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CNN LATE EDITION WITH WOLF BLITZER

Interview With Condoleezza Rice; Pataki Talks About 9-11; Graham, Shelby Discuss War on Terrorism

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WOLF BLITZER, HOST: It's noon in Washington and New York, 9:00 a.m. in Los Angeles, 5:00 p.m. in London, and 8:00 p.m. in Baghdad. Wherever you're watching from around the world, thanks for joining us for this special pre-September 11 LATE EDITION. We'll get to my exclusive interview with the president's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, in just a few minutes, but first, this news alert.

(NEWSBREAK)

BLITZER: And within the past hour, I spoke with President Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, about Iraq, the U.S. war on terror, and Wednesday's one-year anniversary of the 9/11 attacks against the United States.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: Dr. Rice, thanks for joining us on this Sunday as usual.

Is Iraq's regime of President Saddam Hussein right now a clear and present danger to the United States?

CONDOLEEZZA RICE, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER: There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein's regime is a danger to the United States and to its allies, to our interests.

It is also a danger that is gathering momentum, and it simply makes no sense to wait any longer to do something about the threat that is posed here. As the president has said, "The one option that we do not have is to do nothing."

BLITZER: Well when you say you can't wait much longer, how much longer, in effect, can you wait?

RICE: We've waited a very long time. It has been, after all, 11 years, more than a decade now, of defiance of U.N. resolutions by Saddam Hussein. Every obligation that he signed onto after the Gulf War, so that he would not be a threat to peace and security, he has ignored and flaunted.

We know that in the last four years there have been no weapons inspectors in Iraq to monitor what he is doing, and we have evidence, increasing evidence, that he continues his march toward weapons of mass destruction.

No one can give you an exact time line as to when he is going to have this or that weapon, but given what we have experienced in history and given what we have experienced on September 11, I don't think anyone wants to wait for the 100 percent surety that he has a weapon of mass destruction that can reach the United States, because the only time we may be 100 percent sure is when something lands on our territory. We can't afford to wait that way.

BLITZER: Exactly one week ago right now, on this program, the Iraqi deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, denied any such intentions on the part of his government. Listen specifically to what Mr. Aziz said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TARIQ AZIZ, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF IRAQ: The United States and everybody in the world should know that there are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: All right, what do you say to his blunt, flat statement?

RICE: This is a regime that has lied and cheated. It is a regime that refused to admit anything to weapons inspectors until defectors came out and pinpointed where certain programs were taking place.

I don't think anybody can take the word of Saddam Hussein and his regime, and certainly an American president and allies who are obligated to worry about the safety and security of our countries, cannot take the word of this dictator, who lies, pathologically lies.

BLITZER: Well, it's not just Tariq Aziz and Saddam Hussein. Scott Ritter, a former United Nations weapons inspector, today addressed the Iraqi National Assembly and basically made the point that there are no problems as far as Iraq is concerned. Listen specifically to what he said in his speech.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SCOTT RITTER, FORMER U.N. WEAPONS INSPECTOR: My country seems to be on the verge of making an historical mistake, one that will forever change the political dynamic which has governed the world since the end of the Second World War, namely the foundation of international law as set forth in United Nations charter, which calls for the peaceful resolution of problems between nations.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: I wonder if you want to respond to what Scott Ritter

directly said, there are no serious threats to the United States from Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program? RICE: Well, I'd very interested to know how one can dismiss a weapons of mass destruction program that was well documented before 1991, when the inspectors actually arrived, what they found in 1991; that was being documented until 1998 when the inspectors left; that continues to gather momentum.

It's not just the United States that's making this case. This case is being made by independent analysts, as well, as to the forward march of the weapons of mass destruction programs of Saddam Hussein.

This is a man who has attacked his neighbors twice, who represses his own people, who's tried to assassinate a former American president, who pays \$25,000 to Hamas bombers -- by the way, some of whom blew up Hebrew University and, with it, five Americans. He has a long history.

And it's not true that the United Nations charter refers only to peaceful resolution. The United Nations charter actually has teeth, and Article VII does permit that there can be necessary means taken.

And it was, after all, under U.N. auspices that Saddam Hussein was finally challenged in 1991, that he was defeated in the Gulf War, and that he was made to sign onto a series of commitments to make sure that he could not be a threat to peace and security, commitments that he has broken and broken and broken.

So that simply isn't the case that this is a peace-loving man who's just wanting to be left alone. That simply isn't the case.

BLITZER: So your bottom line is that the U.N. charter does endorse the strategy of preemptive strikes that the president outlined in his West Point commencement address earlier this year?

RICE: The U.N. charter certainly endorses self-defense. And the U.N. charter -- it is under the U.N. charter that the resolutions were put together that are supposed to constrain Saddam Hussein and to disarm him so that he is not a threat to peace and security.

The United Nations and Security Council have teeth. And in 1991, they bared those teeth to try to deal with this real threat. Saddam Hussein has been in a decade of defiance against the very United Nations that tried to constrain him.

He is the one who is responsible here. He is the one who has to answer. The burden of proof is on him to show that he has disarmed, not on the United States, not on Great Britain, not on the members of the international community.

BLITZER: Based on what you know right now, how close is Saddam Hussein's government -- how close is that government to developing a nuclear capability?

RICE: You will get different estimates about precisely how close he

is. We do know that he is actively pursuing a nuclear weapon. We do know that there have been shipments going into Iran, for instance -- into Iraq, for instance, of aluminum tubes that really are only suited to -- high-quality aluminum tools that are only really suited for nuclear weapons programs, centrifuge programs.

We know that he has the infrastructure, nuclear scientists to make a nuclear weapon. And we know that when the inspectors assessed this after the Gulf War, he was far, far closer to a crude nuclear device than anybody thought, maybe six months from a crude nuclear device.

The problem here is that there will always be some uncertainty about how quickly he can acquire nuclear weapons. But we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.

BLITZER: The bottom line therefore is what, your assessment, six months, a year, five years? How much longer do you believe, given the intelligence information you obviously have, it will take for Saddam Hussein's government to have a nuclear bomb?

RICE: Well, we're going to be laying out for the American people and for the Congress in appropriate hearings and at the U.N., all of the available evidence that we can make available as to his progress.

But I want to just caution, it is not incumbent on the United States to prove that Saddam Hussein is trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction. He's already demonstrated that he's trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

It is incumbent on Saddam Hussein, who, after all, signed on to an obligation to disarm, to convince the world that he is not trying to. And every piece of experience with him, all of the available evidence is simply that he continues down this road.

We do not want to be surprised again. History shows that you are always surprised about how quickly someone acquires a terrible weapon. We were surprised that the Soviet program was as far along as it was. We thought it would be 1955, it was 1949. Saddam Hussein was almost six months from acquiring a crude nuclear device in 1991.

The problem is that we can't afford to be surprised. We know he has the infrastructure. We know he has the desire. We know his procurement network has been very, very active. How long are we going to wait to deal with what is clearly a gathering threat against the United States, against our allies and against his own region?

BLITZER: Should the United Nations Security Council formally give the Iraqi government one last chance, one last effort to allow U.N. weapons inspection teams back in before the United States makes any decision about military moves?

RICE: Well, the president is going to address the United Nations on Thursday. He has been in consultations with members of the Permanent Five. Those are going to continue -- the permanent five Security

Council members -- those are going to continue. And we will see what is required here.

Let's be very clear that the absence of resolutions is not the problem. There have been 16 resolutions, all of which Saddam Hussein has ignored. So the president is gathering the information. He's looking at his options, and we'll see.

BLITZER: So, you're just waiting right now to determine whether or not another, in effect, ultimatum to the Iraqi government would be worthwhile?

RICE: Well, there's been plenty of ultimatums, and one thing that we better be very clear is that we can't continue to have the kind of defiance of the United Nations, the defiance of the international community that we've had.

The president reserves his right to deal with this problem on behalf of the United States, if necessary. He has said that he wants to seek international support, that he'll go to the United Nations. But we make a mistake whenever we just allow problems to continue to sit, problems to continue to fester and when we don't act.

The one decision that the president has made, and he's supported in that decision by others including Prime Minister Blair, is that we don't have the luxury of doing nothing.

BLITZER: Last week when I interviewed Tariq Aziz, the deputy prime minister of Iraq, he said that any resumption of U.N. weapons inspections inside Iraq under the leadership of Hans Blix, who's the current chief weapons inspector, is a non-starter because they don't trust Hans Blix.

Would the U.S., do you believe, and other members of the Security Council be willing to go back and take a look at the composition of these U.N. inspection teams and remove Mr. Blix as the leader for them?

RICE: It is high time that the international community tell Saddam Hussein and his regime that this is not an issue of negotiation with the U.N. about obligations that they undertook in 1991.

They lost the war, a war of aggression that they started that tried to take over Kuwait. They lost that war. As a result, the United Nations put in place an inspections regime that was aimed at disarmament. It was not, after all, an inspection regime that was an end in itself. Disarmament was the goal here. And Saddam Hussein signed onto all of these obligations.

And it is absolutely true that for 11 years now he has negotiated with the U.N. as if he won the war. The fact is, he lost the war. The U.N. understood that he was not trustworthy, understood that there needed to be a way to monitor his programs and to make sure that he was destroying weapons of mass destruction.

No, nobody is going to negotiate anything with this regime.

BLITZER: As far as chemical weapons are concerned, does the Iraqi military currently have the capability of launching missiles, ballistic missiles, Scud missiles, or other medium- or even longer- range missiles with a chemical or a biological warhead? RICE: We know that there are unaccounted-for Scud and other ballistic missiles in Iraq. And part of the problem is that, since 1998, there has been no way to even get minimal information about those programs except through intelligence means.

So, we know that he has stored the biological weapons. We know that he has used chemical weapons. And we know that he has looked for ways to weaponize those and deliver them.

I can't give you a definitive answer on how he would mate the ballistic missile programs that he has developed and continues to develop to chemical and biological weapons, but we do know that he wants to do it. And I assume that he will eventually be able to do that, probably sooner rather than later.

BLITZER: When I spoke with Tariq Aziz, I asked him if the U.S. attacked Iraq, would he in turn, would Iraq in turn attack Israel? Once again, you remember, the Iraqis launched 39 Scud attacks against the Israelis during the Gulf War.

This was his response when I asked him whether they would attack Israel with Scud missiles. Listen to what he said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

AZIZ: We don't have them. They were all destroyed, and they were all accounted for by the international -- by the U.N. inspectors.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Is that true?

RICE: No, it is not true. The fact is that the -- that they didn't -- we don't believe that they destroyed them all. And Iraq has a history of lying about everything. This is not a regime that can be trusted.

Now, the fact that they attacked Israel after the -- during the Gulf War should tell us something. This is a regime that is very -- that very much wants to blackmail us, wants to blackmail us, the United States, because our interests clash. It wants to blackmail its neighbors, and it will eventually want to blackmail the entire international community.

If we wait until that blackmail includes the ability to blackmail with a nuclear weapon, we will have made a grave mistake.

BLITZER: If the Iraqis where to strike at Israel, would the U.S. discourage the Israelis from retaliating, as was the case, as you well remember, during the Gulf War?

RICE: Well, I think it's best not to get into hypotheticals here. We should do everything to dissuade Iraq from threatening any of its

neighbors under these circumstances. It has a history of threatening its neighbors. But I think it's probably not best to get into hypotheticals here. BLITZER: I assume you're not going to tell us, then, if you would cooperate with the Israelis and provide friend and foe identification signals to them if they were to respond so that their aircraft would not be in danger. As you remember, during the Gulf War, the U.S. decided not to give that kind of information to the Israeli air force.

RICE: As I said, Wolf, I think it's better not to get into hypotheticals. We're getting ahead of ourselves. The president has not made a decision that the use of military force is the best option. He is reviewing all of his options and he is talking to people about them.

The one thing he has determined, though, is that we can't do nothing. We simply can't afford inaction at this point.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: We have to take a quick commercial break. When we return, I'll ask President Bush's national security adviser if the president has the international support he needs to launch a preemptive strike against Iraq.

More of my interview when we come back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION. We return now to my exclusive interview with President Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: When will you ask Congress for a resolution endorsing potential use of military force?

RICE: We'll want to have discussions with the congressional leadership and with others about the timing of this. But I believe that the president thinks it's best to do this sooner rather than later and in this session of Congress. This is a problem...

BLITZER: Excuse me for interrupting.

RICE: Yes?

BLITZER: You mean before the congressional recess in advance of the elections, within the next month or so.

RICE: Yes, that's right, before the congressional recess, before the congressional recess. I think the president has made clear that he would like to have a full debate and a resolution, but we're going to discuss this with the members of Congress.

BLITZER: There's a lot of explaining that members of Congress insist you still need to do. The president -- there is a new poll, a

CNN-USA Today Gallup poll that was released on Thursday. "Has President Bush done enough to explain why U.S. might take action in Iraq?" Thirty-nine percent say yes, 58 percent say no. Is the president just beginning this explanation process right now?

RICE: We're just making the case.

In fact, the case has been around for some time. Let's remember that in 1998 when things came to a head with the Iraqi regime about their treatment of inspectors, the United States Congress overwhelmingly passed a law called the Iraqi Liberation Act that said Saddam Hussein's regime is a threat to peace and stability and ought to be removed.

At that time, a number of senators, including people like Senator Daschle, talked about the fact that this was a major threat, that the president had to have the ability to deal with this threat through available means. I mean, people have known about this for a long time. It's been debated in Congress before, and overwhelmingly the U.S. Congress supported regime change as a policy.

Now, if you fast forward to four years later, it's hard to believe that this situation has gotten better than it was in '98.

So, yes, we are more than prepared to talk about the case, prepared to talk about what has happened since 1998. But already in 1998, the collective wisdom of the Congress and the then-Clinton administration was that this was a regime that was a threat to its neighbors, a threat to its people, a threat to American interests, that its weapons of mass destruction were best going to be dealt with when the regime was gone. That collective wisdom was right in 1998. It is more right in 2002.

BLITZER: The president was on the phone Friday speaking to world leaders, including the leaders of Russia, France, China. He met with Tony Blair, as you know of course, over the weekend at Camp David.

But with the exception of Tony Blair and maybe one or two others, he still doesn't have that kind of endorsement that he would love to have from the rest of the allies and close friends and permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.

RICE: What we're hearing from everyone is that they understand that Saddam Hussein is a threat. They understand that he's been a threat for a long time. After all, France and China and Russia are members of the permanent five of the Security Council that voted the 16 U.N. resolutions that he has repeatedly violated. So there is no confusion about the threat.

Of course there are those who want to discuss and talk about how we address that threat, and the president has promised those consultations.

This is not an easy issue. No one goes to the use of military force lightly, and most especially this president who is deliberative, who,

even when we were brutally attacked on September 11, took his time in assembling a coalition for Afghanistan, took his time in making sure that we had a good military plan, took his time in making certain that we got word to the Afghan people that this was not a war against them, this was a war of liberation.

So this is a president who is deliberative. And he will be deliberative here. He has not determined that the use of force is the best option.

We are talking to our friends and allies. And I think you will see that, as we make the case, as we do the consultations, as we decide on a course of action, that there will be plenty of support for this president, as there has been in the past.

BLITZER: Dr. Rice, is there any hard evidence directly linking the Iraqi government to al Qaeda and the 9/11 terror attacks against the United States?

RICE: There is certainly evidence that al Qaeda people have been in Iraq. There is certainly evidence that Saddam Hussein cavorts with terrorists.

I think that if you asked, do we know that he had a role in 9/11, no, we do not know that he had a role in 9/11. But I think that this is the test that sets a bar that is far too high.

We know a great deal about his terrorist activity. We know that he, as I said before, tried to assassinate President George H. W. Bush. We know that he pays Hamas terrorists \$25,000 for suicide bombings that led to suicide bombings against American citizens with five American deaths at Hebrew University. We know that he is acquiring weapons of mass destruction, that he has extreme animosity against the United States.

And what we will not wait for is that particular nexus of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, that is extremism and the technology to come together in a way that is harmful to the United States.

Again, the burden of proof is not on us. The burden of proof is on him. We will make a case. There is plenty of evidence and plenty of experience with who this man is and with what he is doing. But in the final analysis, you have to ask yourself if you want the 100 percent certainty of what he is doing to be an attack on the United States or an attack on our allies. We don't want that to be the moment at which we think, oh yes, we should have connected the dots differently. There was plenty of evidence of what he was trying to do, and we didn't act.

BLITZER: What is the significance, if any, of the meeting that occurred between Mohammed Atta, the ringleader of the al Qaeda terror operation, the 9/11 terror operation, and a senior Iraqi intelligence operative in Prague, in the Czech Republic before 9/11? And did that meeting -- can you confirm absolutely that that meeting took place?

RICE: We continue to look at evidence of that meeting. And it's

just more of a picture that is emerging that there may well have been contacts between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's regime. There are others. And we will be laying out the case. But I don't think that we want to try and make the case that he directed somehow the 9/11 events. That's not the issue here. The issue is, what kind of threat does he pose to America and to its interests? And he poses a clear threat to the United States. He poses a threat because he is trying to acquire the most terrible weapons, because he is not a status-quo actor.

Those who say, "Well, if we just leave him alone, he'll leave us alone," really do have a burden of proof, because he has never left anyone alone. He's attacked his neighbors. He is involved in assassination attempts. He is paying suicide bombers.

Eventually, sooner rather than later, our interests and his are going to clash again. And what he wants to do is to have the United States at bay because he can threaten us with weapons of mass destruction. And this president is simply not willing to wait until he either actually attacks or blackmails us and keeps us from acting in our own interests.

BLITZER: Dr. Rice, we are winding up our time, but let me ask you about the assassination attempt against the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai. Was al Qaeda behind that assassination attempt?

RICE: Certainly the assessment of the Afghan authorities is that this was probably Taliban or al Qaeda remnants. I don't think that we know fully, and obviously we'll help in any investigation of that.

There's no doubt that it's still a dangerous place, Afghanistan. The fortunate thing is that the United States was helping to provide security for Chairman Karzai. And it shows that the United States is committed to that regime.

Afghanistan has a long way to go. There are pockets of insecurity in the country, particularly in southeastern Afghanistan, where we're really still at war and where American forces are still very active along the Pakistani border. There are clearly remnants of Taliban and al Qaeda still in the country.

But we have to step back and look at where Afghanistan is now as opposed to a year ago. A year ago, the Taliban were still in power. They were still able to harbor al Qaeda. al Qaeda was able to train openly there, to carry out its financing of its terrible schemes. It had its communications network there.

Now, al Qaeda's on the run. Afghanistan is no longer a base of operations. The Afghan government is a friendly government that is trying to bring democracy to its people. And the Afghan people are free of the kind of horrible, oppressive regime that made it impossible for women to even walk in the streets without fear of police, of religious police beating them up.

I mean, this is a place that has come a long way. We still have a lot to do. The U.S. government is committed to Afghanistan's reconstruction and security, but we've come an awfully long way in

less than a year. BLITZER: I believe a year ago, almost a year ago, you were the person who first informed President Bush that the United States was under attack at the World Trade Center in New York.

What is the single most important lesson that you, as the president's national security adviser, the single most important lesson you've learned over this past year?

RICE: The single most important lesson that I've learned is that, unfortunately, you will always be surprised about the magnitude of events; that you will be surprised, particularly in this world, with terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, at how much damage can be done by a few people; and that you should not wait to be surprised by evil people who may wish you real harm with weapons of mass destruction that would make September 11 look small in comparison.

History shows us that inaction is the problem, and the vulnerability of the United States is really what came home very, very clearly on 9/11. We've been a country that's been fortunate to be protected by two oceans, to not have serious attacks on our territory for most of our history. And we were unfortunately reminded in a very devastating way of our vulnerability.

We're in a new world. We're in a world in which the possibility of terrorism, married up with technology, could make us very, very sorry that we didn't act.

So I think, if September 11 taught us anything, it taught us that we're vulnerable, and vulnerable in ways that we didn't fully understand.

We've been working hard to minimize those vulnerabilities. That's why there's a new Department of Homeland Security being created. We've been working hard at hardening the country. Tom Ridge and his colleagues work at this every day, as do we all.

But the truth of the matter is, we're an open society, we want to remain an open society, and there will continue to be vulnerability. That's why we have to meet the threats when they are not yet taking place on our territory and on our soil.

It makes ever more urgent the continued war against al Qaeda, the continued support for our allies, who are helping us to fight that war. And it makes more urgent looking at other threats, like those who are building weapons of mass destruction and mean us ill.

BLITZER: Dr. Rice, thanks for taking some time out from your meetings at Camp David, joining us on this Sunday. Appreciate it very much.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: And up next, we'll talk to a man who was at the epicenter of the chaos last September 11. One year later, what lessons has he learned? The New York governor, George Pataki,

joins us, when LATE EDITION continues. (COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GOV. GEORGE PATAKI, NEW YORK: We will remember. We will rebuild. And we will move forward with the unity and confidence of a free people.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: The governor of New York, George Pataki, speaking at a luncheon Friday in New York with members of the U.S. Congress. The gathering was part of the Congress' commemoration of the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

Welcome back to LATE EDITION. Joining us now from New York is the governor, Governor George Pataki.

Governor, welcome back to LATE EDITION.

PATAKI: Thank you, Wolf.

BLITZER: Let me begin with some pressing questions. How worried are you, if you're worried at all, I assume you are, about the possibility of more terrorism against the United States around this first anniversary that's coming up Wednesday?

PATAKI: Well, Wolf, I think we have to be concerned about our security and our safety every single day, not just this anniversary.

And I was watching your interview with National Security Director Rice, and what she was saying about how we learned on September 11 that oceans no longer are enough to protect us from terror and protect us from violence is absolutely true.

And we've created a strong office of public security in New York state. We're working with local and federal officials. And the most important thing government does is to provide for the safety and the security of its people, and we're doing everything in our power to try to make sure that we can be prepared and prevent any further attacks.

BLITZER: Has the federal government or your own statewide law enforcement intelligence community notified you of any particular specific credible threat that may be out there?

PATAKI: No, Wolf, there are no specific threats aimed at any targets that I'm aware of for September 11, or any targets in New York at the current time.

Having said that, we take every day seriously. We take our public security seriously. And I'm grateful for the support we're getting from the administration in Washington and for the cooperation we have between the city officials, state officials and local officials across New York.

Right now, a year later, we have I think it's about 2,400 National

Guard troops still activated, still deployed, helping local officials and county officials with security. And we're in a different era. We're in an era when we are targets of terror. And we have to do everything in our power to protect the people who we represent, and certainly we're doing that in New York.

BLITZER: Governor, I assume you're a lot better prepared today than you were a year ago, based on the lessons learned over this past year, but you're probably not where you really want to be, are you?

PATAKI: I don't think we can ever do enough to prepare and protect the people of New York and the people of America. And there's a lot more that needs to be done. We've ramped up airport security. We have greatly expanded state patrolling at our border areas with the Canada and in the harbor areas of New York. But this just a different world. And who knows where the next threat, the next possible attack might come from?

And I'm just very, very appreciative of the courage, the strength that New Yorkers have shown, the cooperation we've gotten from all levels of government, from the White House right through to the local sheriff's department. And no state is better prepared, no state is doing more proactively to protect its people. And I think the people of New York are as safe as anyone in America.

Having said that, there is no one anywhere who can say with absolute certainty that there will never be another attack, which is why I think what Dr. Rice was saying earlier on the show is just so important.

BLITZER: The Pentagon says it's going to resume those combat air patrols as a precaution over New York air space, over Washington, D.C. air space in the coming days. Is that something that should just be a temporary move, or do you think it should be permanent?

PATAKI: Well, Wolf, I don't think we can say at this point, because -- and certainly, the proper answer would come from the federal officials, because they have access to highly classified information that I don't get and that law enforcement in New York doesn't get.

But they have been very good about sharing information. We're unaware of any credible threats, specific threats against New York as we approach the anniversary. And that contrasts with Fourth of July weekend, Memorial Day weekend, when we had threats against the Statue of Liberty and other symbols of America that are here in New York.

So we're going to be vigilant, we're going to do everything in our power to prepare and protect the people of New York. But one of the lessons, Wolf, is we have to go about our lives with confidence and with the sense of freedom and belief in tomorrow that characterize us as New Yorkers and Americans. We can't allow the threat of terror, we can't allow the weapon of fear to take away the tremendous strength and confidence that we have to have as New Yorkers and as Americans. And I believe the people of New York have that right now.

BLITZER: Are you satisfied, Governor, with the level of cooperation you're getting from federal authorities here in Washington -- Governor Ridge, the director of homeland security at the White House, for example -- or are you frustrated you're not getting enough information?

PATAKI: There's a dramatic, exponential improvement since September 11. We had very real complaints about the information sharing prior to September 11, but since that time, whether it's Governor Ridge, Secretary Ashcroft, we've just had a great, great improvement in that information sharing.

Having said that, I don't think, as governor, I should ever be satisfied with anything, whether it's security, information sharing, the state of our economy or the mood of the people. My job is every day to try to find ways to move us forward and to improve things. And we have made suggestions as to additional information that could be provided and shared with law enforcement in New York. And we have proposed legislation here in New York that we should adopt that would enhance our local officials, the city police departments, the state police in their ability to go after those who might be among us who threaten us.

So, we have to take every step, and we have to continually be vigilant and diligent in moving forward with the protection of the people.

BLITZER: I'll ask you a question I asked Dr. Rice. A year ago, you were right there on the scene at the destruction, right near Ground Zero, literally very soon after the United States was attacked.

What's the biggest lesson that you've learned as a result of that attack?

PATAKI: Oh, Wolf, your show's only two hours long. The lessons we learned are endless.

One, of course, is our vulnerability. And another is the fact that the freedoms that we love and that allow us to live in the greatest country that's ever been are detested by evil people in other corners of the globe and some of whom among us now.

But I think the positive lessons we learned are the strength of New Yorkers, the strength of ordinary Americans and our citizens who could never have anticipated or prepared for an attack of this magnitude and responded with such incredible courage and willingness to sacrifice and allowed us to move on.

And also, we learned who the true heroes are. Maybe it's not a movie star or a great athlete. The true heroes are the men and women who put on uniforms, protect us every day, risk their lives in the fire department, and police department, emergency services, the men and women overseas today, going after those who would threaten us or take away our freedom. Those are the heroes, and that's one of the important lessons we learned on September 11.

BLITZER: You have a big election coming up, you're seeking re-election in November. The Democrats mounting a major attack against you with the statewide -- the Democratic nominee Carl McCall, obviously being the front runner now that Andrew Cuomo has left.

Here's a commercial, though, that you're running right now, a political commercial, and I want to give you a chance to talk about it. Let's roll it.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

PATAKI: Pride, hard work, courage and compassion. I'm proud of what you've done, and I'm proud to be your governor. I just wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Yes, some people have -- may be suggesting that it would be inappropriate in a political campaign to go back to 9/11 and use that for political purposes. Have you faced that kind of criticism?

PATAKI: Wolf, not at all, because I think people understand that when I say I'm proud of New Yorkers, I'm proud of our courage, I'm proud of the unity that we have shown and continue to show, that that is absolutely sincere and it's what I believe deeply in my heart.

I love this state, I love the people of this state, and I am very grateful that they have given me the opportunity to lead this state in good times and in difficult times. I certainly hope to have the opportunity to continue to work every day to try to make the lives of New Yorkers, who are the most courageous and, I believe, the most inspired people in the greatest country in the world, just a little better, a little stronger, a little more confident every day.

That's the role of a governor. That's the role of leadership. And that's what I tried to provide and would like to continue to have the chance to provide.

BLITZER: Governor Pataki, thanks for spending some time. I know these next few days are going to be very emotional, very difficult for all of us. Good of you to join us on LATE EDITION.

PATAKI: Thank you, Wolf. Nice being with you.

BLITZER: Thank you very much.

And just ahead, while U.S. lawmakers are showing a united front on the war on terrorism, there's no complete agreement about a new military strategy against Saddam Hussein.

Will the U.S. Congress support a preemptive strike? We'll ask two powerful members of the U.S. Senate, the Senate Intelligence Committee chairman, Bob Graham, and the committee vice chairman, Richard Shelby, when LATE EDITION returns.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: At the appropriate time, this administration will go to the Congress to seek approval for -- necessary to deal with the threat.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: President Bush making assurances that he'll get congressional approval for a new military campaign against Iraq, if he so determines.

Welcome back to LATE EDITION. We're joined now by two leading members of the United States Senate: the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, he's here in Washington, Senator Bob Graham, Democrat of Florida. And in New York, the panel's top Republican, the vice chairman, Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama.

Senators, welcome back to LATE EDITION.

And, Senator Graham, I'll begin with you. You heard Condoleezza Rice just say to me that she's hoping for this congressional resolution to be approved before the recess, before the election, in other words, over the next month. Will that happen?

SEN. BOB GRAHAM (D-FL), CHAIRMAN, INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE: Personally, I think the sequence ought to be, first, that the president do as he will do, speak to the United Nations, and if he intends to ask the United Nations for some action, that that be taken first.

For instance, I believe a key concern of the American people is whether we go to war alone or whether we do it with a group of allies. The United Nations action would be the clearest statement as to the kind of global support that we would have for a war in Iraq.

BLITZER: I guess White House officials, Senator Graham, would suggest that maybe if the Congress spoke first, that would give encouragement to allies and other members of the U.N. Security Council to support such a resolution.

GRAHAM: I believe that if the Congress knew this full circumstances under which we were going to be committing U.S. troops, not only in the war itself but then the commitment that we are going to be making after the war to stabilize what will be a nation shattered by 30 years of mal-government and on its economic knees, what kind of help we're going to have from the rest of the world in that rebuilding process, it would strengthen the president's case before the Congress.

BLITZER: Senator Shelby, you agree with Senator Graham?

RICHARD SHELBY (R-AL), VICE CHAIRMAN, INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE: I agree with him some. But I believe this, Wolf. I

believe the president this week, is going to lay out to the world, through the U.N. address to the General Assembly, why we need to deal with Iraq and why we need to deal with him soon. I believe, Wolf, that the support will be in the Senate for President Bush's initiative. And I ultimately believe that a lot of our allies will follow once they know what we know today.

BLITZER: Senator Shelby, how strong is the evidence? And you've seen the classified information, all the best information the U.S. government has collected. How strong is the evidence that the Iraqis may be on the verge of developing a nuclear capability?

SHELBY: I'm not sure that it's imminent, but what bothers me Wolf, is what we don't know. You will recall that our intelligence sources, before '91, they had missed, I believe on what -- how far along Saddam Hussein was toward a nuclear weapon. He was a lot closer to developing a nuclear weapon that we thought. He could be today. But it's not just nuclear, it's biological, it's chemical and the mean to do it.

I believe we have to act. If we don't act soon, will we ever act?

BLITZER: Well, that's a good question to pick up with, Senator Graham.

Condoleezza Rice, on this program, made exactly the same point, that the U.S. does not have the luxury of waiting much longer.

GRAHAM: The United States also doesn't have the luxury of focusing exclusively on Iraq. We've got a series of national security issues, particularly in the Middle East and Central Asia. We have a war going on in Afghanistan. As we've seen in the last couple of weeks, there are a lot of problems in the completion of that. We had a war against terrorism outside of Afghanistan. We have the Israeli- Palestinian conflict. And we have weapons of mass destruction, maybe even to a more threatening degree, in Iran and elsewhere as the concern about Iraq.

So we have to put the Iraqi issue in the context of all of those concerns the United States faces.

BLITZER: Let me press you on the Iranian issue. Are you more concerned about a potential Iranian threat to U.S. interests than Iraqi threats?

GRAHAM: I think that, particularly in the area of nuclear, Iran is a significantly more threatening nation than Iraq. But they...

BLITZER: Well, let's ask Senator Shelby to weigh in on that. What do you say, Senator Shelby?

SHELBY: Well, they could be in the long run. I think Senator Graham is on to something here.

I personally believe, and maybe it's hope, that the people of Iran are going to deal with their own situation there ultimately. You know, they have had a lot of free elections. They don't have all of the things worked out. You know, the clergy has been able to

trump a lot of the legislative initiatives. But I think maybe things will work in the right direction.

But get back to Iraq, look back in history, Wolf. 1936, look what Hitler did. He went into the Rhineland, nothing happened. 1938, he annexed Austria, nothing happened. And then he helped dismember -- well, we helped him -- we didn't, but England and France helped him dismember Czechoslovakia in 1938, and then he seized the rest of it, and then war began September the 1st, 1939.

There are things that are in our interests of preemption. Are we going to wait until it's too late? I hope not.

BLITZER: All right, we're going to pick up this point -- specific point. I hear, Senator Graham, I know you want to weigh in, because basically what Senator Shelby is talking about, what used to be called appeasement. But we'll pick up that point.

We'll talk about much more coming up in the next hour of LATE EDITION. In addition to that, your phone calls for these two senators. We'll continue to talk about Iraq, the war on terror with Senators Graham and Shelby.

Then, New York City since 9/11. We'll get reflections on the tragedy and look ahead with the New York City police commissioner, Ray Kelly, and the New York City fire commissioner, Nicholas Scoppetta. Plus, a conversation with the founders of an exhibit that chronicles September 11 in graphic images. You won't want to miss that.

All that, much more, coming up in the next hour of LATE EDITION.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION.

We'll continue our discussion with the two top members of the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee in just a moment, but first, here's CNN's Fredricka Whitfield in Atlanta with a news alert.

(NEWSBREAK)

BLITZER: We're continuing our conversation with Democratic Senator Bob Graham of Florida -- he's the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee -- and Republican Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama. He is the committee's vice chairman.

Senator Graham, I'll begin with you. This resolution that was -- that you co-sponsored, I believe, in 1998, a resolution that said this -- that you supported it, "urges the president to take all necessary and appropriate actions to respond to the threat posed by Iraq's refusal to end its weapons of mass destruction programs." You supported it in '98. I assume you would support a similar kind of resolution right now.

GRAHAM: I would.

And I think it's not quite correct to say that we are doing nothing at the present time. We are patrolling no-fly zones in both the northern and southern parts of Iraq so that Saddam Hussein's military activity is confined to a narrow strip in the middle of the country.

Number two, we have been enforcing economic sanctions. We probably ought to increase those sanctions. There are some current stories in the press that indicate that Hussein is escalating his efforts to buy weapons of mass destruction, particularly fissile material for a nuclear bomb. We ought to be increasing our security of what comes into the country of Iraq.

We also have recently let Saddam Hussein know what the consequences of his use of a weapon of mass destruction -- chemical, biological, or, if and when he acquires it, nuclear -- against any of his neighbors, and that would be annihilation.

BLITZER: When you say that the U.S. has let Saddam Hussein know that, how have they done that?

GRAHAM: Well, the problem is that it wasn't very long ago that our intelligence people were saying "We don't know what Saddam Hussein and leaders of other rogue states feel our response would be to their use of a weapon of mass destruction." I found that to be chilling, that they were uncertain as to U.S. policy.

We now understand that -- our belief is that Saddam Hussein fully understands that if he were to use a weapon of mass destruction that it would result in the annihilation not only of him but of much of his society.

BLITZER: Has that formally been conveyed to Baghdad?

GRAHAM: That is what has been conveyed to Baghdad, and that, according to our best information, is what Saddam Hussein expects if he were to use a weapon of mass destruction.

I think deterrence, which was the essential ingredient of the standoff for better than 40 years of the Cold War is not doing nothing. It is telling an adversary what the consequences would be, and demonstrating by our willingness and preparedness to take that action that we're serious.

BLITZER: So, Senator Shelby, Saddam Hussein -- if Senator Graham is correct, and I assume he is correct and I assume you think he is correct as well -- should be under no illusions that if he were to use weapons of mass destruction, the United States has now formally warned him he will be annihilated?

SHELBY: Absolutely. We've done that before, President Bush in -- the first President Bush in 1990, '91 did that. I think it was clear, unmistakable language.

Wolf, I want to touch on one other thing. In 1981, I believe it was, the Israelis bombed a nuclear so-called power plant under construction by the French in Iraq. If they had not done that, if

they had not preempted that situation, they would have plutonium, would have had it years ago. That was an act of preemption, to save us from having to fight later against someone with nuclear weapons.

Saddam Hussein, if you leave him alone, we don't know if it's going to be a year, if it's going to be months or two years, he will have nuclear weapons. That will change the whole equation in the Middle East.

BLITZER: All right, let's take a caller from New York.

Go ahead with your question, please.

CALLER: Good afternoon, Senators. My question is to both of you, but particularly to Senator Graham.

If the vote were held today on a resolution specifically authorizing the use of American military force against Iraq, would you vote yes or no?

GRAHAM: I know that you want a clear answer, and I wish I could give it to you, but I don't have the facts that I intend to get to answer that question.

I believe, for instance, we need to know what are the consequences of a war against a Iraq on other important U.S. goals, particularly pursuing successfully the war on terrorism, both in and outside of Afghanistan.

I want to know what is the likely reaction of Saddam Hussein once he is attacked. Would he feel that at that point he was facing an annihilation, and therefore there were no constraints, no deterrents, on his actions.

Those are some of the fundamental questions which I have to have better answers than I have today in order to determine how I would vote at some future date.

BLITZER: Senator Shelby, you want you to handle that caller's question?

SHELBY: I would certainly vote today, or next week, or two weeks from now, to use force, to take care to have a regime change, to preempt something that is going to be inevitable, that is, nuclear weapons and other type of weapons in the arsenal of Saddam Hussein.

I think we need to do it, the sooner the better. I believe the evidence is there. President Bush is right, and I look forward to his address.

BLITZER: All right, Senator Graham, one, we do know that many in the Arab world, certainly as reflected by Amre Moussa, who is the secretary general of the Arab League, they say it would be a disaster if the U.S. were to preemptively strike against Iraq. Listen to what Amre Moussa had to say.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

AMRE MOUSSA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ARAB LEAGUE: We believe it that will open the gates of hell in the Middle East.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: "We believe," he says, "it would open gates of hell in the Middle East," if the U.S. were to strike against Iraq. Do you believe that?

GRAHAM: I think it has the potential of very serious ramifications throughout the region. I was in the Middle East in July, met with leaders in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, to talk about what the consequence would be. And they all discussed the high level of anti-Americanism which already exists in their country, the feeling that we are at war with the religion of Islam, and that a war against Iraq would be another piece of evidence that would further excite and incite their streets.

They also were concerned that if there were regime change in any of the countries of the Middle East, the chances were that the change would be to a more extreme, not a more democratic, government, that we might end up not with one Iran and Ayatollah, but with a half-dozen of them in Middle East.

BLITZER: Senator Shelby, you share those concerns?

SHELBY: No, I don't share those concerns. I share some of the concerns of the world we're having to deal with, that is the Islamic world, and the problems there.

But I believe that we will be successful if we go in. I believe we're going to go in. And people like success, and they also know we're not wanting to stay there any longer than we have to.

BLITZER: All right, Senators, once again, stand by.

We're going to take another quick break. We have a lot more ground to cover with Senators Graham and Shelby.

First, we're just getting this news into CNN, some sad news, to inform our viewers. Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani's mother has passed away at the age of 92. The mayor was there. The mayor, we're told, was at her side. Helen Giuliani, once again, 92. She'd been sick for some time, passed away just a short while ago at the Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York.

Our condolences, of course, to Mayor Giuliani and his entire family.

We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION. We're continuing our conversation with the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee

chairman, Bob Graham of Florida, and the Intelligence Committee vice chairman, Richard Shelby of Alabama.

Senators, we have a caller from Massachusetts. Please go ahead with your question.

CALLER: This is for both senators, what they think of John Ritter's complete turnaround about the Iraq matter?

BLITZER: I think he's referring, Senator Shelby, to Scott Ritter, the former U.N. weapons inspector who addressed the Iraqi National Assembly earlier today and warned of the dangers that would face the United States, indeed the world, of a preemptive U.S. strike. He says there is no serious threat to the United States coming from Iraq.

SHELBY: I saw his comments on television earlier this morning. I was troubled. I've met Scott Ritter, and I've had a lot of respect for him. I think he's an idealist, which is good, but I think he's way off base here.

BLITZER: What about you, Senator Graham?

GRAHAM: I saw his statement, and I was very surprised. I don't know how he can make a categorical announcement as to what Iraq's capabilities are, since there have not been international inspectors in the country for about four years.

BLITZER: Senator Shelby, the German chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, said something earlier in the week: "Under my leadership, Germany will not take part in an intervention in Iraq." That's not Scott Ritter, that's one of the closest U.S. allies. What do you make of that?

SHELBY: Well, there's a hot political race going on in Germany as we speak. I believe the election there is the 22nd of this month. It's nip and tuck. Perhaps he's running for his life, and he wants every vote he can garner.

But at the end of all the debate on this, I believe that our allies, starting with Britain and perhaps even France and Germany, will line up with us. They have in the past, and I hope they will, after they know all the facts, weigh all the intelligence, will know what way to go, and that is to get rid of Saddam Hussein.

BLITZER: Senator Graham, the latest CNN-USA Today Gallup Poll that was released Thursday asked, is it necessary to get U.N. support before attacking Iraq, asked the American public. Sixty-eight percent said yes; 30 percent said no. Where do you stand on that?

GRAHAM: Well, I don't think it's absolutely necessary to get United Nations support if we come to the conclusion that our national security requires U.S. unilateral intervention.

But I think it certainly would make it easier, not so much in the military phase, but in the post-military phase. We're going to face

a country which has been shattered over the last three decades. It's not going to be an easy task to put it back together, and we would want to have some allies and friends assisting us in that effort. And the time to get them on board is before, not after, we have launched this attack. BLITZER: Senator Shelby, that same poll asked the American people this question. Are there terrorists in the United States who are capable of another major attack? Look at this. Eighty-eight percent of the American public think yes, there are such terrorists in the U.S. right now. Only 10 percent say no.

What do you say?

SHELBY: I think that the 88 percent are exactly right. We hope there will not be another hit, but I think that's foolish to think that way. There are a lot of people in this country, today, Wolf, as we speak, that can do harm and will try to do harm to us, just like happened September 11.

BLITZER: Before I let both you have go, I want to get both of you to weigh in on this whole issue of anthrax investigation. I'll start with you, Senator Graham.

Steven Hatfill, a former U.S. Army researcher, described by the Attorney General John Ashcroft as a person of interest in this anthrax investigation. We're not sure exactly what that means. He's been complaining they've ruined his life.

Is there solid evidence to suggest that he may have had some role in this anthrax attack that killed five Americans?

GRAHAM: I have no intelligence as to Hatfill or anyone else's complicity in this. This is an issue that our joint committee, which is looking at events that were before, during and after September 11, is going to be reviewing, is what has taken so long for our intelligence agencies to determine the source and the individual who did these heinous set of anthrax letters.

BLITZER: Senator Shelby, I've known you for many years. I assume...

SHELBY: I agree with Senator Graham.

BLITZER: I assume you're totally frustrated by this lack of coming to grips, who killed these people in this terrorist anthrax letter campaign.

SHELBY: Absolutely. We all are. And I don't have any evidence or any intelligence that this man that you mentioned, that we've been reading about, had anything to do with that. That would be up to the Justice Department.

I'd say, if they've got a case against him, they ought to charge him. If they don't, they ought to move on. But that's their decision.

BLITZER: All right. On that note, I'm going to thank both of you for joining us, as usual, Senator Shelby, Senator Graham...

SHELBY: Thank you. BLITZER: ... the two leading members of the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee. Always productive, always useful to have both of you on our program. We always learn something.

When we return, the heroes of September 11. Many of New York's bravest and finest died trying to rescue others, but is the city more prepared now to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring? We'll ask the New York City fire commissioner, Nicholas Scoppetta, and the New York City police commissioner, Ray Kelly.

LATE EDITION will be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: You're looking at a live picture of President Bush. He is just back on the South Lawn of the White House, following a weekend of meetings, important meetings involving a possible war with Iraq at the Camp David Presidential Retreat in the Catoctin Mountains of Maryland.

The president just got off Marine One on the South Lawn. He is now being received by some tourists, friends who have gathered there to welcome the president back to Washington. We will continue to watch the president on the South Lawn. And if he stops, speaks with reporters, we'll of course bring you his comments.

In the meantime, let's move on and talk about what's happening in New York City. Right now, New York City firefighters and police and other rescue personnel did perform heroically on September 11 of last year, leading 25,000 people from the World Trade Center to safety. Many of New York's finest and bravest paid with their lives.

We will talk with the city's fire commissioner in just a minute, but joining us now from New York is the city's police commissioner, Ray Kelly.

Commissioner Kelly, welcome back to LATE EDITION. Always good to have you on our program.

How tight is security right now in New York City, in advance of the commemorative events on Wednesday, surrounding the first anniversary of 9/11?

RAY KELLY, NEW YORK CITY'S POLICE COMMISSIONER: Well, we've certainly increased security in the aftermath of September 11. It's tight. We have a big city. Again, we have some vulnerabilities, as people have said on your show today. But I think we're in good shape. We've done a lot. We've learned a lot of lessons from September 11. We are using all of our resources well. We are interacting with the federal government in a much more effective way than we did prior to September 11. So I think we're doing well.

BLITZER: So how worried are you right now?

KELLY: Well, I think we have to be concerned after September 11, any time there is a major gathering of people, probably anywhere in the United States, but particularly here in New York. As I say, I think we're using our resources well. We're working with the state and federal authorities to ensure the highest possible level of safety.

BLITZER: Is there any information that you have, right now, that is particularly alarming enough that would warrant, for example, going up to a higher level of alert from the federal, sort of, yellow code out there -- yellow threat level that's out there right now?

KELLY: No, we have no specific intelligence information that would indicate any movement in that direction.

We're going to treat September 11 as certainly an important day, but we have no information to indicate that there's any higher threat on September 11 than any other day.

BLITZER: You just saw in that poll that we showed the two senators, the members of the Intelligence Committee, that, what, 88 percent of the American public thinks there are still terrorist cells in the United States, in place right now, that could do enormous damage to the U.S.

Do you agree with that assessment?

KELLY: Well, I'd say it's certainly possible. I think we simply don't know enough. We know that there are al Qaeda sympathizers all over the world. And whether or not there are cells or whether or not there are people who are in sync with them and want to do harm to this country, it's difficult to tell. But I think there are people here who would do harm, would hurt Americans, and we have to be on our guard.

BLITZER: Is it your assessment -- you've spent a lot of time in Washington, as well as in New York, obviously, Commissioner -- is it your assessment that the federal government now, a year after 9/11, is doing everything possible to prevent terrorist attacks against American citizens?

KELLY: Well, I think that they're doing everything that they can. I think they have to change some of their practices. I know the CIA and FBI seem to have been getting closer together. There's a lot of written reports today that indicate that that's not exactly where it should be, but there is a sense of collaboration, of cooperative work together at all levels of government.

Our information from the federal government is certainly flowing more freely than ever before. We have, in New York City, expanded our joint terrorist task force, that is, the people that we have working in the task force, to well over 100 investigators. They're working more closely than ever with the federal authorities.

So, I think government as a whole, at the federal, state and local level, is working more effectively together. Is it where it ultimately should be? Probably not. I think it's an incremental process. We

have to build on it every day. BLITZER: So there may be rivalries in Washington between the law enforcement, the intelligence community. But are you getting the level of cooperation, as the police commissioner of New York City, that you need from federal authorities?

KELLY: Yes, yes. As I say, we're working much more closely than we have in the past. A lot of that has to do with information flow. We're getting that information. We're comfortable, in that we're getting information that the federal government is getting, certainly as it affects New York.

So, yes, I feel that our relationship is much better.

BLITZER: There was a study that the New York City commissioned, the McKinsey (ph) & Co. study, a consultant firm, came out last month, August 19th, which made some recommendations, some problems that existed in the past, problems that need some cleaning up -- for example, clear delineation of responsibility, how to improve the police department response, better clarity in chain of command, radio protocols that optimized information flow, more effective mobilization of members, more effective provisioning of emergency equipment, a comprehensive disaster-response plan.

It sounds to me, if you believe that McKinsey (ph) study, Commissioner, that there's an enormous amount of work that you, as the police commissioner of New York City, that you and your team needs to do.

KELLY: Well, we started a lot of things in motion in January. We didn't wait for the McKinsey (ph) report to tell us what to do.

We have put in place seven internal task forces that are addressing each of the McKinsey (ph) recommendations. We'll have those report shortly.

But much of that work has already been done. We have set up alternate command sites. Our executives now know in much greater detail as to what they should be doing. We need some more equipment. We need more training. We know that, and we're moving, I think, aggressively in that direction.

The McKinsey (ph) report was helpful, no question about it, but many of the things that they recommended were already well under way.

BLITZER: There were some powerful words written by the columnist Richard Cohen in The Washington Post on Thursday, and I'll put them up on the screen and get your reaction: "The people who died, the firemen, the cops, the ordinary office workers were often brave, but to label them all `heroes,' while sometimes apt, obscures the fact that they were also victims who were ill-served by their superiors, their equipment, their government."

KELLY: Well, certainly are pretty strong words. I don't know if I would agree with it. I think nobody could have reasonably foreseen an attack the magnitude of what we experienced on September 11.

And in these jobs -- police, fire, EMS workers -- there is a certain assumption of risk, no question about it. They're certainly heroes in my mind, just by the fact that they ran in when others ran out.

So, we've learned from 9/11, no question about it. We're learning from the McKinsey (ph) report, as you said. We're better now than we were six months ago. We'll be better six months from now than we are now. It is an incremental process, as I say. We're getting stronger every day.

We need better training. We need better equipment. And we're moving aggressively in that direction.

BLITZER: You were the police commissioner in 1993 at the time of the first World Trade Center attack. And I know that, looking back on that, people obviously wish they would have done things differently in the years that followed.

What was the biggest mistake that was made in that investigation and analysis that, if corrected, may have precluded 9/11?

KELLY: Well, I don't think it was seen as a large-scale, international plot against the United States. It was written off initially as just an amorphous grouping of radicals who were somehow motivated by the blind sheik but were not part of an international conspiracy. The arrest of Ramzi Yousef and Ramzi Yousef's involvement in that bombing should have been a huge wake-up call. It simply wasn't.

And we've all heard the term, "connecting the dots." That wasn't done. It wasn't done on a federal level. We certainly couldn't do it on a municipal level. But it should have been the wake-up call for America that we were at war. We've been at war since 1993, and we simply didn't realize it.

BLITZER: Commissioner Kelly, thanks for joining us on this important Sunday before 9/11. Appreciate it very much. Good luck to you and all your officers out there.

KELLY: Thank you, Wolf.

BLITZER: And New York City's fire commissioner, Nicholas Scoppetta, is on his way to our studios. We'll talk with him when he arrives about the heroic efforts of the firefighters of 9/11.

But up next, we'll talk with the organizers of an incredible book of photographs called, "Here is New York," on our special. These photographs -- we'll be showing a lot of these photographs as our special pre-9/11 LATE EDITION continues.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION.

In response to the thousands of photographs that chronicled the World Trade Center tragedy, an exhibition of those images was put together and is now being shown around the United States and other parts of the world. The exhibit is called "This Is New York,"

and joining us now here in Washington are its two co-founders, Michael Shulan and Charles Traub.

Gentlemen, welcome to LATE EDITION.

"Here Is New York," that's the correct name. Excuse me for not saying it correctly.

But let me begin with you, Michael. Tell us about this incredible, incredible book you put together.

MICHAEL SHULAN, CO-FOUNDER, HERE IS NEW YORK EXHIBIT: Well, the book grows out of an exhibition that we did. Really, there were four of us who started it, and it became a volunteer effort of hundreds of people. It started really only 10 days or so after 9/11.

It began actually when -- I live in Soho, which is about 15 blocks above Ground Zero. And I, as a rather spontaneous act on the 12th, taped actually a picture up in the window which I had acquired in the flea market. It wasn't a picture that I had taken. It's an anonymous picture.

I saw people looking at it, and then the four of us decided -- Charles, Alice Rose George (ph), who's another of the founders, and Jill Perest (ph) -- we decided that it was important to put up as many pictures as we could.

BLITZER: So you started putting these pictures up, Charles, where?

CHARLES TRAUB, CO-FOUNDER, HERE IS NEW YORK EXHIBIT: At 116 Prince (ph) in Soho on a little storefront. And we put them up from professionals and amateurs, anybody who wanted to give us pictures. And it just grew. It just -- we thought we were going to be open three weeks, and it's almost a year now.

BLITZER: How many pictures do you have collected so far?

TRAUB: In the collection, there's close to 7,000. In the various shows, there are somewhere between 500 and 2,000.

BLITZER: And then it's going to be showing this -- right now at the Corcoran Gallery here in Washington.

SHULAN: It's in the Corcoran in Washington. We're actually going to be showing it on the Ellipse on some screens and, really, in 20 cities around the world.

BLITZER: It's an amazing, amazing exhibit. I'm sure a lot of people will want to see it, especially on this first anniversary -- around this first anniversary, but hopefully long after this.

I'm going to talk about how you guys did this, but let's start showing our viewers some specifics. There's one -- there's a lot of them that really stood out and jumped out at me, but there's one that showed a nun. A nun -- and she was wearing a face mask. Here it is. Right here. She's walking through lower Manhattan, see the street behind her. There's cloudy -- obviously it's cloudy from

the dust and other debris.

What did this picture, Charles, say to you, when you saw it? Because it is such a remarkable, poignant image.

SHULAN: Well, like a lot of these images, it has a certain kind of ethereal quality to it. I mean, this is, you know, somebody who gave herself to this cause, who went down to help people. She actually came into the gallery to talk to us and see the pictures.

It is a picture of hope. It's a picture of humanity. It's a picture of people helping people and also tells you something about how awesome it was down there, that, you know, she was walking to the event or away from it, I'm not sure -- I mean, after it happened -- but you see how isolated it is, how just empty the city is.

BLITZER: And that was a picture taken by a professional photographer, Elliot Schwartz (ph).

TRAUB: Yes, Elliot (ph) is an artist and a professional photographer.

Actually, the story is interesting. He was locked out -- he lives by Ground Zero, and he was locked out of his apartment. He was trying to get back, and he saw this nun, and he took the picture.

And then about eight months later, she actually came into the gallery and said, "I heard that my picture is here." And I called Elliot (ph) on the phone and I said, "Guess what, Elliot (ph)? There's someone here who wants to see you." And he was quite worried because he felt that she would be upset, and in fact she was very happy.

BLITZER: There's another amazing picture that we'll put up right now of three firefighters -- three firefighters who were putting out a fire literally at Ground Zero. Another professional photographer, I take it, Andrea Buer (ph) took this picture.

Michael, talk about this picture.

SHULAN: Well, Andrea works for -- she's actually a photographer for FEMA, for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and she was on assignment, or this was her job to take these pictures.

This is an extraordinary picture. It could easily be a Caravaggio or a de la Croix. If I'm not mistaken, it was taken with a digital camera, and it sort of points up how this technology has advanced and how digital cameras can really, at this point, do things that they couldn't do before and, even in certain cases, do things that regular cameras can't do before, which is to say they can really capture gradations of light in scenes, which would be very hard to do with conventional cameras.

BLITZER: Are you going to put some of these digital pictures up on the web? Is there a website or anything...

SHULAN: There is a website, www.hereisnewyork.org. And it has close to 5,000 images up, including this and all of these pictures. And anybody can go to it and find out about it, and even purchase images for charity from it.

BLITZER: All right. We're going to continue this. We have a lot more pictures we want to show our viewers, an incredible exhibit, an incredible book.

We'll continue our conversation with Michael Shulan and Charles Traub. They're the co-founders of the exhibit, "Here is New York." Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION. We're talking about an amazing photographic exhibit, "Here is New York," with the exhibit's co-founders Michael Shulan and Charles Traub.

Michael, let me ask you -- you know, as we're going show some more of these pictures -- how did you make the selection what goes in the exhibit, what goes in the book?

SHULAN: Well, when we first had this idea, we thought, in fact, that we would pick pictures to put up, we would curate the exhibition. But as they came in, and they came in in waves, we really realized that all of these pictures were terrific, and that pictures -- we didn't need to select pictures for the exhibition in New York.

That being said, when the exhibitions have gone around the world, we've tried to pick a selection of pictures which really just in some way replicates the feel of the total exhibition.

So in the book, there are 900 out of the 6,000 pictures. And we really tried to pick a 900 that worked in the similar way to the whole 6,000.

BLITZER: Here's another picture. I want to put it up on our screen. It's a photo of a statue of a man with an open briefcase. And if our viewers can take a look at this, he's covered, obviously in dust and surrounded by rubble, near Wall Street, another professional photographer, Jeff Murnelstein (ph), took this picture.

TRAUB: He did. It's a wonderful picture. It really captures the whole horror of the whole thing, but also in a slightly removed and surreal way because it is a statue that is sitting there, not, obviously, a real person. So it has a lot of symbolic meaning. It has tremendous depth. And then it's covered with the sort of white material that disintegrated from the buildings that covered everything and sort of put everything in a shroud.

So it has a tremendous kind of vibe about it. It's also been a tremendous seller. In fact, I suspect one of the greatest sellers in all photographic history. This particular picture, people...

BLITZER: This statue was in a park before that was -- that's why it

looks so haunting as it does.

TRAUB: Looks so haunting, and it just was covered with this awful dust. And he really caught the essence of that statue's afterlife, if you will.

BLITZER: You talked about a seller. What do you do with the money, Michael, you know, that you're -- obviously, the sale of this book, the exhibit, you're going to be making some money. What happens with the money?

SHULAN: Well, we've given all the money -- we are a non-profit and we give all the monies to the Children's Aid Society. We've been selling prints for \$25 each. I think we printed something over 50,000 at this point. And with the book proceeds, we're giving the net proceeds to them.

BLITZER: So it goes to charity then. So that the book itself is what, \$45?

SHULAN: The book is \$49. And the Children's Aid Society is a well-established New York charity. When we went looking for someone to give the money to, not realizing that of course that we were going to have vast -- any great sum to give away, we really wanted it to go to the children of victims who we thought wouldn't otherwise be taken care by other funds, children of restaurant workers, immigrants. And that's really what their mandate is, and so we're very happy, and we are very honored to be with them still.

BLITZER: Charles, take a look at this picture we're going to put up now, of a young mother over here trying to comfort her baby on a rooftop that overlooks what used to be the World Trade Center. In the background, towers are on fire but still standing at that moment.

TRAUB: It's a remarkable picture that catches the fragility of all of our lives and the moments in watching when we watched this terrible event, those of us who were in New York. It's by Alex Webb, who is a very well-known photojournalist. And he was driving down the street in Brooklyn, and he saw people and they told him to come up to the roof to see what was happening. And he really didn't know the people. He doesn't exactly know the circumstances.

But it catches every dynamic of the moments of terror that were there, and particularly the care of the mother for the baby, and a sense of hope, also, that comes out of this terrible moment.

BLITZER: How many of these pictures, Charles, were from professional photographers and how many just from average amateurs out there?

TRAUB: It's a very difficult number to give you, but it's probably two-thirds amateur, one-third professional. And of course, a few amateurs have gone professional. And there are people who -- all kinds of people, artists and children and professionals and agency

people, journalists, what have you. It's really hard to know exactly. We've never taken an actual total. But I'm guessing two-thirds to one-third. BLITZER: We have an amateur photographer who has got a picture that I'll put up now. It's a picture of a photo of the World Trade Center -- look at this -- taken from an airplane window before the attacks through the clouds going up. Katie Weisberger (ph), she's a student, amateur photographer, took this picture.

It's an amazing, amazing, eerie picture, isn't it?

SHULAN: Well, it's very ethereal. It's very inspiring. It's very -- certainly in light of what happened, this obviously was taken some time before, it really gives one a sense of hope.

It also speaks to the fact that in these 6,000 pictures, there are just -- almost all of them are extraordinary in some way.

This is certainly one of the most extraordinary in this sense. But they are all wonderful, because the event itself was something which touched all of us. And photographers really rose to the challenge.

BLITZER: There is a poll that's coming out -- that just came out, a CNN-USA Today Gallup poll, that asked this question: Has time healed the country's wounds? 27 percent said yes, 71 percent said no.

I assume one of your goals, Charles, is to have these pictures help us heal some of these wounds.

TRAUB: I think that that was always our primary goal, was to hang pictures, give people some way to both be active, to come, to leave their testament, to leave their stone at the grave. When people gather in the gallery, in any of the galleries -- and I suspect it will happen on the Ellipse -- there is a sense of community.

There is a sense of people talking to each other, people of all different ethnic backgrounds, walks of life, nationalities, who really all share this experience of, if you will, reconfirming what they saw, what they know. And the feeling they walk away with is not so much one of horror and terror, but one of community, one of why did this happen, and what do we do to prevent it from happening again, anywhere in the world?

BLITZER: Still photos are still so special, aren't they, even though we have video and we have all sorts of other high technology? What makes these still photos, including black and white still photos, so special?

SHULAN: Well, I think part is that you can look at them, and look at them over and over again. I think that still photos -- these photos speak to each other, and they speak to the viewer. And there is a kind of conversation that arises by this colloquy of photographs.

Certainly, when we began, we felt that the more that you watched

the footage on TV of the plane lancing the tower, the less sense it seemed to make, and that we needed really to look at it from as broad a perspective as possible. And I think that these still photos really say that everyone has a stake in this, that everyone's view is important, that everyone has an emotional stake and an emotional process to work through. And I think that the still photo really is essential in doing that and works terribly well.

BLITZER: And that Web site once again, if people want to take...

SHULAN: [Www.hereisnewyork.org](http://www.hereisnewyork.org).

BLITZER: All one word, hereisnewyork. All right, thank you very much.

SHULAN: Thank you.

BLITZER: Charles Traub and Michael Shulan.

SHULAN: Thank you.

BLITZER: Good luck with this important work.

TRAUB: Thank you. Appreciate it.

BLITZER: And when we come back, we'll talk with New York's fire commissioner, Nicholas Scoppetta. We'll ask him what's in store for New York's firefighters right now. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION. We're continuing our conversation about 9/11 and the security changes in New York City since that awful day. Joining me now in New York is the fire commissioner of New York City, Nicholas Scoppetta.

Commissioner, thanks for joining us. And I just want to remind our viewers that on September 11, 23 of New York City's police officers were killed, but 343 firefighters were killed on that terrible, terrible day.

Talk to us about what you've learned since then that might, might be able to reduce that kind of number, God forbid, if another terror attack should strike.

NICHOLAS SCOPPETTA, FIRE COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK CITY: Well, we did a five-month study with a lot of help from the McKinsey & Company. They donated their time, and working with our senior people in the department, we did a study of the department's response. And so a whole lot of new things are coming out of that: an enhanced fire operations center, new staging, new recall procedures, new deployment strategies, ways of managing large incidents in some ways in that are done in other parts of the country, incident management teams.

So there are a lot of new initiatives, new training, new planning, that has come out of that, and we're in the process of instituting

all of these changes now. BLITZER: One of the biggest failures that we now know existed was the inability for firefighters very often to communicate with police, for example, and with others who might have been able to tell them, "You know what, don't start, don't continue climbing those stairs at the World Trade Center."

SCOPPETTA: Well, you see, the fire department and the police department never operated on the same frequencies. So it wasn't just a failure of technology, it was a failure of interdepartmental planning and coordination.

Commissioner Kelly and I have addressed that to a certain extent, and we are doing it now on a larger scale. For example, we can now talk to the police helicopters, there's a frequency programmed into their radios that matches our frequencies. We are now looking at our radios operating off of the police department's infrastructure system of over 300 receivers and transmitters around the city.

There's no magic radio that's going to communicate well under all conditions. But there are terrific systems that can help you do that. And we don't have it, the police does have it. And now we are piggybacking on their system, or at least looking at the viability of that. So there's a lot of good that is coming out of the interdepartmental aspects of this.

BLITZER: When will the firefighters have that kind of communications capability that they need in order to satisfy you and New York City's citizens that the kind of miscommunications that existed on 9/11 won't recur?

SCOPPETTA: Well, we have been putting out now, testing, piloting, new radios that have better penetration, have many more frequencies, operate on the police department's frequencies as well. And they are presently being deployed in one borough, they've been tested for a week in the one borough, seven more weeks and we'll know whether or not these meet our needs.

But in addition to that -- I mean, that's for 95 percent of the calls we receive, the jobs we go on, they will be just fine. But for the high-rise activities, the underground, the subways or basement subgrade operations, we need a much more sophisticated system. And that is what we're doing with the police department, being able to plug into their system of receivers that enhance the signal under those difficult conditions and send it on.

BLITZER: All right. Well, let's hope that happens very, very soon. Good luck to you. Good luck to all your men and women who work for New York City Fire Department. Appreciate it, Commissioner, very much for joining us.

SCOPPETTA: Thank you, Wolf.

BLITZER: And it's time now to say good-bye to our international viewers. Thanks very much for watching.

Coming up for our North American audience, the next hour of LATE EDITION. If a strike against Iraq is in the future, what will U.S.

forces face this time around? We'll get insight from three CNN military analysts.

Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION.

We'll talk with our three top military experts about what shape a new military campaign against Iraq might take in just a moment. We'll also speak with New York's senior senator, Chuck Schumer. But first, here's CNN's Fredricka Whitfield with a news alert.

(NEWSBREAK)

BLITZER: With President Bush making it clear that he is intent on removing Saddam Hussein from power one way or another, questions are being raised about what toll the task will take on U.S. forces if ordered into combat action.

Joining us now with some insight are CNN's three military analysts: In Little Rock, Arkansas, the former supreme commander of NATO, retired General Wesley Clark; in Oakbrook, Illinois, the retired Brigadier General David Grange; and in Los Angeles, the retired Major General Don Shepperd.

Generals, thanks to all of you for joining us.

And I'll begin, General Clark, with you and put up on the screen some comments that the Army Secretary Thomas White said earlier this week.

He said this: "We have done a lot with prepositioned stocks in the Gulf, making sure they're accessible and that they're in the right spot to support whatever the president wants to do. But we've done nothing specifically against any particular scenario for war." He was talking about what the U.S. has deployed so far in Kuwait, which, of course, borders, neighbors Iraq.

This, General Clark, seems to be the first official confirmation that they are getting ready, very seriously ready, by prepositioning military equipment along Iraq's border, they're getting ready for a possible war.

GEN. WESLEY CLARK (RET.), CNN MILITARY ANALYST: I think that's right. I think there is a lot of equipment moving. Some of it is because they've overlapped units, in terms of having an exercise in Kuwait, so they've got forces there. Some of it is filling out prepositioned sets. Some of it is relocating equipment and supplies out of Saudi Arabia to get it to places where it's more accessible and more likely to be used without the political weight that we'd have to resolve with the Saudis.

But that having been said, there is a lot available. If we go into Iraq, we won't have the six-month buildup -- we won't have to have a six-month buildup like we did in 1990. It'll be a much

shorter buildup. We'll get forces there much quicker. There is a lot of equipment available. So, get ready.

BLITZER: I know that, General Shepperd, you know a lot about air lift capabilities. Does the Air Force have the lift -- what they call the lift capability, to deploy, to pre-position troops and equipment very rapidly, so it doesn't take six months as it did during Operation Desert Shield, as General Clark just said, that led up to Operation Desert Strom, the Gulf War?

MAJ. GEN. DONALD SHEPPERD (RET.), CNN MILITARY ANALYST: Yes and no, Wolf. Our air lift is strained at all times. Remember, we're still supporting the war in Afghanistan against terror. We've got some 40,000 troops tied up in that, and they have to be resupplied on a regular basis.

Much of what you use in a war effort goes by ship, not by air. People go by air. Light things go by air. But the big equipment goes by ship. So no matter how you cut it, the preposition stocks, as General Clark said, are very, very important. And you will be moving other things in. The buildup won't be as long as it was last time, but there will be a buildup.

BLITZER: General Grange, when this buildup unfolds, doesn't it send all of the -- a lot of information to the enemy -- in this particular case, the Iraqis would be the enemy -- a lot of information that they could use to get themselves ready for whatever the U.S. military may have in store for them?

BRIG. GEN. DAVID GRANGE (RET.), CNN MILITARY ANALYST: Well, it's pretty hard to, I mean, to achieve surprise today with a global information environment. But, you know, I think they know that they are a target, or a potential target at least. And with all of the stuff going to right now in the region, with the war in Afghanistan and exercises going on in Middle East as an example, the prepositioned stocks that we have, not knowing which direction we're coming from, I believe that we can still maintain, if launched (ph), a good amount of surprise. Though he know its is coming, he won't know the details.

BLITZER: But, General Clark, in the midst of this prepositioning, this surprise that may or may not turn out to be a surprise, you know military planners have to assume for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The Iraqis might not simply wait to take that first punch. What does the U.S. do then?

CLARK: Well, I think the United States has to be prepared to receive hostile action with its forward forces once it begins the deployment. I don't think you can assume that it's up to the United States to start the initiation.

But, Wolf, there is another scenario that's possible here also. Saddam has, in the past, used weapons of mass destruction against his own population. He's had problems with the Shi'ites down in the southern area for years. There is nothing to keep him from opening the campaign by causing a humanitarian catastrophe that would impede the advance of U.S. forces and divert

international attention. So it's an unpredictable start that we're looking at.

BLITZER: General Shepperd, I want to show you and show our viewers some remarkable video that our Jamie McIntyre over at the Pentagon got, our Pentagon correspondent, or senior Pentagon correspondent, some declassified video from what's called a Predator.

This is video that was used in -- the Predator was used in Afghanistan, an unmanned drone, very effectively. It's armed. And we also have some communication showing how effective it actually was. I want you to listen to this little excerpt from this declassified videotape.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We have the two buildings inside. There seems to be a (UNINTELLIGIBLE) but a lot of vehicles were (UNINTELLIGIBLE). Those were the only two buildings in the area. Do you see those?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: (UNINTELLIGIBLE) is it on the east side or the west side of the Joint 4?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: They obviously could take real-time pictures and fire missiles at sites, at targets.

Now, that's in Afghanistan. Is this Predator system -- do you think it would be significant as far as Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi military is concerned?

SHEPPERD: Yes, that would be significant, Wolf. We've had tremendous increases in our capability to conduct warfare since the Gulf War. We can now attack targets with precision, day and night, through any kind of weather. We really didn't have that capability during the Gulf War.

And what you saw there was an AT-130 gun ship working with controllers on the ground and other intelligence means and striking targets with great precision. Saddam is going to be feeling those affects this time if we go to war with him. We have greatly increased capabilities.

BLITZER: And, General Grange, you're a former special operations officer. The Afghan model that was used successfully to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to destroy, effectively, al Qaeda in Afghanistan, or at least a big chunk of it, is that applicable when you're dealing with 400,000 members of the Iraqi military?

GRANGE: I don't think so. You're going to have some work with the special operating forces or with other governmental agencies, working with the indigenous population to do some work like that.

But you're still going to need a maneuver element. You're still

going to need some special operating direct action, U.S.-only or U.S.- coalition type forces to go into some sensitive targets, targets that precision munitions can not take out due to, let's say, civilians on a battlefield or collateral damage.

BLITZER: General Clark, as you well know from your experience in the Balkans, and the American public's experience, I guess, going back to the Gulf War, the American public does not want to see many U.S. military casualties. They don't want to see any.

But if the U.S. goes to war against Iraq, whether with special operations forces or these Predator unmanned drones or other high-tech equipment, there will be significant casualties, I assume.

CLARK: Well, we have to assume when we go into combat that we're going to face casualties. But you know, predicting the numbers of casualties is impossible. It's not about war games, it's about human beings.

And much will depend, in this case, on all of the conditions antecedent to the initiation of combat. In other words, if we've gone to the United Nations, if we've got allies, if we've got strong supporters in the region, if we really undercut any hope on the part of Saddam's military and civilian personnel that he is going to achieve success or even get help from anybody in the region, they are going to quickly come to the realization that it's hopeless. And the faster we make them believe that, the fewer casualties that we'll have.

So this could be a tough fight. It could be a rout. And it's too early to call it right now.

BLITZER: Did you hear Senator Graham on this program earlier, General Clark, say that the U.S. has now formally in some way informed Saddam Hussein and his generals that if they use any weapons of mass destruction against friends in the region or anyplace else, they will be annihilated, they should be under no illusion going into this next confrontation.

CLARK: Well, I think that's the prudent thing to have told them. In this case, it's a little bit different than 1990 because we've already announced that the objective here will be to get rid of Saddam Hussein. So you have to ask, what does he have to lose here? Maybe it'll effect the members of the armed forces who might be readying the weapons, if the information gets to them.

It'll be a challenge in psychological operations to undercut the morale of the Iraqi forces and their leadership as rapidly as possible.

BLITZER: All right, generals, stand by. We're going to take a quick break.

We have much more to talk about with our military experts. They'll also be taking your phone calls, so call us now.

LATE EDITION will continue right after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BUSH: I firmly believe that the world cannot allow the world's worst leaders to hold America blackmailed, to threaten America, to threaten our peace and threaten our friends and allies with the world's worst weapons.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: President Bush making the case for ousting Iraq's President Saddam Hussein.

We're talking about a possible U.S. military campaign against Iraq with retired general and former NATO supreme allied commander Wesley Clark, the retired Brigadier General David Grange, retired Major General Don Shepperd.

Generals, we have a call from Idaho.

Idaho, please go ahead and ask your question.

CALLER: Good afternoon, gentlemen. I have a question to ask you. I do not understand why there's such a push for return of U.N. inspectors, considering three-fourths of what we know about Iraq weapons of mass destruction was not uncovered until the defection of Hussein Kamil (ph), and even during the time of the inspections, Saddam was caught bringing into the country \$300 million worth or Russian ballistic missile guidance systems.

BLITZER: All right, well, let me ask General Grange to pick that up.

Earlier today on Meet the Press, General Grange, Vice President Cheney said that he's very skeptical that a return of weapons inspectors would achieve much.

GRANGE: Well, I feel that it's good to go ahead give a one-last-chance option to gain some type of U.N. support, some type of international support, but an option that's backed with freedom of movement anywhere in country, any time and place, followed immediately by force if not abided by. And I think that will help us quite a bit with effort here if we do go to war.

BLITZER: Over the past four years, General Shepperd, has the U.S. military come up with new equipment, high-technology equipment, that might make work of the inspectors more productive if that equipment was given to those U.N. inspectors?

SHEPPERD: In some cases it has, Wolf, but there is no panacea for inspection. You have to have people on the ground able to look in places that they wished to look at times of their choosing. That's the only way to do it.

And I agree with General Grange, this one last effort has to be

done politically to gain support of allies and the international community and United Nations before we can go in militarily.

BLITZER: And I know General Clark agrees with that as well, but I won't speak for him.

Do you agree, General Clark?

CLARK: I do.

BLITZER: All right. Well, let me ask General Clark this question.

As you know, there was an unsuccessful assassination attempt against the Afghan leader, Hamid Karzai, earlier this past week. He's on his way to the United States this week to participate in the 9/11 commemorative events.

But some in the military are wondering, can the U.S. effectively fight two wars at the same time, the war against terror in and around Afghanistan, for example, plus a much more robust war against Iraq?

CLARK: I think the answer to that is yes. We can certainly sustain the level of commitment we've got. It depends really on the distribution of the intelligence assets and the availability of strategic air and sea lift.

As far as the intelligence assets are concerned, we're using a lot of those in Afghanistan right now, but I'm sure we've got enough because we're covering Iraq at all times. We'll be stretched thin, but it's doable.

As far as the lift is concerned, we still have the civil reserve air fleet. We have other mobilizations we can make. We've got other sea lift we can call on. We've got our allies we can call on. It can be done.

BLITZER: Let's take another caller from Texas.

Go ahead, Texas. Texas, go ahead.

All right, we don't have Texas. I'll then move on.

General Grange, Vice President Cheney spoke out earlier today, and he basically said that if the other allies knew what the U.S. intelligence community knew, they'd be on board. I want to listen to what the vice president said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RICHARD CHENEY, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: I don't think they know the same information. I think the fact is that, in terms of the quality of our intelligence operation, I think we're better than anybody else generally in this area.

I think many of our European allies, for example, who are reluctant to address this issue, or who have been critical of the suggestion

that somehow the United States wants to aggressively go address this issue, I think many of them do not have access to the information we have.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: General Grange, I know you can explain this to our viewers who may be confused. Well, why doesn't the United States simply share this intelligence with those close allies?

GRANGE: Well, some close allies, in fact, we do, but some of them we don't. And it's tiered depending on the reliability and the different treaties we have with different allies. Some ongoing operations that are supported by some intelligence that the United States has may not be able to be shared because it will compromise that particular mission.

So when the time comes, I believe that more of this will come out in order to gain some support. But it'll never be 100 percent.

BLITZER: How important is it, General Shepperd, that the American public is not divided, is fully supportive of a U.S. military operation -- I ask this question in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, for example -- in moving forward against Iraq?

SHEPPERD: Well, I think it's really important that the American public be sold on the reason to send their sons and daughters into combat. That's the reason that the president really does have to make the case, not only to Congress, not only to the U.N., to our allies, but to the American people. And he's at the early stages of doing that.

In the end, I think the American people will certainly support him. On the other hand, America is always divided. There is always differences of opinion. There are always peace groups that think a war, under any circumstances, is wrong. The president has to deal with that, and it's a tough job.

BLITZER: I'll give you the final word, General Clark. You're the senior general on this panel. What is your bottom-line assessment? What needs to be done right now to prepare the American public, indeed the rest of the world, for war?

CLARK: Wolf, you're starting with the assumption that the decision has been made to go to war and it's only a matter of preparing. And this has been one of the problems that the administration has had in communicating it.

In order to improve the communications, the administration has got to lay out clearly what is the problem. Is it the weapons of mass destruction? Is it because Saddam is an evil man? What is the specific problem? Has he uttered a threat against America? Or is it the threat to Israel? We've got to get the problem out on the table.

And then we've got to go through the process of taking that problem to the United Nations, showing the evidence, trying to find

other solutions. And then if we end up that the only solution is the resort to force, it is the last choice.

And that's the process we've got to go through. We don't have a lot of time, according to the president, to do this, but I hope we can do a thorough job of going through this process, because this is what's essential to bring the American people, and indeed world opinion, on board.

And if I could just say one more thing, Wolf. Beyond Iraq, we've still got the war on al Qaeda. We've still got Iran very close to nuclear weapons themselves. They already have chemical and biological weapons. We've got to look at the problem of Iraq in the context of the overall situation of the war on terror, on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and on the problems in the region.

So we've got to go through this process, because it's essential to dealing with the larger strategic picture.

BLITZER: General Clark, General Grange and General Shepperd, thanks for joining us on this pre-9/11 LATE EDITION. Of course, we'll have you back. Appreciate it very much. I suspect we'll probably be having all three of you back often in the weeks and months ahead.

And just ahead, as New York and the rest of the United States prepare to commemorate the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks, we'll reflect and we'll look ahead with the New York senator -- the senior senator from New York, Charles Schumer.

LATE EDITION will continue right after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Ground Zero in New York.

Welcome back to LATE EDITION. Earlier today, I spoke with the New York senior senator, Charles Schumer, about that tragic day a year ago and what lies ahead for New York and the nation.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: Senator Schumer, thanks for joining us on this Sunday before the first anniversary of 9/11. I know you're in Boston because you're dropping off your daughter at college. Congratulations on that front.

SEN. CHUCK SCHUMER (D), NEW YORK: Thank you.

BLITZER: But on the substantive issue of the day, the possibility of the U.S. going to war against Iraq, are you convinced now there is no alternative?

SCHUMER: Well, no, I'm not convinced there's no alternative. You know, the president and the secretary of defense, in a briefing to the senators last week, said, "We have good evidence that shows why this is a necessity, and we will be sharing it with you and, in a

non-classified way, with the American people and the people of the world." That hasn't happened yet.

It's interesting, Wolf, I think there's more of a -- there's very little partisanship on this issue, Wolf. From what I've heard from Democrats and Republicans, the stand is virtually the same, which is, basically, show us the money, show us the evidence that, A, Iraq is going to be a real danger, which, if it has nuclear weapons or could have them in a short time, would be, and B, that invasion is the only resort, or maybe the last but only remaining resort. And you'll find -- I think the president will get generalized support.

But thus far, he hasn't done that to either the Congress or the American people or, for that matter, to the people of the world, so that even leaders like Blair who want to go along with him are being pulled by their populace in another direction.

BLITZER: But you're clearly among those open-minded, ready to vote in favor of a resolution endorsing the war option if you get some more evidence, hard evidence that Iraq represents a clear and present danger.

SCHUMER: And that this is really the only practical alternative, yes, I am.

BLITZER: The other option, of course, being letting those U.N. weapons inspectors back in. The vice president, Dick Cheney, seems to think that that just would be a waste of time. Do you feel that that would be a waste of time?

SCHUMER: Well, it's probably not a waste of time in bringing together the leadership of the world. You know, so much of the Europeans, for instance, have shown an almost atavistic, knee-jerk reaction against anything the U.S. would do on its own.

So, if the evidence is such that they couldn't get nuclear weapons in three to four years, and to have a six-month or a three-month trial period where we'd see if Saddam would really let the inspectors into the country and let them go everywhere they wanted to, it's probably worth it. On the other hand, if it's going to be a year, it's very possible that they'd have them in a year. You don't want to take that six-month gamble.

So I think it's a question of, really, this is one of those rare moments where it's going to come down to the facts. And once the facts are out there, there's not going to be too much dissent, one side or the other. Among my colleagues, it's been the Republicans who have been even more skeptical than the Democrats thus far.

BLITZER: Including the House majority leader, Dick Armey.

The former president, Bill Clinton, suggested this week the top U.S. priority should be the war on terror, fighting al Qaeda, Iraq not necessarily being at the top of his agenda right now. Do you agree with him?

SCHUMER: Well, I think the two are -- I half agree with him. The

two are interrelated. If Iraq were to develop a nuclear weapon, I don't think anyone believes they could deliver it to the heartland of the United States, but they certainly could give it to a suicide bomber, put it on a container that comes in a ship or a plane, or assembled in another country and comes across our border in Mexico or in Canada. And so that's a real danger, the combination. If we didn't have 9/11, if we didn't think that there suicide bombers from terrorist missions -- terrorist groups, who had missions to destroy things in America, even Iraq having nuclear weapons would be less of a danger. But the combination of the two makes -- is what makes everybody afraid, and it's a real fear.

BLITZER: Is New York safer today than it was a year ago, Senator Schumer?

SCHUMER: Well, New York, we are safer today, just as America is safer today. I think that's clear. I mean, clearly, a year ago today, on September 8th, 2001, our guard was totally down, the guard among our intelligence agencies, the guard among everybody was down. Now it's up, and that alone makes us safer. The fact that cockpits are -- the doors are barred, a simple thing like that makes a 9/11, a repeat of 9/11 extremely unlikely.

But on the other hand, Wolf, I would say that, while the president overseas is doing a pretty good job, their great failure is protecting America.

Let me give you one irony here. Senator Warner and I have legislation that would allow the detection of nuclear devices before they came into the country. You can do it. It costs about \$1 billion. We're not getting any support from the administration on that. And neither they nor the mainstream of Congress is, as of yet, willing to spend the billion dollars.

We're willing to spend \$40 billion to go to Iraq, perhaps, and prevent them from having nuclear weapons. But what would seem to be a more foolproof way of stopping nuclear weapons from being smuggled into this country, detection devices on every crane that unloaded a container, on every toll booth where the trucks came through, we're not doing that at all.

And that's for one reason: I think the administration is so afraid to spend non-military money, so afraid of an increasing government role that they are not doing all they should be doing on domestic security.

BLITZER: Would that -- I was going to say, would that change if there were a formal Department of Homeland Security? And will there be a Senate resolution, Senate bill, passing this new proposed department by the time Congress goes into recess for the elections next month?

SCHUMER: Well, Senator Byrd quoted in one of our meetings a Roman senator from the Roman Senate who said, "When you can't think of anything else, do a reorganization. It makes the public look -- it makes -- it seems to the public you're doing something, but you're not."

I'm not against a reorganization, but I think it is hardly the answer. If the computers don't work in the INS or the FBI, just switching around the departments doesn't get those computers to work. If we can't detect nuclear weapons coming across our borders, switching departments isn't going to create those detection devices.

And my worry is that we'll think that we've rearranged departments, that will accomplish everything we should, and it's maybe 10 percent of what should be done.

In addition, I think the reason the administration has sort of grasped at this rearranging of departments, again, their almost knee-jerk fear of spending money. That OMB and the budget people are so in charge and the whole administration is so focused on continuing to, quote, "shrink government," even post-9/11, that we don't do a lot of the things we should be doing on homeland side.

The military is an exception. They're willing to spend the money there, but not on homeland defense. So we get a lot of sort of activities that really don't mean much. Reorganizing, yes, that could help, but it's not 90 percent of what needs to be done, other types of symbolic things.

The northern border, right now we don't have -- you talk to Customs, INS, Border Patrol, every one of the main, you know, the line people there says we don't have close to enough people to make our borders secure. We put money -- we authorized money in this Patriot Act, but the administration has refused to spend it.

BLITZER: It sounds -- and we only have a few seconds left, Senator Schumer. It sounds like you believe the country is still very vulnerable as we approach the first anniversary of 9/11.

SCHUMER: You know, since 9/11, my motto is you can't be too careful. And we are, on homeland security -- we're being very careful overseas. And that's why we are debating going into Iraq. But at the same time, we are not showing the same vigor in protecting ourselves at the airports, at the borders. The INS computers are so backward that terrorists can probably still sneak into this country. These kinds of things are not being done.

And to win the war on terror, you need a one-two punch. You have to do it overseas, but you also have to do it at home.

BLITZER: On that note, let me thank you for joining us this Sunday, Senator Schumer. Good luck, once again, with your daughter joining -- going into college, a momentous day for you and your family as well.

SCHUMER: Thank you. It sure is.

BLITZER: Appreciate it very much.

SCHUMER: Thanks, Wolf.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: And just ahead, will Iraq be a major issue in the fall elections? We'll talk about that and much more with the Republican Party chairman, Marc Racicot, and the Democratic Party chairman, Terry McAuliffe. LATE EDITION will continue right after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION. We'll talk shortly with the Democratic and Republican Party chairmen about a possible war with Iraq and much more, but first let's get a check of the headlines here. CNN's Fredricka Whitfield in Atlanta with a news alert.

(NEWSBREAK)

BLITZER: It's now less than two months to the fall elections, with control of both the U.S. House and Senate very much up in the air. How will a possible war with Iraq affect the political campaigns? Joining us now to talk about that and more, the Republican Party chairman, Mark Racicot, and the Democratic Party chairman, Terry McAuliffe.

Gentlemen, welcome back to LATE EDITION.

Well, how's it -- it's a wild card out there, Governor, the whole Iraq question on the November elections. What's your sense?

MARC RACICOT, RNC CHAIRMAN: Well, it's not a political question, quite obviously. It's a matter of national security. It's a matter of security for the world.

It's been a relevant issue for more than 10 years. We know, going back to 1991, there have been an infinite number of different resolutions from the United Nations and expressions of aggressive protective interests being displayed even by members of Congress.

It's interesting to note, as a matter of fact, that in 1998, of course, one of the most aggressive spokespeople of that point and time was the president of the United States, Bill Clinton, and following him very close behind him were the present leaders of the Democratically-controlled Senate. So this has been an issue for a very long period of time.

BLITZER: But there could be political ramifications. Even though it is a life-and-death national security issue, there still could be political ramifications in the House and Senate and maybe even the gubernatorial elections.

RACICOT: There could be political ramifications, but I think that the American people recognize clearly when their leaders focus upon the central question and deal with it in a way that requires a strategic response, rather than a political response.

So, I believe as long as people for both sides of the aisles stay focused upon that particular question, there won't be any political

ramifications. The moment that they try and politicize it and be opportunistic is the moment, I think, that there is some impact upon what happens across the country.

BLITZER: Terry McAuliffe, what do you say? TERRY MCAULIFFE, DNC CHAIRMAN: I think when the Americans go to the polls this November 5th they're going to focus on those kitchen-table issues. Who do they think's going to do a better job of getting the economy moving again? Who do they think will do a better job of providing a prescription drug benefit? Who do they think will do a better job of making sure this Social Security is protected for years to come? And I think those are the issues they're going to focus on.

CNN, the other day, just had a poll. By 20 points, your poll showed that Americans are going to go vote on those kitchen-table issues, not on the war on Iraq.

As, you know, just look at the elections last year, Wolf. You know, less than 60 days after September 11, the Democrats won all over the country, both governors, we won the majority of the state houses. So...

BLITZER: I'm going to put that poll up on the screen, the poll you're referring to, the CNN-USA Today Gallup poll. You're absolutely right. How important -- which is more important to your vote for Congress this year? The economy, 57 percent; Iraq, 34 percent.

Having said that, though, Terry McAuliffe, if the American public sees men and women of the armed forces being deployed, moving to repositioned locations, a lot of buildup going, these numbers could quickly change.

MCAULIFFE: Well, first of all, it is bipartisan support of this president as we have fought the war on terrorism. After September 11, Democrats, Republicans, we've all come together.

But the issues that people are facing right now as they're sitting around their kitchen tables at home, do they have a job, do they feel good about their financial security? Are their parents living in a dignified retirement, and do they have money for education for their children? Those are kitchen-table issues that people are going to focus on.

Obviously, Iraq is a major question for us. It is not a partisan issue; it's a bipartisan issue.

And the elections will be won or lost on who they think will do a better job on the kitchen-table issues. I make the argument, obviously, the Democrats will do a much better job of that, and that's why we're doing well in the polls today.

BLITZER: And the fact is that there are plenty of Republicans who are asking maybe even more difficult questions of the administration about Iraq than Democrats are asking, so on that particular front, the questioning of the administration goes across

party lines, as you well know, Governor.

But I was struck yesterday in New York Times by a quote from the White House chief of staff, Andrew Card, saying the president is now about to begin making his case for the possibility of war with Iraq. And he defended the delay by saying this. He said, "From a marketing point of view, you don't introduce new products in August," waiting until after Labor Day. That's why the administration was late, maybe, as some critics say, in explaining what it's all about, what this Iraq strategy is all about.

Do you think they were late?

RACICOT: Well, there's no way they were late. For God's sake, this issue has been on the national agenda for over a decade. President Clinton spoke to this issue in very aggressive terms in 1998. Senator Daschle did, Senator Kerry did, Senator Lieberman did, all talking about pursuing every aggressive means that was needed and necessary to address the issue, including regime change if that was needed and necessary in order to abate the difficulty that was facing the country.

So fact of matter is, this issue has been on the agenda forever, over the course of last 10 years. Senator Biden conducted hearings this summer, the president spoke to the issue in the State of the Union address.

So the notion that somehow this has crept in in the fall election season to the public discussion is absolute nonsense. As Vice President Cheney pointed out earlier today, the fact of matter is, you can't time when you're going to address national security questions based upon the fact that every other year there's an election in this country.

BLITZER: In that same poll that you were referring earlier, the CNN-USA Today Gallup poll, the president's job approval ratings, "How is the president handling his job as president," 66 percent approve, 29 percent disapprove. In January, he was up at 77 percent and even higher right after 9/11.

But still, 66 percent for President Bush at this point, very, very strong numbers.

MCAULIFFE: First of all, Wolf, George Bush is not on the ballot this year. I would only ask you go back to 2001 when he had a 92 percent approval rating ...

BLITZER: The first President Bush?

MCAULIFFE: This President Bush. Last year when we had the elections going on, and Jim McGreevey won in New Jersey, Mark Warner won in Virginia. I mean, we did very well with our candidates all across the country because we were talking about the kitchen-table issues.

So polls don't matter. George Bush will probably run again in 2004, and when he's on the ballot then we'll focus on that. But we're

focused on '02.

I think we're going to have a spectacular year this year. If you go around the country, I think we're going to have resounding wins. I think we're going to pick up a couple of Senate seats. We're going to do very well and win the House back. But our governors, today we have double-digit leads in Michigan, Illinois, Pennsylvania, in Maine and Arizona, in New Mexico.

I mean, I'm very excited...

BLITZER: All right.

MCAULIFFE: ... because we're focused on those kitchen-table issues.

BLITZER: We're going to go through some specific races, but we're going to take a quick break.

When we come back we'll talk, continue our conversation with the Republican and the Democratic Party chairmen. We'll also be taking your phone calls.

LATE EDITION will continue right after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back. We're talking about campaign 2002 with the Republican Party chairman, Marc Racicot, and the Democratic Party chairman, Terry McAuliffe.

Governor -- and I call you governor -- to our viewers who may not know, you once were a governor until recently, governor of Montana.

RACICOT: You can call me anything but late for dinner.

BLITZER: So that'll be your title for the rest of your life, unless someday you move up and get another title, one of these days.

Let's put up on screen, showing some of the contests that are going to be unfolding in November. 435 House races, of course. 34 Senate races, 36 governor races.

In the House, Governor, what, 30 or 40 of those races are competitive, the rest really aren't, right?

RACICOT: I would say so. We think that there's between 30 and 35 races that are probably highly competitive.

And we're delighted for the opportunity to talk about, as the chairman calls them, the kitchen-table issues, because the president and the Republicans in Congress have a very, very good record with education, addressing issues of tax relief, addressing the issues of trade promotion authority.

We just have so much more that we'd like to get done. We'd like to

see the Senate pass a budget, which it hasn't for the first time since 1974.

We'd like to see the issues surrounding terrorism insurance -- which really is a jobs issue. \$10 billion worth of construct projects that can't proceed because that issue is not resolved. So many workers that aren't working as a result of that. The House has passed it; the Senate hasn't taken it up. And Medicare prescription drugs...

BLITZER: Well, let me ask you on specific issue, because both of you know that the last time around, prescription drug benefits for seniors was a huge issue and sort of, Terry McAuliffe, disappeared. Why?

MCAULIFFE: Well, it didn't disappear. It was much talked about this year.

BLITZER: But there is no prescription drug benefits legislation that's been enacted and signed into law.

MCAULIFFE: Wolf, we got very close. We got 52 votes in the United States Senate for the Graham-Miller-Kennedy bill, which would have covered 39 million seniors in this country, would have had a catastrophic benefit. This would have been very good for seniors in this country -- 52.

Unfortunately, due to the rules in the Senate, we need 60. But a majority of the United States Senate voted for that piece of legislation. And if President Bush would step up and work in the Senate, work with us on this prescription drug benefit, we could pass that piece of legislation.

BLITZER: What about that?

RACICOT: Well, there's no question that the president is ready to work on that particular issue. They've never been back. The Democratically controlled Senate has never come back and wanted to move that issue forward.

The fact is, this is what has happened time and time and time again. That the president is concerned about progress, not about politics. He wants action, not inaction. And polls do not dictate the direction that he pursues. So he's ready to work on that issue, on terrorism reform, on all of the issues left unaddressed.

MCAULIFFE: A majority of the Senate -- let me just be perfectly clear. A majority of the United States Senate voted for the Graham- Miller-Kennedy prescription drug bill. We could get this passed.

BLITZER: Fifty-two.

MCAULIFFE: Fifty-two. That's a majority.

(CROSSTALK)

MCAULIFFE: So the sense in the Senate, we can get to 60. Unfortunately, the same with the budget. We can't get a budget out of the Senate because it needs 60 votes.

BLITZER: You need 60 to avoid a filibuster.

RACICOT: Who schedules everything? Who's in charge of the agenda? MCAULIFFE: The Graham-Miller-Kennedy thing was brought to the floor. It was scheduled. It was brought up for a vote. What more do you want?

RACICOT: Senator Daschle is there and has control of the agenda. All he has to do is schedule these things for consideration, and they have to be brought up. And that's what he refuses to do, just like with the budget.

BLITZER: You probably, Governor, saw the L.A. Times poll that came out the other day. Which party will you back in the November elections? Democrats, 47 percent, Republicans, 39 percent.

So if we're looking at those House races, Senate races, governors races, you as a Republican, you may have some problems.

RACICOT: Well, I think that all of these races across the country, we've acknowledged all along, are going to be difficult. I mean, this is a country very, very closely divided, in terms of their political interests and their inclinations. So we've known these races are going to be tough from the very beginning.

We believe that we can stem the tide of history. I mean, we're inspired to that every day. We don't give any guarantees of that. But we absolutely believe we can hold on to the House.

BLITZER: Usually in these mid-term elections, the party outside of power from the White House does very well. You think the Democrats are going to, A, take over the House and manage to hold on to the Senate?

MCAULIFFE: I do, but it's a little different this year. First of all, as we talked about, after redistricting, there are only about 35 seats in play.

And second, as you know, George Bush had zero coattails in 2000. So there were not a lot of new seats that came in with President Bush. There weren't any that came in.

But the reason we're consistently doing well, as that poll shows, is that we're out there on those critical issues.

You know, this economy has been sputtering for a long time. People saw their 401(k)s absolutely shatter. People were very worried. And the House Republicans, you know, passed a tax bill that gave a \$254 million tax break for Enron. So...

(CROSSTALK)

BLITZER: Are the Republicans going to pay a price for that?

RACICOT: That's absolute nonsense. And you don't hear one Democrat, because it's a facetious, shallow allegation that they talk about, calling for repeal. If they want to repeal those things -- as a matter of fact, I've been wondering to myself lately, with some of the statements that have been made by Mr. McAuliffe and others, whether or not calling for this summit and discussion after the election there is some inclination here to raise taxes after the election.

BLITZER: We've got to leave it right there, unfortunately.

MCAULIFFE: Good.

BLITZER: We'll leave it for taxes on another occasion. Governor Racicot, Terry McAuliffe, thanks for joining us. That's good, they shake hands on this program.

MCAULIFFE: Wolf.

BLITZER: I shake hands with you as well.

RACICOT: Thank you.

BLITZER: Appreciate it very much.

Up next, Bruce Morton's essay.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: And now Bruce Morton on the year of September 11.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BRUCE MORTON, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): A look this Sunday at the year that's gone by, in the words not of leaders but of we the people, as we all reacted to September 11.

September 12, the day after.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Just to see so many police officers everywhere, everywhere you go, National Guards out on some of the streets, it's eerie.

MORTON: A street musician tries to remember an old bugle call.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Look with compassion on the whole human family, and especially on those who lost their lives this week.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: This is our country. These are our aircraft. And these are our skies. And we're taking them back!

(APPLAUSE)

MORTON: September 27, we knew life had changed, maybe forever.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I have a 5-year-old granddaughter. I just, you know, I adore her. I make sure I hug her every day and tell her how much I love her.

MORTON: We had new heroes.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: There was this fixation on celebrity, and this was the only heroes that kids had, your musicians or actors. And, you know, it's really sweet to see them now take a second look and go, oh my goodness, it's a fireman, it's a policeman. It's, your everyday -- it could be my dad.

MORTON: Christmas was different.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We've been saying a lot of prayers, but I think it's important for the kids to know that, you know, there is still love and happiness around the Christmas season, and, you know, it is a time of peace as well.

MORTON: February. Buddhist monks make a mandela (ph), a sand sculpture in Washington.

UNIDENTIFIED CHILD: I thought the prayer meant they wish good for us all.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I love that what they're doing to try to heal and protect the United States.

MORTON: April, traditional concerns.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Nobody likes to pay taxes, but you have to. It's part of life.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: What's fair? I mean, we have -- we live in a safe, protected society. We benefit certainly to a degree, but how do you put a value on that?

MORTON: Time passes, life goes on.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Why should I aggravate myself? Man, you got to be crazy.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I think I am a different person. I appreciate life more. I kiss my children more, and I just, I have more fear.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I just have to live my life as best I can, and not worry about everything.

MORTON: Our lives move forward; we look back. We won't forget, but pain can ease with time. We've lived a year of what may be a very long war.

I'm Bruce Morton.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: Thank you very much, Bruce.

And this personal note, today was the last appearance of my good friends Sam Donaldson and Cokie Roberts on ABC's "This Week." They will be sorely missed in our world of Sunday morning talk. I wish them only the best of luck as they move forward in their next adventures in television. They're great journalists and very good people.

And that's your LATE EDITION for Sunday, September 8. Please be sure to join us next Sunday and every Sunday at noon Eastern for the last word in Sunday talk.

Don't forget, tune in right here, Monday through Friday 5:00 p.m. Eastern, for "WOLF BLITZER REPORTS." Among my guests tomorrow, the secretary of state, Colin Powell.

Until then, thanks very much for watching. Enjoy the rest of your weekend. I'm Wolf Blitzer in Washington.

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