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



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TRANSCRIPT

BOB SCHIEFFER: Today on FACE THE NATION, the President's top national security adviser, Jim Jones, on North Korea, Afghanistan, and closing Guantanamo Bay.

Former President Bill Clinton surprise visit to North Korea, Tuesday, helps secure the release of two American journalists, Laura Ling and Euna Lee. But what happens now? Could this lead to new nuclear weapons talks? We will ask the national security adviser, Jim Jones.

And one of those reports that U.S. commanders in Afghanistan want more troops. We'll bring in the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, and key Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina. I'll have a final word on the "plane" truth--is Congress trying to buy planes the Pentagon doesn't want, to fly members of Congress around.

But first, General Jim Jones 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.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And good morning again, General Jones is in the studio with us this morning.

Thank you very much for coming, General. You went to Afghanistan back in June, you took reporter Bob Woodward along on the trip, and afterwards he reported that you told the commanders there they would have to make due with what they had. Yet, every day brings a new report that General McChrystal, the top American commander on the ground there, is preparing a new assessment and it appears that he is going to ask for more troops. We hear that from various people, Anthony Cordesman from CSIS is just back from there. He says we have set impossible goals. We set impossible time frames. He says you are going to have to have more resources. Are you getting ready to consider putting more troops into Afghanistan?

GENERAL JAMES JONES, RETIRED (National Security Adviser): We -- first of all, it is a pleasure to be with you, thank you very much for having me. The fact is-- and I'll get to my remarks on what-- what-- what the intention was, but the fact is that in-- in March, we announced a-- a very comprehensive strategy that everybody participated in. That strategy has essentially three legs--more security, followed by economic development, followed by better governance from the-- at the local levels in Afghanistan. And buttressed by more-- more rapid development of the Afghan army and the Afghan police. So we want to put an Afghan capacity together as quickly as possible. We have over forty nations on the ground, we have all of the international organizations you could want, from the U.N. to NATO, to E.U., the World Bank, the IMF, and nongovernmental organizations. And Afghanistan will be solved by-- by a-- a better coordination of-- of these-- these elements. The-- the troops strength is an important piece of it, and my message to General McChrystal and to the commanders when I-- when I went there was to say, think about-- think about the total strategy that we've all agreed to. General McChrystal is conducting an assessment at the request of secretary of defense. They -- the Defense Department will evaluate what General McChrystal has to say. And in due time, it'll come up for a decision by the President.

But I did not say--I want to be clear on this--I did not say that-- that-- that troops strength is off the table for discussion. What I did say is that we have yet to be able to measure the implementation of the new strategy, so if you-- if you have recommendations make it in the context of the new strategy. This-- we have learned one thing in six years, we-- this-- this is not just about troop strength.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, but that sounds like you are getting us ready for sending more troops to Afghanistan.

GENERAL JAMES JONES (overlapping): Well, let me-- let me put another thing on the table here. When the President made his decision, there were additional troops that were on the charts that the-- the secretary of defense said at the time, "Mister President, you do not have to make this decision now, this is something we can consider later after we measure the implementation of our strategy." So we will have discussions as the-- as the weeks and months go by. The big thing for us now is to make sure that the strategy is being implemented, we've got new commanders, we've got new diplomats, we've got Mister Richard Holbrooke, who is supervising a theater enga-- engagement.

It is not just about Afghanistan, it's about Pakistan and what is going on there.

BOB SCHIEFFER: But, General, we have been there how long? Six years--

GENERAL JAMES JONES (overlapping): Exactly.

BOB SCHIEFFER --and it's like-- it's like-- it sounds like you-- you're talking about we just got there.

GENERAL JAMES JONES: No, no, no. We-- I-- I have been involved in this for six years also.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Well, how-- how bad is it there? Every rewar-- report we have is that it's worse than it's ever been. That it has become sort of a sinkhole and now-- and now you are trying to develop yardsticks to find out how well we are doing. When are we going to know how we are doing, even?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: We will-- that-- that's a very good question, and it is a fair question. I-- this is my opinion. My opinion was that we did not have a well-articulated strategy until March of this year. We had a strategy for security. We had a stra-- a little bit of a strategy for economic development, which was other people's problems, and we had a strategy that-- that may be addressed a little bit of governance and the rule of law. This strategy merges all of -- all of-- all of those three things.

We're also-- we're-- we're definitely going to, in conjunction with our allies, develop the Afghan army at a faster rate and the Afghan police, so that we can have Afghans in charge of their own destiny in a shorter period of time.

So, yes, we have been there six years. But if you go back to the overall history of it, and you look at the three pillars that needed-- need to be developed, security has always been done reasonably well, although we have had a back-- some backsliding since 2007, but the other two have been allowed to not develop as quickly. So in conjunction with our allies, and I want to make sure that-- that I make this point as well, this is not just a U.S. problem. This is a-- an international problem, and-- and we cannot-- we-- we-- I-- I think we have the strategy and we will shortly see, and-- and I mean within a year, whether this strategy is working and then we'll-- we'll adjust from there.

BOB SCHIEFFER: We'll know in a year if the new strategy--

GENERAL JAMES JONES (overlapping): Within-- within the year, we will see--

BOB SCHIEFFER: --is working?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: And we have the metrics to evaluate this strategy. The Congress has mandated them. We were going to do them anyway. The President has said, "I want regular reports as to how we're doing."

BOB SCHIEFFER: But so far it isn't working? Would that be fair to say?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: Well, it's only-- it's only been three months old.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Well, I mean, the previous strategy?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: We don't even have-- the-- the troop strength that has been agreed has not even arrived there, so-- so my benchmark is this administration, in March, committed to a new strategy. We involved Afghanistan. We involved Pakistan. We involved NATO, the allies. We had the NATO summit, where the allies had a-- a new--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): So let me see if I can just sum this up here

GENERAL JAMES JONES: --a new attitude.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You're going to develop a new strategy--

GENERAL JAMES JONES (overlapping): We've had it.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --and --and you have a new strategy going, and you may have to send more troops to Afghanistan? You're not, at least, going to rule that out at this point?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: I-- I won't rule-- we-- we won't rule anything out--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): All right.

GENERAL JAMES JONES: --that stands to reason, but-- but it is fair to say that that once we agree on a new strategy, we want-- we want to make sure that-- that it is-- has a chance to be evaluated.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Okay.

GENERAL JAMES JONES: And if-- if things come up where we need to adjust one way or the other, and it involves troops or it involves more incentives--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): But isn't--

GENERAL JAMES JONES: --for economic development or-- or better assistance to help the Afghan government-- government function, we'll do that.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Now-- now what was it, last weekend, that Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, flew-- flew out to meet with General McChrystal?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: Correct.

BOB SCHIEFFER: That suggests there may be some sort of-- we may be in some sort of crisis mode. This was a secret trip that wasn't announced until after they completed it. Would you think-- would you say that things in Afghanistan at this point are at a crisis level?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: Well, we're-- we're coming up to a very important election. We have, I think, a-- no, I don't think-- I don't think we're at a crisis level, in terms of-- or that there's going to be any movement on the ground by the Taliban that's going to overthrow the government. We're going to have, I think, a good election. The signs are that it's going to be-- the instruments of security are-- are being well thought out. I think, with-- with the success that we've had on the Pakistan side of the border, which we can talk about if you like, and the growing troop strength by-- by the U.S. and-- and some allies on the Afghan side, I think-- I-- I think the security aspect of things is going to get-- is going to get better. There's going to be a little bit more fighting. Unfortunately, we're taking more casualties, but if we're able to marry up the other two legs of this three-legged stool that I mentioned, put things that will change the-- the economic forecast for the Afghan people on the ground, put Afghan troops, Afghan police in-- in the villages languages and towns, I think that's the-- that's the-- that's the future.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Let me ask you about this situation in Pakistan. Mehsud, the top Taliban man-- I heard you say earlier today that we're ninety percent sure that we got him. Now, how important is that?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: Well, I think it is very important. First of all, it's important because this is Pakistan's public enemy number one, if I could. He has-- he controls a very violent aspect of the-- the insurgent problems in-- in-- on the Pakistani side of the border. And this would be-- this is a big deal, and--

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Let's-- let's talk, a little bit about the developments in North Korea. Former President Clinton went there. He got these people. We now know that it was the North Koreans that said, if you'll send him, we'll-- we'll let these two young Americans go. We also know that, because I've heard you all-- already report this, that the President, former President, did have conversations with them on a variety of subjects. What happens now? Do we -- do we expect some development here now?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: Well, we hope so. President Clinton did have the opportunity to talk to the North Korean leader and suggest that the happy scene that was carried out in California with the unification of families could have happened with the detainee from South Korea in-- in Seoul or in Tokyo with-- with the Japanese abductees and-- and he represented our desire to have them released as well. I think that, obviously, with his-- as the former President, with his father, the-- the Korean leader's father, was-- had eight years of experience with dealing with North Korea, and he was able to, in his own way-- be, I hope, persuasive that there is a better way, there is a better path, but it's clear that-- that the-- couple of things are clear. One is that we sent no official or unofficial message from-- from our government, so there was no--there's nothing secretive here, that North Korea knows that the path to talking is through the-- the six party process, and that within that six party process--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): They seem to want to have some sort of one-on-one dialogue with the United States. Would we be willing to do that?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: Sure within the context of the six party talks.

BOB SCHIEFFER: What does that mean?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: Meaning if they come back to the talks, we will talk to them bilaterally within-- within those talks. We have coordinated all of this, by the way, with the other allies--the Chinese, the Russians, the South Koreans, the Japanese. So the-- the path is clear, and President Clinton is a very convincing gentleman and-- and I hope-- I hope he was able to convince them.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Let me ask you this, General. Why do you think-- why do you think the North Korean leader wanted to do this? Was he trying to impress his own people? Was he trying to impress his military that, look, I can get a former President of the United States to come over here. That shows you that I am still a strong and vibrant leader? Or was he trying to impress the rest of the world? What was that all about?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: You know, I'd-- I'd be guessing. You know, internally, he-- he can manipulate this any way he wants, but as far as the rest of the world, I think that we are clear on what it was and what it wasn't.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And-- and what it was?

GENERAL JAMES JONES: What it was, is a private humanitarian mission to rescue-- rescue and obtain the release of two girls, so they could be with their families and that is President Obama's-- that-- that was his-- his goal in this.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Finally, Gitmo. Every indication is you will not be able to make the President's deadline of closing that down by the end of the year.

GENERAL JAMES JONES: This-- this is a complex issue and-- and-- and we are-- we are working on this every single day. I-- I still believe that-- that-- that we can achieve our goals, but it is a complex issue.

BOB SCHIEFFER: But you are not sure if you are going to make it?

GENERAL JAMES JONES (overlapping): I-- I-- No, I think we will. I think there are some things on the table that-- that we can't necessarily talk about right now, but hopefully there're some-- there're some signs here that-- that we will find-- we'll the right way to do this.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. General Jones, thanks for being with us and I hope you come back.

GENERAL JAMES JONES: It is a pleasure, thank you very much.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And we will be back with our round table from Congress in just a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And with us now from Clemson, South Carolina, Senator Lindsey Graham of the Armed Services Committee. And here in the studio with us, Senator Carl Levin, who is the chairman of that committee.

Let's start first with Afghanistan, where I started with General Jones. What are you going to do, Senator Levin, if the President comes to you and says we've got to have a lot more troops for Afghanistan?

SENATOR CARL LEVIN (D-Michigan, Chairman, Armed Services Committee):
Well--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Will Congress go along with that?

SENATOR CARL LEVIN: Well, it's too early to know what Congress would do. It depends on what the facts and the arguments are. It depends what our commanders in the field say. It depends also, I think, in part, what our NATO allies are willing to do. Many of them have come forth. Some of them-- a number of countries have taken some very hard hits, losses of troops, but a lot of the other NATO allies have fallen short of their commitments and we're going to put maximum pressure on them to do what they promised to do, in terms of providing trainers for the Afghan army and also providing money.

They-- they have promised a billion dollars, along with a billion euros, a long time ago, and they have only provided ten percent of that.

So, you know, Afghanistan is a little but different from Ira-- a lot different from Iraq. For one thing, Afghanistan is the place, along with the Pakistan border, that the attackers were trained and harbored, that hit us on 9/11. We took our eye off that ball when we went to Iraq, but now we've got our eye on that border. We cannot allow that border to become a safe haven again.

And something else is very significant in Afghanistan. And that is that the Afghan army is cohesive; they are motivated; they hate the Taliban. And so they have the motivation necessary. What they don't have are the numbers yet. We've got to be much, much better and quick-training of the Afghan army, because I think we've got to transfer this responsibility as quickly as we can to the Afghans.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Senator Graham, what-- what about that?

What-- what about when we put our eye back on that area along the border?

What's going to need to be done there, and how far do you think Congress is going to be willing to go?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM (Armed Services Committee): Well, your question was, what would you-- what would Congress do if the President said we needed more troops in Afghanistan?

I am one Republican that would support more troops in Afghanistan. I do believe, quite frankly-- I'll be shocked if more troops are not requested by our commanders.

Afghanistan has deteriorated. In July of last year the President said, when he was a candidate for office, that Afghanistan, not Iraq, was the central battle in the war on terror.

I disagreed then because Iraq hung in the balance. Iraq is more stable. The President is right. Afghanistan is now the central battle front on the war on terror. That means more of everything: more troops, more political engagement, more economic engagement.

Carl is right. Our NATO allies need to send more troops. The Afghan army to be doubled would be a twenty billion dolla-- twenty billion dollar appropriation over five years. America is now paying ninety percent of the Afghan army. NATO contributed their hundred million dollars when Gates passed the hat to help pay for the Afghan army, so I would urge our NATO allies to submit more troops, more funding.

And I'll be shocked if more troops are not needed. We must secure Afghanistan, and it is not secure now because we don't have enough troops.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, do you have any indication that our NATO allies are going to say anything more than, oh, it's a great idea, and we'd be happy to continue holding your hat but we're not going to help you much more?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: So what do we do after that?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Well, we-- we have to get it right. We urge our -- you know, the President has a lot of political capital throughout the world. He's come up with a new engagement strategy. Hopefully, they will reward the President by helping him.

But we've got to do it. No matter what NATO does, we've got to make sure that Afghanistan is secure for all the reasons that Carl said.

If we go-- if Afghanistan becomes a chaotic situation, it affects Pakistan. So we're going to need more of everything.

My message to my Democratic colleagues is that we made mistakes in Iraq. Let's not Rumsfeld Afghanistan. Let's don't do this thing on the cheap. Let's have enough combat power and engagement across the board to make sure we're successful. And quite frankly, we all have got a lot of ground to make up.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, I'm-- I'm going to get back to Senator Levin in just a minute, but I've got to ask you what you mean when you say "Let's don't Rumsfeld this thing."

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: We went in with a strategy to win-- to defeat the Iraqi army that worked. We never had enough troops on the ground to secure the population.

You cannot have political reconciliation, economic progress, the rule of law, when the judges and the economy is under siege by the enemy. There is too much violence. We've lost parts of Afghanistan to the Taliban.

So once we changed strategies and engaged in the surge with more military power, more of everything, we turned Iraq around. When I'm saying "Don't Rumsfeld Afghanistan," don't resist the idea that we're going to need more, because we are.

As much as it hurts me to say that, knowing that people in Iraq will come to Afghanistan to continue to fight, I think it's the only way to turn around Afghanistan.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. So where are you going to get these troops, Senator?

And the last time I heard, the government was in, kind of, a crunch for money. How do you pay for all of this?

SENATOR CARL LEVIN: We have to transfer a lot of responsibility to the Afghan army. There was a summit, a NATO summit in April. There was a commitment made to have a trainer group go to Afghanistan, by NATO countries.

We've got to put a lot of pressure on NATO allies that have so far not come through to do that. It is critically important.

The Afghan army not only needs to get to a hundred and thirty thousand which is the current goal, from their approximately eighty thousand that they're at now; they've got to double that to get to two hundred and fifty thousand.

For all of the reasons that Lindsey Graham have just given that we've got to protect the Afghan people and they have got to protect their own people from the Taliban.

And by the way, there is a lot of challenging areas in Afghanistan. But Afghanistan in many areas is safe and secure and there are certain areas where there are challenges and we have got to take those challenges on.

BOB SCHIEFFER: But would you disagree with the Senator Graham's premise that it's just going to take a lot more of everything, including U.S. troops.

SENATOR CARL LEVIN: I-- I think it is going to take a lot more of most things. I don't think we should commit at this point to more troops for two reasons.

Number one, it takes NATO allies off the hook from keeping their commitments and number two, it takes some of the pressure off of the Afghans themselves to help move that army much more quickly. We need their commanders, for instance, to have larger units in Afghanistan.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I want to ask you quickly about Guantanamo. General Jones says they still believe they can get it closed down by the end of the year. There seems to be a lot of resistance in Congress. Senator McConnell said this morning he thought there would be widespread bipartisan opposition to closing it down. Do you think it can actually be done?

SENATOR CARL LEVIN: Yeah, I think it can be done and the White House assured me as of yesterday that they are on track to get us that plan in the time required by law. You know, we have-- President Bush who said we have to close Guantanamo. We got our key military leaders, from Petraeus to our Admiral Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs say we've got to close Guantanamo. Five president-- former secretaries of state say we have to close Guantanamo because Guantanamo has been used by terrorists as a training tool.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): So, what are you going to do these people?

SENATOR CARL LEVIN: So there is a very broad consensus among some of us, the key leaders of this country that we've got-- that we need to close it, because it is a security threat as long as we keep it open.

And so now what I believe we need to do is to have the plan, which others have insisted we have and I agree, have that plan in place for transferring all of those two hundred twenty people to other places for tro-- not to release--

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Would you be willing to take some of those people in Michigan?

SENATOR CARL LEVIN: I support that, providing we have local support and the governor when we are talking about state facilities, of course, I do. You know, we should not be cowed by the terrorists so that we don't even keep them in maximum security prisons in the United States. We can't allow the terrorists to be intimidating us from trying them and keeping them in our jails.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right, we have to end it there. Senator Graham, thank you for being with us this morning. And you too, Senator Levin.

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Thank you.

SENATOR CARL LEVIN: Thank you.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: Finally today, when the leaders of the Big Three auto makers flew to Washington in their private planes last year to ask for a federal bailout, Congress was not amused. Lines of capital lawmakers heading for the microphones to denounce the auto executives got longer than the lines at airport metal detectors. Even the automakers who are hardly the role models when it comes to making swift decisions quickly figured out they had stepped in it, they sold the planes.

What did Congress figure out from all of that? Apparently, that taxpayers needed to buy more planes to haul them around. This is one of those stories where about here, we have to insert the words I am not kidding. But the House has approved spending a half billion dollars to enlarge the fleet of Air Force planes that hauls members of Congress and officials of the federal government around.

Some of this is no doubt justified. The Air Force wants two planes to replace planes that are wearing out and it wants to buy two aircraft that it is currently leasing. But the House wants to buy four more planes that the Pentagon says it doesn't need or even want. It is Congress that wants them to meet its own growing travel needs. The Wall Street Journal and we thank them for this, reports that House members spent three thousand days overseas at taxpayer expense last year.

That's nearly four times as many days they spent overseas ten years ago at a cost of thirteen million dollars which is a tenfold increase since 1995. Nothing much surprises me anymore, but when I read this stuff, I always wonder, do you think they think that no one will find out? Or is it that they just don't care? Back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And that's our broadcast. FACE THE NATION will be back right here next Sunday, same time, same place.