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

CBS News

FACE THE NATION

Sunday, July 6, 2008

GUESTS: Senator John Kerry
Democrat, Massachusetts

Senator Lindsey Graham
Republican, South Carolina

MODERATOR/PANELIST: Mr. 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, Senator Obama says he'll "refine" his position on Iraq. McCain's people say it's more than that. Throughout the primary season, Senator Obama told voters he would begin to withdraw US troops from Iraq immediately.

Senator BARACK OBAMA: And as president I will end the war in Iraq and I will bring our troops home within 16 months.

SCHIEFFER: But now he says he'll refine his policies after meeting with US commanders there this summer. What does this really mean? How will this affect his race against Senator McCain?

We'll talk about that and a lot more with two key insiders: Obama supporter and former Democratic nominee Senator John Kerry, who's just back from a visit to the Middle East, and Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, a co-chairman of the McCain campaign.

Then I'll have a final thought on the main thing we should remember on the Fourth of July.

But first, Kerry and Graham 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 on this Fourth of July weekend. With us from Boston, Senator John Kerry. With us from Clemson, South Carolina, Senator Lindsey Graham.

Senator Kerry, I want to begin with you because you are a big supporter now of Barack Obama.

Senator JOHN KERRY (Democrat, Massachusetts): Right.

SCHIEFFER: Senator Obama's been saying he'll begin an immediate withdrawal of the American forces in Iraq once he becomes president. If he does, here's the way he put it back in March:

Sen. OBAMA: (From March 19, 2008) In order to end this war responsibly, I will immediately begin to remove our troops from Iraq. We can responsibly remove one to two combat brigades each month. If we start with the number of brigades we have in Iraq today, we can remove all of them in 16 months.

SCHIEFFER: But last week he seemed to have a slightly different take. Here's what he said last week.

Sen. OBAMA: (From July 3, 2008) When I go to Iraq and I have a chance to talk to some of the commanders on the ground, I'm sure I'll have more information and will continue to refine my policies.

SCHIEFFER: So is this a change in policy? Some in the McCain campaign go so far as to say it is a flip-flop? Senator Kerry, explain for us.

Sen. KERRY: Well, the Republicans and John McCain specifically are trying desperately to get away from the reality of John McCain's position, which is that he has a plan for staying in Iraq and Barack Obama has a plan for getting out of Iraq. Barack Obama has a plan for ending the war, John McCain has a plan for continuing the war. And he has said so very clearly dozens and dozens of times. What the McCain campaign is trying to do is take the normal statement of anybody smart enough to be president of the United States and ready to be president, who says he'll refine--may refine tactically what you might decide to do over the course of that withdrawal, and how you protect American troops, and how you in fact get the Iraqi army to stand up faster. But it is no change whatsoever in his fundamental determination to end the war. John McCain, on the other hand, has proven that he's been wrong about every judgment he's made about the war. Wrong about the Iraqis paying for the reconstruction, wrong about whether or not the oil would pay for it, wrong about Sunni and Shia violence through the years, wrong about the willingness of the Iraqis to stand up for themselves, wrong even about his own judgment about timelines, etc. Which he's now changed.

SCHIEFFER: All right, so--let's let...

Sen. KERRY: So they're just--they're--Bob, the bottom line is, they're trying very hard to make an issue where there really isn't one and where the contrast could not be more forceful.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, let's go to Senator Graham here, because Senator, what Barack Obama is saying here, he's saying he's going to listen to the commanders on the ground. That is exactly what Senator McCain has been telling him he ought to do. But instead of saying 'That's a good thing you've done, there, Senator,' the people in your campaign are now saying, 'This is some kind of a flip-flop,' 'Here he goes shifting his position again.' Why has the campaign come down so hard on him about this?

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM (Republican, South Carolina): Well, I hope he will go to Iraq and listen to the commanders and evaluate the progress. He hasn't been since January 2006, and I guess what disturbs most of us here is that, during the primary season, he was as hard over as you could be about leaving Iraq, ending the war now. We've been hard over about winning the war. John McCain has come up with a strategy called the surge, Bob, that worked. Senator Obama said not only it wouldn't work, it would make things worse. He's had a position on Iraq that's been a very strong political calculation. That is that 'I'm going to align myself with MoveOn.org, I'm going to left know I'm going to end this war.' Two weeks ago, he meets with a foreign minister in Iraq. The foreign minister begs him not to implement this irresponsible plan and announces to the world that, after talking with Senator Obama, he thinks Senator Obama and McCain are on the same sheet of music.

He holds a second news conference after everybody jumps on him about changing his position about listening to commanders, and here's what he says shortly after the first news conference. "Let me be clear as I can be. I intend to end this war. My first day in office, I will bring the Joint Chiefs of Staff in, and I will give them a new mission. That is to end the war, responsibly, deliberately, but decisively." So I don't know what he's going to do. He's in a box. He ran hard to the left during the primary. The surge he said would fail has worked. He's now going to Iraq after two and a half years, and he's in a box. If he comes back from Iraq and says, 'This thing hasn't worked, you need to pull all the troops out,' he will look irresponsible, and he doesn't know how to handle that.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, let me go back to Senator Kerry.

Sen. KERRY: Well, Bob--yeah.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just say one thing, because I was very struck, Senator Kerry, by the line you took just now. I remember back in 2004, when you were thinking seriously--people were talking about you adding John McCain, a Republican, as your running mate. Now that--it didn't come down to that, and we all know that, but that was the talk, and there was serious consideration, I know. Yet now, you're being very hard, it seems to me. This is not the first time you have said that John McCain didn't understand the lessons...

Sen. KERRY: Right.

SCHIEFFER: ...of 9/11. You've said he...

Sen. KERRY: Well, let me...

SCHIEFFER: ...didn't understand the Middle East. What's happened here?

Sen. KERRY: Right.

SCHIEFFER: Has John McCain changed or have you changed?

Sen. KERRY: Yes.

SCHIEFFER: What's happened here?

Sen. KERRY: John McCain.

SCHIEFFER: John McCain?

Sen. KERRY: John McCain has changed in profound and fundamental ways that I find, personally, really surprising and, frankly, upsetting. He is not the John McCain as the senator who defined himself, quote, "as a maverick," though questionable. This is a different John McCain. This is, you know, not the Senator John McCain, this is "nomination John McCain." This is "wannabe president" John McCain. And the result is that John McCain has flip-flopped on more issues than, you know, I was even ever accused possibly of thinking about. I mean, this is extraordinary, what he's done. He's changed on taxes. He's now in favor of the Bush tax cut. If you like the Bush economy, if you like the Bush tax cut and what it's done to our economy, making wealthier people wealthier and the average middle class struggle harder, then John McCain's going to give you a third term of George Bush and Karl Rove. If you like what has happened to oil prices, John McCain is going to continue that policy. If you like what you've seen about health care, John McCain has no health care plan. I would've at least expected the John McCain that I knew back then to realize...

SCHIEFFER: Well...

Sen. KERRY: ...what almost every person in the Pentagon has admitted. I mean, Bob, you're smart, you've talked to these people in Washington. There are very few people who walk around and say, 'Going into Iraq was the right thing to do and we should've done it. I'd do it again if I had the chance.' John McCain does. John McCain believes this was the right decision.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let...

Sen. KERRY: He said, you know, you can't--I have to tell you, Bob, I just came back from the Middle East. I just met with the king of Saudi Arabia. I met with President Mubarak of Egypt. I met with others. You know what they said to me? They said, 'You, America, have served up to Iran, Iraq on a platter.' They are outraged by this sort of, you know, ineptitude of what has been done by those who decided it was smart to go into Iraq.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask you one question here.

Sen. KERRY: And they have turned away--yeah.

SCHIEFFER: Before we--before--because we are going to talk about--are you now challenging Senator McCain's integrity?

Sen. KERRY: I'm challenging Senator McCain's judgment, his judgment that says there's no violence history between Sunni and Shia. That's wrong. His judgment that says this is going to increase the stability of the Middle East. It hasn't. It's made it less stable. The judgment that says this will, quote "This will be the best thing for America and the world in a long time."

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. KERRY: It's the worst thing that we've done in a long time.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. KERRY: And he's turned his eye away from Afghanistan and al-Qaeda and made America less safe.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. KERRY: That's dangerous for our country.

SCHIEFFER: We're going to have to take a break here. We'll come back and talk about this and a lot more in just a minute. One minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Well, we're back now with Senators John Kerry and Lindsey Graham.

And, Senator Graham, I guess the question to you is simply what about that?

Sen. GRAHAM: Well, I, you know, I don't think John's going to be asked to run as Senator Kerry's vice president anymore if he runs again. But let me just--Iraq is important. John understood we were losing in Iraq, quite frankly. That after Baghdad fell, we had the wrong strategy in place. And John above anybody else in the country spoke against his own administration, argued with Rumsfeld that we didn't have enough troops. It's not just a few dead-enders. And he risked his own political career to turn it around. The surge. Senator Obama did not support the surge. He said it wouldn't work. He's been calling for a withdrawal of troops. He was wrong. The big test for this country is how do you avoid losing in Iraq? If we were to listen to Barack Obama, we would've lost. If we listen to him now, we will lose in the future and undercut all the gains we've made. We're winning because John McCain understood Iraq better than anybody else. The surge has worked. The political, economic and military progress in Iraq is undeniable. The biggest loser in Iraq is al-Qaeda because the Muslims in Iraq joined with us and turned on them and they've punished al-Qaeda in Iraq. Anytime a Muslim will take up arms against bin Laden sympathizers, we're all safer. The biggest loser in the future is going to be Iran. The Shia militia supported by Iran have been turned on by the Maliki government. The Iraqi Army is performing much, much better. Their economy is growing. And still, to this day, you don't know what Barack Obama really wants to do. He is in a bind. He said things that didn't bear fruit, and he doesn't know how to change. Al-Qaeda's on their knees. Iran's being contained by a--by a stronger, more democratic, more effective Iraq. And the only way we can lose this war now is to go down the road that Obama suggests, and that's pulling out, sending a signal to al-Qaeda don't give up hope, telling Iran you can still--you can still fill the vacuum you created in Iraq. The enemy's on their knees, and the only person talking in a way to get them off their knees is Barack Obama...

SCHIEFFER: Let me...

Sen. GRAHAM: ...and I hope the American people will reject him.

Sen. KERRY: With all due respect, Bob, Bob...

SCHIEFFER: Let me--let me--Senator, you are just back from that part of the...

Sen. KERRY: I have to respond to that.

SCHIEFFER: ...you are just back from that part of the world.

Sen. KERRY: Yeah. I am.

SCHIEFFER: I'm going to let you respond. What about this situation that Iran is being contained now?

Sen. KERRY: Iran, that's not what you hear from everybody over there, including our friends, the Israelis. They are deeply, deeply concerned about Iran. They believe Iran has expanded its influence throughout the region. Iran is now more powerfully integrated with Hamas, more powerfully integrated and influential in Syria and with Hezbollah. Iran is proceeding now in ways that were unimaginable until we invaded Iraq and basically did what they said, which is provide the Shia with the ability to do what they haven't been able to do in 1200 years, gain a position of dominance over the Sunni. All of their Sunni neighbors are deeply upset by that, and

deeply concerned about Iran's intentions. And the fact is, Lindsey doesn't want to admit this, the Republicans don't want to admit this. They hide behind the surge.

The fact is that none of us doubted the ability of American troops in increased numbers to provide increased levels of security here and there. But that's not what has changed the fundamental dynamic with respect to al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda has been pushed back because the Sunni in the Sunni Triangle made a political decision, a political decision before our troops even got there, to work with the United States and turn against al-Qaeda, and they decided not to harbor them in their villages anymore, because they were tired of their violence. The principal reason today for that transition is, number one, the Sunni awakening, the willing of the Sunnis, and our smart--General Petraeus has been smart. We trained them, we've armed them, but the Shia are very nervous about that. The fact is, the fundamental political reconciliation necessary in Iraq is not happening. But secondly, look where the army was successful. When Prime Minister Maliki sent them in to Basra, he sent them there because the British had pulled back to the air base, and it was necessary for the Iraqis to stand up. That's a success. Barack Obama has never, ever talked about pulling the rug out from under them or just pulling out. He has said, 'We will leave people sufficient to continue to prosecute al-Qaeda, we will leave people to finish the training, and we will leave people to protect American facilities and forces, but we're not going to have American combat troops on the front lines, six years later, fighting a civil war in the middle of a political cauldron that their leadership is unwilling to resolve.'

SCHIEFFER: Let me...

Sen. KERRY: That's what this is about.

SCHIEFFER: OK, let me...

Sen. KERRY: And the surge--the surge was set up to resolve that...

SCHIEFFER: Let me--let me...

Sen. KERRY: ...and it hasn't resolved it.

SCHIEFFER: Let me ask one question here. You're just back from that region. There's talk that the Israelis, as you say, are concerned about Iran...

Sen. KERRY: Right.

SCHIEFFER: ...and that the Israelis might attack, launch airstrikes on some of the Iranian nuclear facilities. Would you urge them not to do that, or would you stand aside if they decided to, Senator Kerry? What would Obama's position be on that?

Sen. KERRY: Well, you ask me what I would do, and what Obama would do. I think that--let me--let me speak for myself. I think--I know that a President Obama will take no option off the table.

SCHIEFFER: OK.

Sen. KERRY: A President Obama will always have the military option there. But I would certainly say to him--and I did say to the Israelis that I talked to--that it would be very unwise to proceed rapidly to a military choice not having yet exhausted all of the remedies available to us in terms of...

SCHIEFFER: OK.

Sen. KERRY: ...diplomacy and options and coercion.

SCHIEFFER: All right, let me interrupt right there...

Sen. KERRY: And we need to do that.

SCHIEFFER: ...and ask Senator Graham, what would you advise the Israelis to do right now, Senator Graham?

Sen. GRAHAM: Well, my advice to the world, not just the Israelis, is confront the Iranian desires to develop a nuclear weapon by imposing sanctions that are meaningful. They import gasoline. The Iranian economy is weak. Not just the Israelis, but the Russians and the Chinese to join with the United States and Europe to stop this regime that seems to be hell-bent on acquiring a nuclear weapon. The Iranian efforts in Iraq have been contained and diminished because of the surge. Senator Obama loves to reinvent himself almost every month. In January of 2007, he said the surge not only would not work, it would make things worse. He's been committed to withdrawing troops until we made him go to Iraq.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. GRAHAM: He hadn't been to Iraq in two years. Now he's got to go listen to the commander tell him about the success we've gained. He's in a box. He said that Iran was a bigger threat than the Soviet Union. Now he says they're not that big of a threat.

SCHIEFFER: All right. We've got to--we've got to cut it right there, Senator. We'll be back in one minute. We have to work in these commercials.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Now we're back again with Senators John Kerry and Lindsey Graham for what has been, should I say, a very spirited discussion, mostly about Iraq.

I want to shift just a little bit. President Bush is in Japan today for the G8 Economic Summit Conference. And at a news conference this morning, he defended his decision to go to the opening ceremonies at the Olympics. Here's what he said.

President GEORGE W. BUSH: (Network technical difficulties)...people.

SCHIEFFER: Well, what he actually said was that it would be an insult to the Chinese people if he did not go to the opening ceremonies. Should he be going to that opening ceremony, Senator Kerry?

Sen. KERRY: I think it's--look, that's a very discretionary kind of choice. I think we've been through, you know, politicizing the Olympics. I think if he goes to China and says the important things that need to be said to the Chinese, then it can be turned into something worthwhile. The bottom line is I think that this administration's efforts over the last years with China have been sporadic. We haven't taken advantage of a lot of opportunities. The Chinese want to be serious partners with us in a lot of things, and I think we could be doing a lot better, and I suspect that President Obama will do better.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Let's see what Senator Graham has to say.

Sen. GRAHAM: I guess the real issue is should you boycott the Olympics, and the answer to me has always been no. This is a moment in time for athletes of the world to come together. China is very much a mixed bag. They've helped us with North Korea. Thank God we had the six-party talks. We're making progress in North Korea because China has helped, but they're doing some bad things in Tibet. It's a very mixed bag, so I'm not going to criticize the president for going to the...

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. GRAHAM: ...to the opening ceremony. And John's right, he should let them know he has serious differences. But China has definitely helped with North Korea.

SCHIEFFER: All right. We're nearly at the end here, but I want to ask both of you about Guantanamo. After the Supreme Court ruling that prisoners there have a right to demand in court that they be shown the evidence as to why they should be held, they're going to have to do something about all those prisoners down there. Everybody agrees about that. Some are going to be brought to trial apparently. Some are going to be returned to their home countries. But there's probably 100 or so down there that they really haven't decided what they're going to do with them, and they're dangerous people. What do you think should be done about Guantanamo? And what does Senator McCain think, Senator Graham?

Sen. GRAHAM: Well, I think we need to look at Guantanamo Bay through the law of armed conflict lens, not through the criminal lens. They're not domestic criminals, they're warriors committed to our destruction. They should be treated under the law of armed conflict. Once you've been properly identified to be an enemy combatant, a military threat to the country, then there's no requirement to release you. If you've committed a war crime, I think the military should do the trial in the military commission setting. If you can repatriate people, fine; but 30 have been released and gone back to the fight. One became a suicide bomber in Iraq. So I want the military to do the trials, and if you've been properly identified to be an enemy combatant, there's no requirement to let you go.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. GRAHAM: Some of these people are going to die in jail because they're too dangerous to let go.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Senator Kerry. And I only have 20 seconds. I'm very sorry.

Sen. KERRY: Well, I think Guantanamo should've been shut. It should be shut now. It never should've existed. I think the administration has really put a blot on American values by not trying these people from the beginning. And I agree with Lindsey in terms of the military component of it. They could've been tried in the field. They could've been tried as combatants where they were. But to have gone through these years at Guantanamo without forwarding any kind of legitimacy for rights, it really runs against America's values. We should try people. Try them, convict them, and if they deserve to be executed on the basis of that finding, then that's what we should do.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. KERRY: It should've been done outside of Guantanamo. It should've been done ages ago. And Guantanamo should be shut and that's a priority, I think, for an Obama administration.

SCHIEFFER: All right. That's where we have to leave it.

I'll be back with a final word in just a moment. Thank you both, gentlemen.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And finally today, some thoughts on this July Fourth weekend. In his wonderful book "Founding Brothers," historian Joe Ellis says of the American Revolution that, quote, "No event in American history, which was so improbably at the time, has seen so inevitable in retrospect. As we think back on the rightness of America's cause, we find it hard to believe that the revolution could've come out any other way." Yet, as Ellis writes, when the Declaration of Independence was signed, the signers had no idea how the revolution would end. The most likely outcome was failure. No matter the rightness of the cause, the signers were defying the most powerful nation in the world, and no colony had ever successfully broken away from a mother country. Revolution after revolution against imperialist powers followed our revolution; but, until ours, none had succeeded. All the signers of our declaration knew for certain was that if it failed, they would hang. Somehow, they won. On the Fourth of July, we celebrate, as we should, the wisdom and the vision of the founders and the way, in one document, that Thomas Jefferson was able to summarize the aspirations of all people--the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But let us never forget the one thing that made all the rest of it and what came after it possible--courage, the courage of those who bet their very lives on a project that all signs suggested would fail. There was nothing inevitable about the American Revolution.

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

