--if the commanders want more troops, yes, you know, more troops. All along I have said that instead of a 130,000, maybe 150,000. I don't want to get into a numbers game, but they have to be highly specialized troops. And in that particular instance, we are stretched rather thin.

SCHIEFFER: But don't you--don't you agree, Senator Roberts, if those commanders are not gonna ask for troops unless they know the Pentagon's prepared to give them to them. I mean, that's just how it works.

Sen. ROBERTS: Well, that's a good question in terms of the Pentagon on how we're stretched so doggone thin that we don't have the kind of troops that we need in terms of Special Forces Marines, special Army units, so on and so forth. People that are in there have to know what the heck we're doing. If we do have those troops, yes, let's send them.

Mr. THOMAS: Senator...

Sen. BIDEN: Bob, can--can I make one very brief point?

SCHIEFFER: Go ahead, Senator.

Sen. BIDEN: I want to make it absolutely clear, the Europeans I spoke with said they would be no part of being involved in Iraq under a US political directive, i.e. Bremer and/or a super-ambassador. That the political operation had to be turned over to the international community, including the United States. That is the beginning. Without that, nothing is gonna happen. That can be done within this time through presidential leadership.

Second point, the generals who are right, Shinseki was right and the former CENTCOM commander, four-star general is right when he said we needed more to begin with, we need more now and we will need more for some time to come.

SCHIEFFER: OK, let me stop, because we have one other thing to cover.

Mr. THOMAS: Senator Roberts, what do you make of this declassified president's daily briefing from--from August 6th. How--how much trouble is that for the administration?

Sen. ROBERTS: I don't think it's any trouble so much as it might set a precedent, because if you release one, why, obviously some other people will say, 'OK, we need some more PDBs.' But I think the situation certainly warranted it under the circumstances. It was a little--a little unique to me because all members of the commission had access to it. You could make a very generic, say, conclusion: Three of the attacks that were mentioned in terms of hijacking happened over three years ago. The business of people in New York doing surveillance, those were tourists. Basically this started in 1994. It's nothing really different..

Mr. THOMAS: Well..

Sen. ROBERTS: ...than Osama bin Laden has been saying. I don't think you're gonna have...

Mr. THOMAS: All--all true, but it's pretty explicit about, 'Here comes al-Qaida.' You don't--you don't think the administration should have done a little more?

Sen. ROBERTS: Yeah, but he's been saying that since '97 on tape. We knew that in most of the intelligence briefings that I have attended in the seven years I have been on the committee. We thought, however, due to the intelligence that we did receive that it would happen in some foreign country, i.e. it was the USS Cole, we'd had the embassy bombings. We knew of nothing specific that we could put our hands on. I don't think that's gonna change anybody's mind, but there's one thing I do want to say. We are--now we have a fetish. We have an addiction to all these investigations. We have 11 of them now that we are conducting.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. ROBERTS: Somebody's got to conduct the war in regards to the global war on terrorism.

SCHIEFFER: And this is where we have to end it. Thank you, Senator.

Back with another FACE THE NATION Flashback in just a second.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Twelve years ago this month another campaign was under way. President Bush's father was facing re-election and it looked as if his Democratic opponent would be Bill Clinton. But it was another candidate who was making the headlines. That's our FACE THE NATION 50th anniversary Flashback.

The crowds chanted, 'We want Ross' and the polls showed that independent businessman Ross Perot posed a real threat to both parties. Bush and Clinton were going down in the polls; he was going up. On FACE THE NATION he said it was because he talked about unpopular problems that had to be fixed, like the deficit.

Mr. ROSS PEROT: (From April 26, 1992) I've said it's like a crazy aunt in the basement. Everybody knows she's there but nobody talks about her. Don't we love our children as much as our parents loved us? Sure we do. We cannot spend their money.

SCHIEFFER: That message resonated with millions of Americans, not enough to elect Perot president, but the votes he drew from George Bush were a major reason Bush was not re-elected. Another FACE THE NATION 50th anniversary Flashback.

And we'll be back with the final word in a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally, today, several weeks ago on FACE THE NATION, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld bristled when we told him retired officers were complaining that the Army was holding soldiers in the service longer than they'd agreed to serve in order to meet manpower levels necessary to fight the war in Iraq. He first said the officers were misinformed. Later, he said the practice was used only sparingly. Last week, the Army confirmed it has been forced to adopt such a policy and that thousands of soldiers may have to remain in Iraq longer than they were told they'd be there. The policy also applies to Reservists and National Guardsmen who will soon make up 40 percent of the force in Iraq.

This has come about because the Army is just not large enough to carry out the mission it has been assigned by the White House. The White House does not like to admit that since it confirms that civilian defense officials vastly underestimated the number of troops Iraq would require. Nevertheless, it is the men and women in the ranks who are paying the price which is not just unfair. It is shortsighted. If we cannot be truthful with enlistees about how long they were expected to serve, they won't re-enlist nor can we continue to ask Reservists and Guardsmen to serve 12-month active duty tours every other year. No one can live that kind of half in the service half out of the service life and few will chose to.

If we're going to fight the war, we must be willing to pay for an Army big enough to do it. We cannot continue to take advantage of the very people who are already putting their lives on the line to defend us.

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