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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 latest on the new terror threat and the countdown to the midterm election.

The government is looking for more people in connection with Friday's cargo plane terror incident and we'll get an update from John Brennan, a White House anti-terrorism point man.

Then we'll turn to Tuesday's election. Tens of thousands of Democrats turned out in Washington yesterday, but across the country the political wind seems to be blowing the Republican way.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN BOEHNER: Now take it easy.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Are Democrats about to lose control of Congress, or can the President's last-minute efforts save the day for them? We'll talk to some of the key players. Pennsylvania's Democratic Governor Ed Rendell; Minnesota Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar; New York Republican Congressman Pete King and Republican Governor Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota.

GOVERNOR TIM PAWLENTY: --it's a good day for--

BOB SCHIEFFER: I'll have some final thoughts on two of my favorite fall pastimes--politics and college football.

MAN: And that's a touchdown.

BOB SCHIEFFER: But first, the latest on the terror threat on FACE THE NATION.

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

BOB SCHIEFFER: And we start this morning from Washington and John Brennan who is President Obama's chief counterterrorism advisor.

Mister Brennan, there's no other way to put it, the more we seem to find out about this-- these bombs that were found on these cargo planes, the more this sounds like a really close call. How powerful do you think these bombs were?

JOHN BRENNAN (White House Counterterrorism Advisor): Well, the investigation is still ongoing and the forensic analysis is being done. But I think the-- the British Assessment this time as well as the Emirates, is that, it was a very viable IED Improvised Explosive Device that could have been detonated aboard that aircraft and could have brought the-- the aircraft down.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you think that that was the objective? I mean these bombs were addressed to these synagogues in Chicago. Do you have any idea what the target was for these bombs?

JOHN BRENNAN: Well, they-- they were addressed to locations in Chicago that have been associated with synagogues. We're looking at the potential that they would have been detonated en route to those synagogues aboard the aircraft as well as at the destinations. But at

this point we, I think would agree with the British that it looks as though they were designed to be detonated in flight.

BOB SCHIEFFER: What was this all about, Mister Brennan? Is this part of some larger plot? Do you think there are more bombs out there? What-- what was going on here?

JOHN BRENNAN: Well, as you know, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is a group that we've been following for quite some time. We believe they were responsible for the underwear bomber last Christmas, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab. They were responsible for trying to assassinate the Prince Muhammad bin Nayef in Saudi Arabia. And they've been very vocal in their threats against U.S. interests in determination to try to carry out attacks here in the homeland. So this is something that we've worked very closely with the Yemeni officials to go against. We've provided assistance to Yemenis. They present a-- a very serious threat. This plot I think is part of that threat and we need to find these individuals who are responsible, bring them to justice as soon as possible.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, now there have been two women arrested as I understand it. But had there-- are you looking for other people? I mean, do you have specific suspects that you're looking for?

JOHN BRENNAN: Well, I think these two women who have been arrested are the ones that the Yemenis believe were responsible for bringing those packages to the FedEx and UPS offices in Sana'a. But clearly, the sophistication of this device requires, I think a number of people who are involved. We are concerned about individuals in Yemen who have very proficient bomb-making capabilities, who are very dangerous. So I do think there are a number of individuals who are responsible for putting this plot together.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you-- have you been able to link these devices to the so-called underwear bomb that was found on that fellow, that they finally arrested in Detroit, the Christmas Day bomber? There was also another bomb that went off I think that injured a Saudi official. Is there any connection between these bombs and those bombs?

JOHN BRENNAN: As I said the investigation is still ongoing but there are very strong, I think similarities of those three events that suggest to me that they are the work of an individual or individuals who are responsible for all three of those devices.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you think that you--

JOHN BRENNAN (overlapping): Four.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --have foiled this particular plot?

JOHN BRENNAN: I think we work-- worked very closely with our Emirate, Saudi, Yemeni and British counterparts. We're very fortunate that the Saudis were able to pass us this-- this information so we could find those packages and neutralize them. We're not presuming that we have, you know, found all tho-- devices that are out there. And I think prudent tells-- prudence tells us to make sure that we're doing everything possible to screen cargo that might be coming from that part of the world even more rigorously than we have. And we currently have put a hold on any cargo that is coming to the United States that originated in Yemen. So--

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you think that Yemen is now terror central? Is this where the focus is? Is this where the biggest threat is now, Mister Brennan?

JOHN BRENNAN: I think the President Saleh of Yemen yesterday said it well. They recognize that al Qaeda has-- it presents a problem in Yemen. It's a serious terrorist organization. They've grown in strength. The Yemenis have been fighting courageously against the al Qaeda terrorists that are in their country. It is a very active operational franchise of al Qaeda. And so this I think just underscores the need for us to work even more closely with the Yemeni counterparts and to be as aggressive as possible in bringing these individuals to justice so that they cannot harm innocents whether they be in Yemen, in the Arabian Peninsula or anywhere throughout the world.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Mister Brennan, thank you so much for joining us this morning. I want to turn now to Pete King, congressman from New York, who is the senior Republican on the Homeland Security Committee in the House. If Republicans do take the House, you'll be the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee.

REPRESENTATIVE PETE KING (R-New York): I hope so.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I know you're well briefed up on all of this. What do you make of the way this was handled?

REPRESENTATIVE PETE KING: Let me say in the past, to be honest, I've had differences with John Brennan. But let me make it clear. On this particular matter, I think the administration has handled it perfectly. They've received external intelligence, they share it with our allies, they got-- they did what had to be done--the FBI, the TSA-- the TSA especially and to John Pistole. They did what they had to do. They shared it with local police like the NYPD here in New York. So everything was done right and they continue to do it right. I give them full credit.

BOB SCHIEFFER: This was a big one, wasn't it?

REPRESENTATIVE PETE KING: It really was. If we had not gotten that intelligence from the Saudis you would have seen it again. At least, two planes go up or maybe the synagogues. And it shows that al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, I think is emerging as the major force now in the Islamic terrorist world. Even in some ways supplanting bin Laden. They-- they-- they had the plot last year in Detroit, now they had this one and they-- and also Major Hasan at Fort Hood. Awlaki and Yemen was also behind that. So now that-- that is I believe the new major battleground in the war against terrorism.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Okay. Well, let's talk some politics because that's what I asked all of you to-- to come here to talk about today. And Governor Rendell, Ed Rendell, governor of Pennsylvania, it looks like the wind is really blowing the Republicans' way this time. What happened? What did the Democrats do wrong here?

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL (D-Pennsylvania): Well-- well, first, Bob, let me just say I slightly disagree. I've sensed and I've been out campaigning the last couple of weeks, I've sensed that if this is a Republican tidal wave, I've sensed a democratic undertone going against it. Democrats are much more fired up in the last two weeks than people would think. African-American voters, I was in a subway station, they're on fire because of the attacks by Mitch McConnell on the President. They know what's at stake here. Gay voters, they know that they're

in the cross hairs. They're on fire. Latino voters in Allentown, Pennsylvania, are riled up. So I-- I think there's going to be some surprises. I'm not saying we're necessarily getting a hold on to the House but I think there is going to be some surprises on Election Day and particularly in Pennsylvania.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, back to my point though--

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL: What happened? Bad communications. I think this administration has done a great job. You go through the things we've accomplished, Lilly Ledbetter, four million more kids in SCHIP, credit card reform, financial reform, college loan reform, the stimulus which clearly according to the CBO has saved a lot of jobs. Health care which has done great things in this year, five or six great things like people with pre-existing illnesses, twenty-five years and younger can't be disqualified for health care. We did just a lousy job communicating it. We let the Republicans to their credit outspend us a year-and-a-half ago when we're paying the price.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Governor Pawlenty out there in Minnesota, you've been out in the country too. I know you're traveling around right now. From your point of view, what is this election all about and why do you-- because I'm sure you're going to tell me that the wind is blowing the Republicans' way and why is that?

GOVERNOR TIM PAWLENTY (R-Minnesota): Well, clearly is, Bob. And with all due respect to my-- my good friend Ed Rendell, I don't think it's about communication. I think it's about the product. They're trying to sell something that isn't any good and what we have now is an economy that remains in the doldrums. We have people reacting very negatively to Obamacare and the overreach of the federal government in that regard is just one example of many overreaches. Then, of course, you have a sense of-- the government's out of control as measured by spending and a lot of other measurements, so people are angry. They're also worried about the future. And they're saying this is not what we thought we were getting when we elected President Obama and the Democratic Congress. Now the pendulum is clearly swinging back towards Republicans.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Let's see what your colleague from Minnesota who comes from the other side of the aisle as it were. What do you think Democrats need to do now? I mean, let's-- let's get back-- past these next couple of days because I'm not sure the next couple of days matter very much, but there are going to be a lot more Republicans in Washington whether or not the Republicans take the House as many people think they will. What should the stance of the Democratic Party be right now, Senator?

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR (D-Minnesota): Well, I believe first of all, we have to come together on a competitive agenda for this country with the President in the lead. He's already talked about increasing exports. That's what people need to hear. I was up in northern Minnesota just last week. The mines are hiring up there. And a guy came up to me and said, "You know, I've been out of work and I'm finally back at work. And I thank you for extending that unemployment or I would have lost my house." So you have to look at this time period as Governor Rendell suggested as twenty-one months where we've been stabilizing things. Now it's time to move forward and I appreciated Congressman King's words about the administration's handling of this latest terror incident because that's what we're going to need going forward. I think courage is not necessarily going to be standing up alone in the coming years. It's going to be standing next to someone you don't always agree with--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Do--

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: --to work for this country.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you really think there is any chance of that? I mean, we look back to the Clinton administration. Bill Clinton elected, then he lost the House of Representatives two years in but he sort of regauge recalibrated and managed to actually get some things done. Do you think there is any chance of that?

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: I do because I think that's what the American people want right now. They want us to move forward on education reform. They know that we're losing ground internationally and that we have to move forward on getting our university research and turn it into products, turning it into jobs, doing more with innovation. They see a path forward. And they expect leaders and I think the President is ideal with this because he understands that he needs to kind of buck where we've been and move forward. That-- that's what they want to see and that's what they want to see in Congress. I do think there should be shifting of priorities to focus more on the economy and jobs. And that's what, when you look at these candidates out there and I-- and I agree with the-- the Governor Rendell, there is three more days here. And the people of this country are going to have to decide, do they want to put people in that are going to face these problems that are going to face the nation, or do they want to see people who are going to throw a bunch of flames in there and divide the nation.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, Pete King, what do you think? I mean, you were around when the Republicans took the House--

REPRESENTATIVE PETE KING (overlapping): Right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --the last time around. They started out really well, but a lot of people thought they in the end overplayed their hand and gave Bill Clinton a chance to-- to actually get some things done that was not in that-- their particular interest or not the way they want to go.

REPUBLICAN PETE KING: Yeah, the first, year 1995 was a tough year and-- but I think the Republicans, if-- if we do win, we will have a mandate though to start cutting back on spending. If we just come in and just start splitting the difference with the President, then to me, it will be turning our back on the voters that elect. We have a mandate to start reducing spending, getting spending under control. That right now is the main priority of the American people. That's what John Boehner and the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives absolutely committed to. And that's what we have to get started on. Obviously, on issues of foreign policy, Senator Klobuchar mentioned education reform. I think, they are-- there's certainly room for-- for compromise view and not even compromise, working together where I think basic issues of spending, we see it as our mandate if there is-- is to get spending under control.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I just see a man behind you and over your shoulder shaking his head.

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL: Yeah, every poll Bob shows that's not the number one priority of the American people. The number one priority of the American people is as Senator Klobuchar said jobs in the economy. That's what we've got to focus on more than anything else. And if it means spending money on infrastructure like the President has proposed and creating thousands of well-paying jobs on construction sites and factories, the Congress better get to it.

REPUBLICAN PETE KING: If I could just--

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: Bob--

REPUBLICAN PETE KING: --get back to the governor on that. One of the reasons we are right now winning seat after seat and it looks like in the House of Representatives, our candidates are stressing reducing spending. So while the governor may not see that, I think and the seats that we're going to win if we-- if we do win them, it's going to be because we're pledged to cut back on spending. We have reneged on that pledge. Then, you know, we just look like another group of politicians coming in. We have to make this year different from others.

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL: But there's good spending and bad spending and that's what the American people want to see us and decide.

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: And the deficit commission is coming out in December, I think it's going to be really important to look at what they do to move forward. And also, I just don't think the answer is giving millionaires hundred thousand checks. So, I'm hopeful that we're going to come together to reduce this deficit, it has to be apparently--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Let's-- let's bring Governor Pawlenty in because I don't want to forget him out there. Governor, weigh in here.

GOVERNOR TIM PAWLENTY: Well, Bob, of course, the issue is jobs in the economy, but that's the great debate and which is the Democrats' view of it is to do that through government and more stimulus-style spending to have government-centric approaches to solutions like health care, drag it into Washington D.C., top down command and control government bureaucracies running systems and the Republicans and conservatives are making the case that doesn't work, hasn't worked, won't work. And we have to stimulate the private economy. We've got to do things to encourage investors and small business leaders and people who are going to grow jobs by reducing tax burdens, reducing costs and reducing government spending. It's two very different world views. And Frankly, the American people has heard those arguments and they're saying through this election as you'll see on Tuesday, we agree with the Republicans on this one.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right, we're going to take a break here, we are going to come back and talk about this some more in one minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And we're back with our round table of elected officials and campaign experts. I want to go to Amy Klobuchar because one of the things immediately after this election, the President and congressional leaders are going to have to decide do they want to call the Congress back for a lame duck session and deal with these extensions of the Bush tax cuts? What do you think is going to happen? What do you think ought to happen?

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: I think we have to do that. The middle class can-- has to get more than a few tootsie rolls in their treat bag for Halloween here. We just can't keep this policy of having the wealthiest get the biggest chunk of these tax cuts. So extending the tax cuts for the middle class, then looking at what we should do with the wealthiest when we have trillion-some-dollar budget deficit. There's two proposals out there, Bob. One is that we could continue the two hundred fifty thousand and above tax cuts for-- the Bush tax cuts, for another year or two and then phase them out, or we could immediately say for people making over a million

dollars, your tax cuts are done. You get them up to a million and then you go back to the Clinton levels. I just don't think that that is going to disrupt or economy. In fact, things were a lot better when Bill Clinton was president. So those are two compromises that have been out there. But clearly, we have to do a combination of making sure the middle class gets these tax cuts, then at the same time figuring out how we do it, so that we get some money back on the deficit.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you think they'll act on this after the Election Day?

REPRESENTATIVE PETE KING: I think something has to be done. And, actually, it's only the last few weeks we've heard any talk of compromise at all. But I think we should extend the tax cuts. As John Kennedy said a good Democrat, back in 1963, a rising tide lifts all boats. We shouldn't get into class warfare. And the so-called millionaires, many of them are small businesses, and there the businesses are produce a great number of the jobs that are the engine of our economy. I believe the worst thing you do is start raising taxes on anyone as we we're trying to come out of this-- in this economic recession.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Governor, how do you-- how do you pay for this though? That's-- that's--

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL: You can't. You can't. And-- and the truth is and Americans are going to have to deal with this sooner or later. If you extend all the tax cuts for another ten years it adds four trillion dollars to the deficit. Everything else all the government spending is miniscule compared to what it would add. What I would do if I were king of the world, what I would do is, I would extend the middle-class tax cuts for two years, eliminate everything else and even phase the middle-class tax cuts out and get us back to Clinton levels after the economy recovers. It's the only way we're going to get control of the deficit. And we have to start talking honestly to the-- to the American people. The Republicans, no offense to Peter, who's a very good guy, but the Republicans say the deficits are most important. Oh, yeah, except-- when tax cuts are concerned, we're going to add four trillion to the deficit.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Governor Pawlenty out there, you've been traveling around the country. How concerned are people? Do you see that as the number one issue out there right now? I mean, I think we all agree the economy is in the dump. And that's-- that's the overriding issue. But this idea of these what to do about these tax cuts?

GOVERNOR TIM PAWLENTY: Well, Bob, when you ask the American people, you talk to them in bakeries or hardware stores or in gatherings, what they'll tell you first and foremost, of course, its jobs as you noted. But secondly, is government spending. And they want it reduced. And they want the economy also to move forward positively. In my view, history shows and good economic theory shows if you reduce taxes, you're going to have more economic activity. If you don't extend those Bush tax cuts all of them it's going to send a very negative signal to the economy that's going to be counterproductive. But on the spending side, we shouldn't just talk about paying for tax cuts. We should also talk about paying for the spending in the federal government that's on auto pilot. And we need to have a, as Ed Rendell said, a very honest discussion. Look the American people in the camera and say there's going to have to be, in the eye, and say there's going to have to be some changes in particularly in the entitlement programs. And we're going to have to start bringing up those issues and-- and be open and transparent and candid about it. But we can't get federal government spending under control unless you're willing to tackle those entitlement programs.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right.

GOVERNOR TIM PAWLENTY: That's what's going to cause a problem.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I just want to talk a little straight politics here. Now all of you have been out campaigning for one person or another. Give me your idea, Senator Klobuchar of the races we ought to be watching?

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: Well, first of all, I feel good about the Senate right now, in terms of what's going to happen at the end of this election. I think we're winning California. I think we're ahead in Washington. Seventy-five percent of the-- the votes there have already been cast. You look over in West Virginia, where Governor Manchin has pretty much opened up a lead there. And then you go across the country and you see things in Alaska where the Republican candidate, they're came out in front-- in favor of getting rid of the minimum wage. They're going down. My friend Michael Bennett in Colorado is in a tight race in Colorado, but doing incredibly well. And there's just, you-- you go through the state and I think people have stepped back a little and say, we want to continue to govern and move forward and we're concerned about the extreme views of some of these candidates.

BOB SCHIEFFER: We're very tight on time here, Congressman.

REPRESENTATIVE PETE KIN: In New York we can take five or six seats, right now, its twenty-seven to two. We can take five, six, seven seats. A race to look at John Loughlin, Rhode Island won Patrick Kennedy seat. I think we're going to take that back.

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL: Sestak, Toomey in Pennsylvania. We're going to hold the Senate regardless, Amy's right, but if Joe Sestak wins we're going to have a very comfortable margin in the Senate.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And Governor Pawlenty, out there in Minnesota.

GOVERNOR TIM PAWLENTY: Well, the vice chair of the Republican Governors Association, I'll focused on the governor's races, Bob will go from twenty-four to at least thirty and probably well north of thirty. Going to see a couple surprises there maybe in Maine, but you'll also see most of the Great Lakes states, switched from mostly blue now back to red. That's going to be a bellwether for things to come.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, I want to thank each and every one of you for being with us this morning.

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE PETE KING: You're welcome.

BOB SCHIEFFER: It's always fun to talk about politics. Of course, the sign of the times, we had to start the broadcast this morning with the latest on terrorism, because it's the issue that hangs over all of this and-- and it is. And we just have to recognize that.

Back with some final thoughts in just a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: Finally today, after this big weekend of football we'll all go vote on Tuesday. And aren't you glad that even though our system isn't perfect we still finish our elections the right way. We vote. Too bad we can't figure out the right way to pick a national champion in college football. Instead of a playoff to determine the national champion, which is how the other sports do it, college football has something called the BCS, the Bowl Championship Series. A mysterious organization that feeds statistics and other mumbo jumbo into computers to determine who plays for the national championship, what the BCS really is, of course, is all about money. It's controlled by the big schools who want only the big schools in the Bowl games because they believe they'll get the biggest TV ratings. You're asking now, why is he off on this rant? Well, it's very simple. I went to TCU, a smaller school with a very good team this year and we want to play the big guys. But even if we go undefeated we may not get that chance. The computers will decide our fate. If we did our politics like that, computers would decide who wins our elections. Maybe based on the strength of their opponents or their positions. And maybe there would be style points for the best yard sign. But we don't do it that way, thank goodness. So I pass on the advice from my mother that I always pass on before elections. Go vote. It makes you feel big and strong. And if you can figure out a way, vote against the BCS.

Back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And that's it for today. We'll be back in Washington next week and be sure to tune in Tuesday night beginning at 10:00 PM. Eastern for CBS News Campaign 2010 Election Night Coverage. Thanks for watching. See you next week.

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