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



## **June 13, 2010 Transcript**

GUESTS: GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST  
Independent-Florida

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR  
Republican-Mississippi

GOVERNOR BOB RILEY  
Republican-Alabama

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN  
National Incident Commander

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## TRANSCRIPT

BOB SCHIEFFER: Today on FACE THE NATION, day fifty-five and the gusher in the Gulf just keeps on gushing. President Obama will head back to the coast tomorrow, and the administration has given BP until this weekend to come up with a better plan to stem the flow. But what if it doesn't? We'll ask the government point man Admiral Thad Allen of the Coast Guard. Then we'll talk to three Gulf Coast governors whose states are being affected by this spill: Haley Barbour of Mississippi, Bob Riley of Alabama, and Charlie Crist of Florida.

I'll have a final word on casting a spell.

But first, Day 55 of the Disaster in the Gulf.

ANNOUNCER: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now from CBS News in Washington, Bob Schieffer.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And, good morning, again.

We start again with Admiral Thad Allen, the point man in all of this for the government. Admiral, thank you for coming. We learned this morning that the President is going down to the coast and then he's going to come back and he's going to address the nation and lay out how he thinks this thing can be worked out from here on in. One of the things we're hearing is that BP will be asked to set aside money that can be paid out in damages to the people who have been hurt down there. How would that be administered?

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN (National Incident Commander): Well, we've been very concerned about the claims process. This is not a core function of an oil-producing company. And they usually re-- retain a third-party contractor to do that. It's not clear to us that there's the right transparency involved con-- concerning the data, the-- how long it takes to pay claims. So one-- one of the things we're probably going to be talking about is an independent third party that could administer a fund to make sure it happens quicker.

BOB SCHIEFFER: In other words, have someone from outside BP. Would that be somebody from the government, or-- but it would be somebody appointed by the government.

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: I think the specification is an independent third party and we're talking about just what that would mean.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. You sent BP a letter last week, telling them to come up with a more aggressive plan to contain this spill. Have you heard from them yet? And what do you expect them to tell you? What do you want to hear here?

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: Well, we actually sent two letters. The first one, they were responsive to. But we were concerned because if you look at the new flow rate numbers and the amount of oil that's going to be potentially out here at risk, we wanted them to give us a faster plan with greater redundancy and greater reliability as we move forward. And they-- we hope to get an answer from that later on today. In fact, we will get an answer.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you want to put independent sensors down there, something other than their equipment down there to tell you how this flow is going because obviously, you know, these numbers have been all over the lot.

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: Well, at the direction of Doctor Chew (ph) and in coordination with our federal on-scene coordinator, we actually are going to be deploying sensors down there today. It will start taking pressure readings. We think we need some independent pressure readings to validate the estimates that have been made by the scientists looking at the video and some other acoustic data.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You know, Admiral, last week on this program, you said that the-- the estimate was at the top nineteen thousand barrels. Now-- now we're learning that it's about forty thousand barrels spewing out of there. Do you think you got had on those figures?

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: No. And I might add they were never BP's figures, they were our figures. We have a flow rate technical group that's been working under the direction of Marcia McNutt, who's head of the U.S. Geological Survey. What I've continued to do is challenge them all a time on their assumptions to go back and make sure we understand what's going on. We have a-- actually have several different methods of trying to establish what that flow rate is anywhere from taking overhead satellite imagery of the oil that's on the water to using very high resolution video to try and assess the volume of the flow and the velocity at which it's rising. And that-- that work really came up with the range of twenty-five to thirty. But at the high end it was forty and at the low end, it was twenty. And we think somewhere around probably the mid-thirty range is what we're looking at. But on the high end there is a possibility it could be forty.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Could it be more?

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: Well, we're going to continue to refine. I've told everybody from the start these are only estimates. We will only know what is flowing out of that well when we have it completely capped-- control of the flow could actually measure.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You-- you also said last week that we'd be deal-- dealing with this well into the fall. Now that we are understanding that there's more coming out than we even thought last week, does that mean this is going to go on even longer? Will this go on into the winter?

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: No, what I meant, Bob, when we finally capped the well and that should be some time in August with the relief well. Up to that that point, there are still-- have-- have oil-- well, it still have been surfacing and we'll have to deal with that on the surface. And that's will take a while to do. And it will be into the fall. Regardless of the flow rate change, we're going to be dealing with this for-- for several months because even when the well is capped, there's residual oil in the water. It's going to have to be dealt with and, of course, the long-term environmental impacts.

BOB SCHIEFFER: President Obama is calling these people from BP to the White House this week for a meeting. I guess, one of the things they're going to talk about is what you just talked about setting up this escrow fund. Is one of the reasons you're-- you're considering, said-- having BP, because you're talking about BP funding this--

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: Correct.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --this-- this-- this damage claims money. Are you worried that BP might go broke and they won't have the money and you want to get it set aside now?

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: Well, I think our assumption is BP is a growing concern. They're a company that's got-- got a lot-- a lot of wealth inside it. That-- I don't think that's a consideration at this time.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Who do you expect to be at this meeting? Will Tony Hayward, the CEO be there?

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: Well, I sent a letter to the chairman of the board. And they're certainly going to be there and I would expect Tony Hayward would be there, too.

BOB SCHIEFFER: He would also--

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: Yeah.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And what exactly are you going to tell them besides talking about this escrow fund?

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: Well, I think there are a lot of things to talk about even within the claims process. We-- you need to talk about indi-- individual claims, but we have businesses that are losing income down there that are really focused on the summer months to achieve all their income. We need to talk about that. I think we need to talk about the containment options that are out there right now and our attempts to create better redundancy and speed those up. I think those will be focus points.

BOB SCHIEFFER: What about all the oil workers, the people who are working these rigs now that the drilling has been halted. They're not getting paid. Is that going to be the responsibility of BP too to make sure that they get money? That they get something?

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: Well, those are policy discussions that are going on inside the administration right now. I'm not sure if there's any-- any resolution on that. That's-- I'm focusing more on the response.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And-- and how are you-- how do you feel about it today? And, say, how you felt about it last week? Are we any better, any worse?

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: Well, the front conti-- continues to widen. And as the spill evolves, we have to evolve our forces. We have amassed more forces on the water than probably any time in recent history in the United States. We have over two thousand vessels of opportunity. These are water-manage-- shrimp boat operators. We have over two thousand other vessels, including Coast Guard cutters. We have four hundred skimmers that are out there. What we're finding out is we're-- we're-- we're get to go a point where we need to fight the war between the shore and the off-shore well, where the oil is starting maybe fifty miles off the coast, rather than trying to capture all around the well, had we got to get our skimmers further offshore and protect this-- we minimize the amount of oil that comes ashore.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, Admiral, thank you very much for coming by.

I hope that there's going to come a time where we won't be asking you to come by here every week. And I bet you feel the same way.

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN: It is my hope as well, Bob.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Thank you so much, Admiral.

And joining us now, three Gulf Coast governors who are trying to deal with all of this: Haley Barbour of Mississippi, Bob Riley of Alabama, and Charlie Crist of Florida. I want to go to Governor Barbour first. Well, Governor, you just heard what Admiral-- what the Admiral said and that is they're going to ask BP to set aside this escrow fund to be administered apparently by a third party, someone not in the company, to start getting this claims money out. How does that strike you?

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR (R-Mississippi): Well, the law is very clear. It's BP's responsibility to pay for all of this. And the mechanism for doing it needs to be one that is friendly to the claimant. Now in fairness, we in Mississippi haven't had as many claims as Louisiana or even Alabama, but we will have. And we want a system that-- that works for our claimants, works for the people who have been damaged. And BP is supposed to pay for it. The law is very clear on that.

BOB SCHIEFFER: The President is going down to your state, among-- to all of the states tomorrow along the coast. You're going to talk to him. Then we're told he's going to come back and address the nation from the Oval Office on Tuesday night. That will be before he meets with the BP executives on Wednesday. What do you think about that?

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR: Well, that's a little surprising to me. I mean, normally if we were-- if I were a governor trying to make sure somebody does something, I would meet with them before I went on television. But, I mean it's up to the President. It's not-- it's not up to me.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you think that BP is responsible for the lost wages that these oil workers are-- are facing now, now that the moratorium, now that the drilling off shore has been halted?

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR: Well, I'm like a lot of people. And, there's-- there's no unanimity about this. But, I don't think we should have a moratorium. There've been more than thirty thousand oil wells drilled in Gulf of Mexico in the last fifty years. This is the first time something like this has ever happened. And we need to get to the bottom of it. Find out what happened. Make sure it doesn't happen again. But, I think it is very reasonable to continue to drill. And the reason I say that is if we don't, then all this oil drilling equipment is going to leave the Gulf of Mexico. It's going to go to West Africa, to Brazil, to Australia, to China, and it's not going to be back in six months when the moratorium is over. It's going to be gone. We produce thirty percent of our oil in the United States in the Gulf of Mexico. You shut that down and it'll have an enormously negative effect on the national economy. What's going on right now is hurting my state's economy and-- and these other Gulf States that you're going to be talking to. But this moratorium is going to hurt the national economy.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Is that what you're going to tell the President when you meet with him tomorrow?

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR: Yes, sir. It's one of the things I'm going to tell him. Thad Allen talked about another thing that I think is very important. And that is, our plan from the beginning

has been to fight the oil offshore. The-- the BP plan has been more to fight the oil all around the well. And I was glad to hear Admiral Allen say they're going to do more of what we have been asking and that is to have a strong in-depth defense that expands from twenty miles offshore back to the barrier islands, back to the sound, back to the shoreline and protects the bays and the-- and the habitat. So--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Um-- let me--

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR: Those are some of the things that we're going to talk about.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Yeah. Let me ask you this, Governor. You have been saying that Mississippi is hurting because of media coverage of this. I mean--

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR (overlapping): Yes, sir.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --what would you have us do, not show these pictures?

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR: There should be a differentiation, Bob. The-- the-- the news coverage of this is-- is, of course, there's a lot of it. And, it's very sensational and it's the worst pictures that you can get. And it shows every hour on cable news and several times a day on the regular networks. And the people of the United States have the impression the whole Gulf of Mexico is ankle deep in oil, which is simply not the case. Everybody knows it's not the case. By God's grace, we haven't had any oil yet reach the shore of Mississippi. We've had a couple of incursions on our barrier islands but we have lost the first third of the tourist season. And, as Admiral Allen said, there are a lot of people on the coast that make most of their living in three months. And they have been clobbered because of the misperception that our whole coast is knee deep in oil. The-- the-- the news media could have differentiated between what's going on in Louisiana and what's happened to us.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): All right.

GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR: But it chose not to.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, we have a lot-- maybe come back to you if we have time in a minute. But, we're going to take a break now and come back and talk to Governor Bob Riley of Alabama and Governor Charlie Crist of Florida in a moment.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And we're back now with Governor Riley of Alabama and Governor Crist of Florida. Governor Riley, to you first. Well Governor Barbour says it hadn't been all that bad around the shore of his state. How is it in Alabama?

GOVERNOR BOB RILEY (R-Alabama): Well, it got a lot worse last night. We had a lot of oil come on to the Orange Beach and the Gulf shores. And it's-- it's a liquid and it's very difficult to pick it up mechanically, it's very difficult to have-- to pick it up physically. But, we can clean it up. We're trying to find something to help coagulate it today so we can pick it up. But, what Haley said a moment ago was absolutely true. What the media has done is portray this whole Gulf Coast area as being knee deep in oil and we do have some challenges. There's no question about it. But, most of the experience of coming to the Gulf Coast is still as great as it's ever been. And we won't encourage people to continue to calm down. You know, there's not a day

that goes by we don't get a hundred telephone calls or thousand telephone calls saying what can we do? I hope the greatest thing you can do right now is come on down, rent a condo, stay in a hotel, go out to eat, play golf, and enjoy the south.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, the President's coming down there tomorrow. What are you going to tell him? What do you want the government to do and-- and how do you think the government has done on this so far?

GOVERNOR BOB RILEY: Well, Bob, if you look back over the last fifty days, one of the things that I think has been a great challenge for us is this unified command. Everyone keeps talking about having a unified command where we all agree. But what we have done is bring all of the federal partners in together and essentially we're trying to manage this through a committee form. And, it's a committee where any one member has absolute veto power. I don't think you can do that. I think we're going to have to set priorities. We're going to have to implement a plan to achieve those goals if we're going to get through this. And, I'm not too sure when we have this many participants trying to come up with a unified approach that it's going to work.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well-- well, what are you suggesting here that the government somehow just take over this from BP and give all the orders from here on in or-- or-- or-- tell me what-- what you think might work?

GOVERNOR BOB RILEY: Well, you know, I don't know how many times I've heard people interviewed, whether it's a mayor from Louisiana or someone in Alabama or Mississippi, but the one thing is we don't know where to go. It's like the claims process that we were talking about a moment ago. There are so many people in the State of Alabama today that just literally have not gone out and filed legitimate claims to be compensated by BP because they think that ultimately BP is the arbiter and so many people tell me, well, it's just a waste of time. We actually ask our Alabama National Guard to go out and help people fill out these forms for one reason--is they are talking to someone other than BP. And all of a sudden, we're trying to say this is a credible claim and it's a credible claim because someone with no vested interest looked at it.

BOB SCHIEFFER: What about-- are you getting enough of this boom? I understand at one point you were a little upset that you weren't getting enough.

GOVERNOR BOB RILEY: Well, I'm still upset about it because every state started off with essentially the same amount of this protective boom. But then, again our unified command went something like this, Bob. BP said go double boom, triple boom, do whatever you want to. We will pay for it. Then someone in the Coast Guard made a decision, no, we need this more in another state than we do in Alabama. This is after we had a plan that I think would've protected our coast. It was a finite amount of boom and once it left, we knew that we would never get it back. And we didn't. So now we're having to implement another plan that won't ever be as successful as the original plan all because someone in the hierarchy or in the chain of command made a decision that they were going to shift the resources.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right, well, Governor, I want to thank you very much for being so candid with us this morning. We obviously wish you the-- the very best in-- in resolving this thing.

Let's go now over to Florida. Governor Crist is out on one of those beautiful Florida beaches. Governor, how worried are you--

GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST (I-Florida) (overlapping): Yes, sir.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --about your beaches right now?

GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST: Well, I'm very concerned about them. I think that, you know, whenever you're facing a situation like this, this is the largest single environmental catastrophe that's faced our country. And so, these beautiful beaches behind me here in Seagrove Beach are-- are pristine, they are clean. Thank God, they're still that way. But, we're greatly concerned about it. That's why we've been working as hard as we can these past fifty-five days to do everything humanly possible to protect these beautiful beaches and the great people that live here and their businesses.

BOB SCHIEFFER: So what are you going to tell the President when he comes down there tomorrow? What do you need from him?

GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST: Well, number one, it's good that he's coming again. I think that's very, very important, Bob. Whenever the President of the United States comes in to an affected area, questions get answered more quickly, assets get deployed more rapidly, and there is a greater focus and attention where it needs to be right now and that's the Gulf States.

So I think it's important that he continue to come down. That kind of focus only helps all of us. You know, whether you're in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana or in my Florida, it's important to have a leader of the free world come down here and pay attention to what's happening. So, we're grateful that he is.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, now, Governor Riley just said what they need is more of-- of that boom, those barriers that they're able to put out there. What do you need in Florida?

GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST: We have a lot of boom. We're going to need a lot more and skimmers as well. I just talked to Admiral Thad Allen yesterday evening requesting more skimmers for off the coast of Florida. We have some that's starting to encroach about three to four miles off Pensacola Beach, some of that thicker sludge, if you will. And we're very concerned about that. More skimmers will help us. But in addition, we have over three hundred and thirty-one thousand feet of boom already deployed in Florida, about another a hundred and eighty thousand feet of boom that is staged or stored, if you will and at the ready.

As many of those assets that we can have to protect our beaches, the better off we're going to be. But I also want to emphasize, this is a great wake-up call for everybody in America about the danger of fossil fuel and what it's doing to our country. And that we have to go to alternative energies. You know, like wind, solar, nuclear, other things that are more clean that don't threaten our way of life. And frankly here in Florida, our economy, because in Florida, as you know, Bob, the environment and our economy are inextricably linked in this huge industry we call tourism.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, what about this idea that Governor Barbour has advanced that we need to stop this moratorium because we need to get back to drilling and because we put a lot of people out of work in Mississippi and Alabama? Do you have that problem in Florida? Is there that much of an oil industry there?

GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST: No, there's not. And-- and-- and I dare say that, you know, we need this moratorium. Look, if this spew in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico doesn't tell us that

we need to be more cautious and more careful about doing this in the future, I don't know what else would. I mean, you know, we don't have these rigs off the Florida coast. We are suffering from the one off the Louisiana coast and it troubles me greatly that that's occurring. That's why I think this is the greatest wake-up call ever that we need to go to alternative fuel. We need to have cleaner fuel for our people. That'll create greater independence and stop sending so much money over to the Middle East.

BOB SCHIEFFER: This idea that Admiral Allen advanced this morning, apparently, the administration is going to tell BP they want to set aside this escrow account. They'll have to fund it. And then a third party, an independent party, will decide how to-- to administer that money. Does that strike you as a good idea?

GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST: I think it is a good idea. I think setting aside as much funds as possible in order to make sure that we can make our people as whole as possible is extremely important right now. You know, I'm not a scientist. My fellow governors aren't, neither is the President. So, we don't have the knowledge to plug the hole, but what we can do is focus on making the people whole and their businesses throughout the Gulf States as much as we can. And that really is mission one in addition to protecting our beaches with boom and skimmers.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you think that the media has misrepresented what's going on down there as far as your state is concerned, Governor?

GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST: Well, I-- I can tell you this. The beaches behind me are-- are gorgeous, Bob. They really are pristine, the water is clean, the fish are biting. People need to continue to please come down to the beautiful sunshine state of Florida. Go to our restaurants, go to our hotels. They're open and eager for business. This is such an important time for the tourist season especially here in northwest Florida.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Can you envision a time when you might have to close those beaches?

GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST: Well, I can but I don't want to. But-- you know, I'm an optimist, Bob, but I'm also a realist. And I understand that, that plume that's Pensacola right now, it's never been closer to our beach. So, we have a first duty--the health, safety and welfare of our people. And if it gets to a point where we have to close the beach, we'll do so. But, right now, no beaches are closed in our sunshine state.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right, well, governors, I want to thank all the three of you for being with us this morning. There's nothing like getting a report from the people on the scene that are dealing with the problem.

We'll be back in a moment with some final thoughts.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: Finally today, Abraham Lincoln once said, "You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time." To that, I would add, you can't please some of the people any of the time, which I was reminded of this week when I read a letter to the editor of the Washington Post complaining of all things about the national spelling bee and the attention it gets in the media.

The writer said that with all the spelling help available on the internet, it is no longer necessary to spell all that well anymore. Instead, the writer says, we should be training our children to think analytically about solving world problems. Analytic thinking is always good but by that logic you could also argue we don't need to train pilots as much as we used to because most of the time a plane is in the air, it's on computer-run autopilot.

Full disclosure here, you're hearing this from a guy who held the title of the worst speller at the Fort Worth Star-Telegram until they hired a kid who spelled "gesture," "jester." But before we assign global warming and what to do about Guantanamo to this year's spelling bee contestants, I think they need to learn to express themselves with more subtly, skill, and recognizable words than you need in your usual text message. They'll get to the world's problems soon enough and maybe I'm old fashioned. But I think knowing a little grammar and spelling might come in handy in explaining their solutions to these world problems.

Back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And that's it for this week. We'll be back right here next week, same time, same bat-channel for FACE THE NATION.

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