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## CNN LATE EDITION WITH WOLF BLITZER

Interview With Bill Frist; Interview With Stephen Hadley

Aired May 14, 2006 - 11:00 ET

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WOLF BLITZER, HOST: It's 11:00 a.m. in Washington, 8:00 a.m. in Los Angeles, 4:00 p.m. in London and 7:00 p.m. in Baghdad. Wherever you're watching from around the world, thanks very much for joining us for "Late Edition."

We'll get to my interview with President Bush's top national security advisor, Stephen Hadley, in just a moment. First, though, let's go to Brianna Keilar at the CNN headquarters in Atlanta for a quick check of what's in the news right now.

(NEWSBREAK)

BLITZER: President Bush will address the American public from the Oval Office tomorrow night on the hot-button issue of immigration reform.

Just a short while ago I spoke with the president's national security advisor, Stephen Hadley, about that, the renewed furor over the domestic spying program, Vice President Cheney and the outing of the former CIA officer Valerie Plame Wilson, Iran's nuclear program and lots more.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: Stephen Hadley, thanks very much for joining us. Welcome back to "Late Edition."

STEPHEN HADLEY, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER: Nice to be here.

BLITZER: The president, in his speech tomorrow night, will he call for the deployment of thousands of U.S. military forces to the border with Mexico?

HADLEY: The president is very concerned, as are a lot of Americans, about securing the border. He's been in discussions with members of the Congress. A lot of ideas have been suggested.

One of the ideas involves using the National Guard. That's an issue that he's considering. And obviously, it's a decision that he will make.

Let me point out that...

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BLITZER: He hasn't made a decision yet on that?

HADLEY: No, sir. This is something that's under consideration. It's a number of ideas that he's talking about.

Let me make...

BLITZER: But let me interrupt for a second. Do you think by tomorrow night, 8 p.m. Eastern, when he delivers the address, he will have made a decision by then? Is there a deadline, in other words, for him to come up with a decision on National Guard forces being deployed to the border by tomorrow night?

HADLEY: What he said he will do tomorrow night is indicate where he stands and what he believes the way forward is on the issue of immigration. And that will include the issues of border security, of internal enforcement, and also the issue of the temporary worker program. So there will be a number of things that he'll be talking about at that time.

Let me just make one point. The notion of using National Guard to support border patrol is not a new one. This is not -- this is something that's actually already being done. It's not about militarization of the border. It's about assisting the civilian border patrol in doing their job, providing intelligence, providing support, logistics support and training and these sorts of things.

BLITZER: Because right now there are only a few hundred National Guard forces on the border. What I think you're talking about are moving thousands, maybe 5,000 or 10,000, maybe even more. So that would be a major leap forward.

HADLEY: No, I think what it would be is simply expanding the kind of thing that has already been done in the past in order to provide a bit of a stop-gap as the Border Patrol build up their capacity to deal with this challenge. That's the kind of idea that's being talked about.

Look, one other thing I need to say is both the United States and our neighbors to the north and the south take the issue of securing the border very seriously. The Mexicans have activities under way; so do the Canadians.

So we are all looking in a cooperative spirit to try and deal with the common problem of securing the border, particularly in this hot season, when the humanitarian considerations for people trying to cross the border become so important.

BLITZER: Immigration reform legislation that's already passed in the House calls for the construction of a new wall, a fence, along much of the border between the United States and Mexico.

Does the president support spending hundreds of millions of dollars to build such a fence?

HADLEY: Well, the president certainly supports strengthening the security of the borders. Spending is up; the number of border patrol is up.

This is something that the president has been paying attention to and doing -- and the administration has been doing over the last four years. So this is a priority for the president. It's an important element of dealing with immigration reform.

BLITZER: But what about a wall or a fence, specifically?

HADLEY: There are a number of things that are being looked at. There are a number of programs that Secretary Chertoff has announced. You'll be hearing, probably, more about these programs tomorrow night.

BLITZER: You don't want to comment on the fence? Is that what you're saying?

HADLEY: No. The president's got a number of things. As I say, Secretary Chertoff has announced a number of initiatives. There are things under consideration, and this is the kind of thing the president will address tomorrow.

BLITZER: The president will support a guest-worker program that eventually will lead, over 11 years or so, for citizenship for most of these illegal immigrants who have been in the United States for more than five years.

HADLEY: What the president has said is that he thinks that the proper approach to immigration reform is securing the border, internal enforcement, and a temporary-worker program so that willing employers in the United States can have access to willing workers, particularly from Mexico, and to do it in a way that is lawful.

That will take some of the pressure off on the border and will allow the border patrol to focus on the things we're really worried about, which is crime and narcotics and the like.

So he believes that we need a comprehensive approach and, as he said publicly, a temporary-worker program that is not amnesty...

BLITZER: Why isn't it amnesty? Because a lot of your critics in the House of Representatives, especially, Republicans, conservatives, say this is amnesty, that if you let these illegal immigrants eventually stay in the United States and

become citizens, this is amnesty.

HADLEY: Well, the president's concept is not amnesty.

BLITZER: Why?

HADLEY: One of the issues is – because one of the problems with amnesty, of course, is if you do – there are now 12 million or so illegal immigrants in the United States. And the concern is that a wholesale amnesty will incentivize more to come.

So the issue is – and this is one of the things that's going to have to be worked out in the dialogue between the president and the Congress, how to deal with this particular problem, how to deal with the difference between those folks who have recently come to this country and those folks who have been here sometimes for years or even a decade and have families and are part of the community. These are tough problems.

And what the president has said there needs – we need to do it lawfully. We can both control our borders and be humane. We can do it in a legal way. And we need to do it in a way that provides a lawful way for people to come to work in the United States.

The issue about how they can progress for citizenship is one that's going to be worked out. But one of the things the president has said is that anybody who's part of one of these temporary-worker programs, if they look at the issue of citizenship, there are things they will need to do, requirements that they will have to meet, and they will have to go to the back of the line, not at the front of the line, to reflect those who have proceeded in the lawful way.

But again, this is the kind of issue that the president will have an opportunity to address tomorrow night.

BLITZER: Let's talk a little bit about this USA Today story that came out this week on collecting billions of phone calls over the past nearly five years since 9/11 to look for patterns, suspicious patterns.

One major U.S. phone company, Qwest, refused to cooperate with the National Security Agency. BellSouth did cooperate; AT&T, Verizon, they did cooperate.

The statement that was released by the attorney for Joseph Nacchio, the former CEO of Qwest, said this: "When we learned that there was a disinclination on the part of authorities to use any legal process, Mr. Nacchio concluded that these requests violated the privacy requirements of the telecommunications act. Accordingly, Mr. Nacchio issued instructions to refuse to comply with these requests."

Apparently, the federal government, the NSA, just dropped the request with Qwest after they refused, citing these legal reasons.

Are you 100 percent convinced that this was legal to go ahead and ask these companies for this private information about tens of millions of Americans' phone calls?

HADLEY: Let me put this in a little context, Wolf. The president takes very seriously his responsibility to protect the privacy rights of the American people.

He also takes seriously the need to use the intelligence resources of this country to protect against those who are trying to attack us. And that's principally Al Qaida and its affiliates.

All the intelligence activities that we have been pursuing are lawful. They have been briefed to the appropriate members of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, both Republicans and Democrats, and are necessary to protect the country against Al Qaida and its affiliates – not innocent Americans, but Al Qaida and its affiliates.

I can't, sitting here, confirm or deny the claims made in that story. But if you look at what the story says, it's very interesting. The story does not claim that there was listening in on domestic – to domestic phone calls. It does not claim that. It does not claim that names were provided or addresses were provided or content of calls were provided or other personal information.

It's talking about calling information: date of call, to whom and how long. And this is information...

BLITZER: But if you have...

HADLEY: ... this is information that is business records. It can be lawfully provided to the federal government in a lot of circumstances.

BLITZER: But if you have the phone number of an individual, it's easy to find out who that individual is.

HADLEY: The Supreme Court has held that calling records, information – phone numbers calls, date, duration of call – is not protected by privacy. And there are lawful ways under a variety of statutes and procedures by which this information can be shared with the federal government. So this is not a privacy issue.

BLITZER: Can you say that over the past nearly five years, this program of collecting all these phone calls, the records, has resulted in thwarting one terrorist attack against the United States?

HADLEY: Again, I cannot confirm or deny the claims in the USA Today story. But what I can say is that the intelligence activities we have conducted against Al Qaida, lawfully briefed to the Congress, narrowly focused on the war on terror, have prevented attacks and saved lives.

BLITZER: There have been specific attacks that were in the working stages that, as a result of this data mining, or whatever it's called, you managed to stop that attack? Is that what you're saying?

HADLEY: I said as a result of intelligence activities undertaken by the United States.

BLITZER: I know, but I'm talking about the collection of the phone numbers. Has that specific program resulted in thwarting a terrorist act?

HADLEY: And as I said to you, I cannot confirm or deny the claims of that story. What I can tell you is the intelligence activity protected and saved lives and protected America, and the president has cited in some of his speeches incidents when that has occurred.

BLITZER: Let's talk about this number-three official at the CIA, Dusty Foggo, who's under investigation. We saw live pictures the other day of his house in suburban Virginia being searched, his offices being searched.

Explain to the American people what's going on here. How is it that the number-three official, appointed by Porter Goss to be the executive director of the CIA, is now under investigation? And you've heard all of these reports about poker games and prostitutes and limousines. What's going on?

HADLEY: This is obviously a matter which is now under investigation. It's a law enforcement matter, as you well know. That means it's something I cannot talk about.

I think the point is that the president has an opportunity in the appointment of Michael Hayden to give new leadership at the CIA. Porter Goss has done a terrific job of beginning the transition to a reformed Central Intelligence Agency. And Mike Hayden now has an opportunity to carry that process forward. And that's why the president nominated him to head the CIA.

BLITZER: So you don't want to go into specifics on Dusty Foggo?

HADLEY: Correct.

BLITZER: Have you ever met the guy?

HADLEY: I'm not sure.

BLITZER: OK. Fair enough. Obviously didn't have a big impact on you, if you don't remember.

There's another story out this weekend, suggesting, on the Valerie Plame investigation, that the vice president, Dick Cheney, when he saw that article that her husband, Joe Wilson, the former ambassador, wrote in the New York Times, scribbled some notes on the side, including, had they done this sort of thing before, send an ambassador to answer a question? Do we ordinarily send people out, pro bono, to work for us, or did his wife send him on a junket?

Was there an effort under way in the White House, in the Bush administration, to undermine the credibility of Ambassador Joe Wilson, as a result of what he was saying at the time?

HADLEY: Well, again, as you know, this is a matter that's under investigation. There are ongoing legal proceedings associated with it. It's the kind of thing that I'm not at liberty to talk about.

BLITZER: But you were there in the middle of all of this at the time. You remember the discussions, the internal discussions. And I believe you were called to testify before the grand jury.

HADLEY: You know, there's been a lot of press commentary about that time and about Ambassador Wilson and the claims he made publicly. And it's been interesting, because there have been articles in the press and also some findings by investigations on the Hill that suggest that some of the claims that were made were not true.

But again, this is a matter that is under investigation, and the instructions that we have, of course, is to cooperate fully with these investigations and not talk about them publicly.

BLITZER: Should there be direct talks between the United States and Iran on its nuclear program?

HADLEY: Well, there have been, of course, lots of talks with Iran on its nuclear program, and we have been very much supportive of that diplomacy.

BLITZER: But should the U.S. meet directly with Iranian officials?

HADLEY: At this point, what we think needs to happen is that the process that you saw on display in New York last week needs to go forward. There needs to be a Chapter 7 resolution coming out of the United Nations Security Council that makes clear what Iran needs to do, in terms of reassuring the international community that it has given up its weapons ambitions.

We are looking at the kinds of sanctions that might be applied if it does not make the right choice. We're also looking at the kinds of benefits that might be applied if Iran does make the right choice.

But there's been a lot of opportunity for discussion with Iran on this issue. There was an agreement reached with three members of the E.U. There was a subsequent offer from the E.U. There was a proposal by the Russians, which would have done enrichment in Russia, not in Iran.

There have been a lot of opportunities for Iran to make the right choice, which is respond to the will of the international community and give assurances, by getting out of the enrichment business, that it's not pursuing a nuclear bomb.

BLITZER: We're out of time, but under what circumstances will the U.S. start direct talks with Iran on the nuclear issues – even as you've already authorized the U.S. ambassador in Afghanistan to have direct talks with his Iranian counterpart on Afghan issues. You've authorized the U.S. ambassador in Baghdad to have direct talks with Iranian officials on Iraqi related issues.

Under what circumstances will you authorize direct U.S.-Iranian talks on the nuclear issue?

HADLEY: We think the framework we have is even better. We have a number of countries that are engaged with Iran on this issue. We are supportive of those discussions, as you know. The Europeans made a proposal to Iran about a year and a half ago, and we indicated clearly we were going to facilitate that proposal.

So the forum has now shifted to a discussion in the U.N. Security Council, where the international community, as a whole, of which the United States is a part, can make clear to Iran what it needs to do. We think that's the right forum at this time for this issue.

BLITZER: Stephen Hadley, the president's national security advisor, thanks for coming in.

HADLEY: Thanks very much.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: And just ahead, we'll get a different perspective. Balancing privacy and protection – is the U.S. government crossing the line? We'll ask a former national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Then, U.S. troops could soon be on the front lines of the immigration battle. We'll talk about the next steps on illegal immigration reform with the Senate majority leader, Bill Frist, and the Senate Judiciary Committee's ranking Democrat, Patrick Leahy.

And remember to tune in to CNN's special primetime coverage of President Bush's speech on immigration reform tomorrow night. I'll begin our coverage with a special edition of "The Situation Room." That starts at 7:00 p.m. Eastern.

"Late Edition" continues right after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: We're not mining or trolling through the personal lives of millions of innocent Americans.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: President Bush responding to the bombshell report this week that the government has been monitoring millions of Americans' phone calls.

Welcome back to "Late Edition." Joining us now is former national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. He served under president Jimmy Carter.

Dr. Brzezinski, always good to have you on "Late Edition."

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, FORMER NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER: Nice to be with you, Wolf.

BLITZER: Is it smart for the U.S. to deploy thousands of National Guard forces to the border with Mexico to stop Mexicans and others from coming into the United States illegally?

BRZEZINSKI: I'm afraid that this have will a dramatizing effect on the problem. It, kind of, militarizes it. And I fear that the countries to the South, in particular, Mexico, would just react very adversely.

There is a problem here. There's no denying there's a serious problem. But I think we ought to view it largely as a legal and socioeconomic problem and not primarily as an enforcement problem which then requires the use of U.S. military forces

That part, to me, is troubling. BLITZER: Well, what do you do to stop illegal immigrants from coming in? Do you build a wall? Do you build a fence?

What do you do if you're not going to send in thousands of troops?

BRZEZINSKI: Well first of all, you enhance, you enlarge the border patrols. You mobilize more people to serve in border patrolling. That's what they're for. They don't have to be in the national guard or in the military.

Secondly, you do something to regularize the status of the illegal immigrants. After all, they're here in part because our economy needs them. We really need them. And they've been here, in some cases, for years. We have to tackle this in a broad and, also, humane fashion.

BLITZER: So you support what the president has proposed, a guest worker program that eventually, over 11 years or so, would allow those illegal immigrants who have been in the United States for at least five years to become citizens?

BRZEZINSKI: Yes, I do. Although, I won't argue about specifics. In fact, I think 11 years may be quite long.

But I do think we need to regularize the status of these people; we have to enforce border control more effectively on the basis of services designed to do that. And we have to have some understanding of the balance between legal requirements and economic needs. And right now, they're out of whack.

BLITZER: Let's talk a little bit about the story that came out this week in USA Today that the NSA, the National Security Agency, since 9/11, has been collecting information on billions of phone calls, tens of millions of Americans, their phone records, to see if there are patterns that could connect the dots, if you will, and lead toward terrorist suspects in the United States or abroad.

Senator Jon Kyl, who is a member of the Judiciary Committee, Republican of Arizona said this. Listen to what he said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. JON KYL (R) AZ: This is nuts. We are in a war. And we've got to collect intelligence on the enemy. And you can't tell the enemy in advance how you're going to do. And discussing all of this stuff is public leads to that.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Are you comfortable with this NSA collection of phone records?

BRZEZINSKI: I'm not dodging, but I'm going to give you some distinctions. I was briefed at very high levels immediately after 9/11. And it seemed, at the time, that the administration was really expecting a follow-on attack in a fairly short period of time. I can see how, in that atmosphere, something like this was started immediately to see if we could get some clues.

But almost five years have passed since then. What I would like to know is what congressional leaders who were briefed and how were they briefed on this program during the intervening months and years?

Was a legal brief presented? If so, what did it say? And third, when Qwest refused to cooperate, why was it permitted not to cooperate if this was such a real, serious national security need?

So there are some weaknesses in the position of the administration, largely because of the passage of time.

BLITZER: So you're suggesting, at this point, you want more information before you draw a hard and fast conclusion on the legality or the usefulness of this whole program?

BRZEZINSKI: Absolutely. I think, in all these issues, there is tremendous vagueness, I don't know what case was made; I don't know what congressional leaders actually proved it. I don't know why we didn't press Qwest if we thought this was so necessary.

And I don't buy the proposition we are at war. You know, this is really a distortion of reality. We have a serious security problem with terrorism, although we haven't been attacked for five years. We have to deal with it over the long haul.

But to create an atmosphere of fear, almost of paranoia, claiming that we're a nation at war, opens the doors to a lot of legal shenanigans that can infringe on civil rights.

BLITZER: General Michael Hayden, the four-star Air Force general, has been tapped to become the next CIA director.

I want you to listen to what Chuck Hagel said about the law that you put in place in 1978 when you were the national security adviser under President Jimmy Carter, the FISA law, the Foreign Intelligence Service Act, because he has expanded that, Michael Hayden, when he was the National Security Agency director before moving on.

Listen to what Hagel said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

U.S. SEN. CHARLES HAGEL (R-NE): The 1978 FISA law is outdated. I think we need a new framework of laws and regulations that in fact bring all of this up into the 21st century, new threats, new technologies.

And we need a law, a framework of regulations so that our intelligence community, our experts can work within the legality of those new laws.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: I assume you agree with Senator Hagel.

BRZEZINSKI: I agree 100 percent.

BLITZER: You think that the FISA has to be updated?

BRZEZINSKI: Oh, absolutely.

BLITZER: If they want to expand it, they should pass new legislation as opposed to just doing it?

BRZEZINSKI: Absolutely. If they just do it, on the basis of, I don't know, written orders, oral orders, how are these orders justified?

We slide into a pattern of illegality which, over time, can become dangerous?

BLITZER: Should General Michael Hayden be confirmed as the CIA director?

BRZEZINSKI: I have no absolutely no view on that subject at this moment. I really don't. I'm not dodging. I just don't have a view.

BLITZER: Well, what about the notion of having a military man, a man in uniform serve as CIA director?

BRZEZINSKI: Some of the best CIA directors were former military men. They weren't, maybe, necessarily, at that moment in uniform, but they got their jobs having been in uniform.

BLITZER: Stansfield Turner was an admiral...

BRZEZINSKI: Bedell Smith was another one.

BLITZER: And he served when you were the national...

BRZEZINSKI: Yes.

BLITZER: Was he active-duty in the Navy at the time when he served as CIA director?

BRZEZINSKI: He certainly was active-duty when he was appointed. I honestly don't know if he then retired or stayed on active duty.

But the point is these people very often have excellent qualifications. I don't think being a military officer necessarily infringes on their capacity to be good directors of CIA.

BLITZER: All right. We're going to ask you to stand by, Dr. Brzezinski.

We have a lot more to talk about. We're going to raise the issue of U.S.-Russia relations, Iran and Iraq, lots more, with Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Also coming up next, a quick look at what's in the news right now, including details on what's been an extremely violent day again in Iraq.

Stay with "Late Edition."

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(NEWSBREAK)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to "Late Edition." I'm Wolf Blitzer in Washington.

We're talking about the Bush administration's national security strategy with former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. He served under former President Jimmy Carter.

There seems to be some tension in the U.S.-Russian relationship right now. Vice President Dick Cheney gave a tough speech the other day to which the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, responded in part this way: "We also must make our house strong and reliable. We must always be ready to counter any attempts to pressure Russia in order to strengthen positions at our expense. The stronger our military is, the less temptation there will be to exert such pressure on us."

How worried are you, if you are, that U.S.-Russian relations are deteriorating?

BRZEZINSKI: I'm not terribly worried.

There are some negatives in these relations due, in part, to the fact that President Bush overstated – dramatically overstated – Russia's move toward democracy. And as a consequence, Putin had a five-year-long free ride. So my only comment on the Cheney speech is that it's a little late in coming.

But on the other hand, we have a lot of common interests. We have a stake in developing energy security, and the summit is going to focus on that. We have a stake in meeting somehow constructively with Iran. We have some differences in tactics, but we share the view that Iran should not have nuclear weapons.

So, you know, we cooperate, we compete, and we also criticize them.

BLITZER: Should there be direct U.S. talks with Iranian officials on Iran's nuclear program?

BRZEZINSKI: That's a key issue. You know, it's really ironic. We're not negotiating with Iran, but we are negotiating. Who are we negotiating with? We're negotiating with the negotiators with Iran. And it's an absurd situation.

BLITZER: To let the French, the Germans, the British, the E.U. in effect, negotiate with the Iranians.

BRZEZINSKI: Yes, and even the Chinese and the Russians.

Now, in the case of North Korea, we are involved directly on a multilateral level in the multilateral talks. We are involved directly in the bilateral talks; we talk directly to the North Koreans.

BLITZER: On the sidelines.

BRZEZINSKI: Yes, but it's a direct formal relationship.

The argument that the administration makes is that we can't negotiate with Iran because it will legitimate them. Well, we're legitimating North Korea, so what's the big deal?

The fact is there are serious differences between the United States and Iran, conflicts over security issues, over financial problems, claims and counterclaims. We need to talk to each other to create a measure of security and to be engaged.

BLITZER: But even if the U.S. were to engage in direct talks with Iran, do you see it at all possible that under any circumstances the president of Iran, Ahmadinejad, would give up a nuclear weapons program?

BRZEZINSKI: First of you, we have built them up. We have built them up by making threats. We have pumped him up. He is not really the top figure. We call him president; that's his title. But the president is not the top dog in Iran.

BLITZER: Is there any incentive for him to give up weapons?

BRZEZINSKI: Not in the present circumstances, when we're not engaged in the negotiating process and when we are pumping up an atmosphere of urgency. The fact is that the earliest, by most intelligence analyses, the Iranians will have nuclear weapons is approximately five years, more likely 10. Some even say 15.

So there is time to set in motion a negotiating process which is multilateral, bilateral; we participate in it and then we address some of the issues that concern us.

But the Iranians have also concerns that we need to address. If we do that, we might be able to contrive an arrangement whereby they're allowed to process but in a fashion that gives all of us security that they're not building weapons.

BLITZER: You wrote a provocative piece recently, saying the U.S. should start withdrawing troops from Iraq. What is



the timetable you would like to see for a complete U.S. pull-out from Iraq?

BRZEZINSKI: I put a little differently than you summarize it. I said we ought to talk to the new Iraqi leaders and get them to ask us to leave.

Those who are willing to ask us to leave are those who are prepared to stay and govern. Those who don't want to ask us to leave, probably, will leave when we leave.

Secondly, we publicly discuss with them how long we stay. And I would say roughly a year. Then thirdly, the Iraqi government then convenes a conference of all of the adjoining Muslim states regarding stabilization of Iraq of which they do have a real interest. And they won't do it as long as it's occupied by us.

BLITZER: Do you see light at the end of this tunnel in Iraq?

BRZEZINSKI: And last, we then convene a donor's conference to rehabilitate Iraq. If we get out, the situation will stabilize. The longer we stay, the more we become the problem, the more likely the civil strife will escalate into civil war. It is not yet a civil war, but it is getting close to it.

BLITZER: Zbigniew Brzezinski served as President Carter's national security adviser. Thanks very much, Dr. Brzezinski, for coming in.

BRZEZINSKI: As always, good to be here.

BLITZER: Thank you.

And up next, the battle over illegal immigration. President Bush set to address the issue in a major speech tomorrow night. We'll preview that speech. We'll preview lots of other issues with the U.S. Senate's majority leader, Bill Frist and the Senate Judiciary Committee's top Democrat, Patrick Leahy. All that coming up. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to "Late Edition." The president's address comes as the Senate tries to hammer out an immigration reform bill. Just a short while ago, here in Washington, I spoke with Senate majority leader, Bill Frist of Tennessee.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: Senator Frist, thanks very much for joining us. Welcome back to "Late Edition."

SEN. BILL FRIST (R-TN), MAJORITY LEADER: Good to be back with you, Wolf.

BLITZER: The president, Monday night, delivers a major address on immigration. Do you support deploying thousands of National Guard, U.S. military forces to the border with Mexico to stop illegal immigrants from coming in?

FRIST: Wolf, I do. There are a lot of things we can do, we are doing in the United States Senate and our Congress. A lot of those take time. The only thing that we can do to secure our borders right now is to give our states help, and that is best done through the National Guard.

BLITZER: How many troops do you think are needed to be sent to the border with Mexico?

FRIST: I think it's too early to know at this standpoint. I think each state has to identify what law enforcement they can put on the front line, what the resources are, and then, at that point in time, determine how much of the National Guard will be necessary.

Who pays for the National Guard? Probably, that will be a federal responsibility, I would think. The National Guard will be under state control. They need to determine how many people will be required along that Texas or Arizona or California borders.

BLITZER: Have you been told by the White House that this is in the president's intention, to deploy or, at least, seek approval for the deployment of U.S. military forces to the border with Mexico?

FRIST: You know, I have not been in direct conversation. I have encouraged use of the National Guard, again, not the Army and not the other military, but the National Guard, which is traditionally under the auspices of the states. I've encouraged – I've encouraged strongly. I think that's the least we can do.

Securing our borders is a federal responsibility. We need to act. We have failed miserably in the past. That was what we failed with in 1986, when we last gave amnesty but we didn't secure our borders. This time, we've got to get it right.

BLITZER: Here's what Harry Reid, your counterpart, the Democratic leader in the Senate, says about this notion. Listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

U.S. SENATOR HARRY REID (D-NV), MINORITY LEADER: As a result of the war in Iraq, so overextended, so depleted in numbers and in equipment, I don't know how in the world we could ask them to have this additional burden, where they'll have to be pulled out of various states around the country to go help with Katrina.

Now we have thousands and thousands Guard and Reserve troops in Iraq. Now we're going to ask them to go to the border? I don't think they are able to do that.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

FRIST: Well, you know, he's wrong. The sort of whining and the moaning – we've got to secure our borders. We hear from the American people. We've got millions of people coming across that border. First and foremost, secure the border, whatever it takes. Everything else we've done has failed, we've got to face that. And so, we need to bring in, I believe, the National Guard. We need to put money in there. We're doing that. We need to increase the number of border security agents. We've done that, and we're going to continue to do that. But right now, for the short term, for all that to take effect, we have to have support, and it's a federal responsibility, and the National Guard are the people to do it. BLITZER: The Republican governor of California, a border state, also has questions about sending troops to the border. Listen to what Arnold Schwarzenegger said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GOV. ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER (R), CALIFORNIA: I think that the key thing is to have secure borders. Going the direction of the National Guard I think is maybe not the right way to go, because I think that the Bush administration and the federal government should put up the money to create the kind of protection that the federal government is responsible to provide.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: What do you say to the governor?

FRIST: Well, I think he too is wrong, in the sense that the National Guard shouldn't be used. The money – we put \$10 billion last year on our border. Just the other day, on the floor of the Senate, another \$1.9 billion. Money alone is not going to do it. I think the governor just said it does come back to money, and I do feel it is a federal responsibility to support that National Guard on the border.

BLITZER: Do you support the president's proposal for a guest worker program that would eventually lead toward citizenship for 10 or 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States over a number of years?

FRIST: Wolf, what we're going to do starting tomorrow is take a comprehensive bill to the floor of the Senate. Strong on border security, as you heard me say. We've got to lock down the border first and foremost. It also is going to have a temporary worker program for about six years, where people can come and go, and it's going to have a strong workplace interior enforcement, where employers will be given the tools to enforce the law, but they've got to enforce the law. And then the fourth component is what to do with the 12 million people.

I do believe that we need to treat that program in respect to the diversity that it is, and thus for less than two years, send them back home. Between three and five years, put them into the temporary worker program.

And greater than five years, give them the opportunity to earn citizenship over another 11-year period. That means they'd have to be in this country for up to as long as 16 years. They have to learn English. They have to have a job. They have to pay back-taxes, pay current taxes. They need to earn that opportunity for citizenship.

BLITZER: But if they've been here for more than five years right now, they have to wait 11 years to become citizens.

FRIST: It would be an earned citizenship, a probationary period. The current legislation on the floor is not perfect. That's why we need to have amendments. Like, right now, felons could get citizenship under the bill that's on the floor. We have to have an amendment, hopefully tomorrow or vote on it on Tuesday, to pull that felon standard out of there.

So there are a lot of things on this bill that are imperfect, but it's comprehensive, it addresses each of the four dimensions that I mentioned. And I predict we will be able to get that bill off the floor.

BLITZER: A lot of your conservative friends call this amnesty, letting these illegal immigrants who have been here for five years or longer work their way toward citizenship. Is this amnesty?

FRIST: You know, that's where all – not all, but most of the focus is going to be, I think, over the next week. What is "amnesty"? How to deal with the 12 million people who came here who broke the law, who broke the law, but also we need to treat them with compassion. Forty percent have been here longer than 10 years.

Now, my definition of "amnesty" – and I've been very consistent with it – is that you don't give people a leg up on citizenship. Thus they have to earn it. And if that's the case, much of the debate, in my mind, should center on what they need to do over that 11-year period to earn that citizenship, what those criteria should be. And that will be debated

on the floor of the Senate.

BLITZER: The CNN poll that we conducted earlier in the month, we asked, "Do you favor or oppose amnesty for illegal immigrants in the United States for more than five years?" Seventy-two percent favor it. Twenty-five percent oppose it.

That would seem to be a strong support for the president's position, which effectively is the McCain-Kennedy legislation in the Senate that you now are on board with.

FRIST: Yes, that is correct. But, again, I think we need to put the word "amnesty" aside because it's become such a buzzword for people right now. Nobody knows exactly what "amnesty" means. They have to define it in their own mind.

But the focus will be on what those 12 million people will have to go through. Some will be sent back home. Some will just be through the temporary-worker program. Those greater than five years are going to have to earn it. What are those criteria going to be?

And let me come back. They should not get a leg up on anybody else, in terms of citizenship. They broke the law.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: And just ahead, the second part of my interview with Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist. We'll speak about a proposal he wants to raise in early June banning same-sex marriage in the United States. We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: For our North American viewers, CNN reporters will be "On the Story." That comes up right after "Late Edition" an hour from now, 1:00 p.m. Eastern, 10:00 a.m. Pacific.

And there's much more ahead on "Late Edition," including the debate over the U.S. government's tracking phone calls. We'll ask the Senate majority leader, Bill Frist, and the Judiciary Committee's ranking Democrat, Patrick Leahy, about that and more.

And don't forget CNN's primetime coverage of President Bush's speech on immigration reform starts at 7:00 p.m. Eastern in "The Situation Room." Lou Dobbs will be joining me. The president's address begins at 8:00 p.m. Eastern. That will be followed by a special edition of "Lou Dobbs Tonight" at 8:30 p.m. Eastern.

"Late Edition" continues right at the top of the hour.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to the second hour of "Late Edition."

We'll return to my interview with the Senate majority leader, Bill Frist, in just a moment. First, though, let's get a quick check of what's in the news right now from Brianna Keilar at the CNN headquarters in Atlanta.

(NEWSBREAK)

BLITZER: Just a short while ago, I spoke with the Senate majority leader, Bill Frist of Tennessee. Here's part two of that conversation.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: As you know, the House of Representatives has already passed legislation that's going to have to be reconciled in a conference committee with any legislation that's eventually passed by the Senate.

The House-passed legislation makes illegal immigration a felony. If you're here in this country illegally, you become a felon. It requires employers to verify worker status and to punish them if they hire illegal immigrants. There are fines, as I said, for hiring illegal immigrants. And it also calls for a fence or a wall to be built along a big chunk of the border, the United States border with Mexico. And no guest-worker program at all.

First of all, do you support building this wall along the border between the United States and Mexico?

FRIST: I think, as I described with the National Guard, we need, in essence, a wall, a wall, a structure where people can't go under, over, around or through. Does it have to be a 30-foot-high concrete wall? No, it does not. It could be the use of UAV, unmanned aerial vehicles, it could be infrared sensors, it could be sensors on the ground. The point is, we have to have a barrier there that people cannot cross. Part of it will have to be a structural wall; part of it does not need to be.

BLITZER: Can you finesse a compromise...

FRIST: Yes.

BLITZER: ... between the Senate and the House?

FRIST: Yes. Yes. I am absolutely convinced.

Right now, this discussion has matured over the last four to five months. We started even in the Senate with just strong border security, first and foremost, and that's where my heart is. But now people realize, unless you in some way manage the magnet which attracts people to this country, no matter how tall that wall is, people are going to continue to come. And therefore, you need all four components of the program.

The debate has matured. Over the next two weeks on the floor of the Senate, the debate is going to mature more and more as people learn more about how complex this problem is. It's an economic problem. It addresses who we are as the American people, a nation of the rule of law, but also a nation rich in immigrant history, our basic values, the humanitarian aspect, that people are dying across these borders.

It's a tough issue. It's not a Republican issue. It's not a Democrat issue. It's an American issue. And it's one we're going to take on boldly, on the floor of the Senate, following the leadership of the president of the United States.

BLITZER: And finally, when do you think this would be passed by the U.S. Senate?

FRIST: Within the next two weeks. I am confident. You've seen us working together in a bipartisan way -- this is a bipartisan bill, across the board. And yes, you know, there may be 10 people on either side who don't vote for it, but it's a bipartisan bill.

You're going to see the very best of the United States Senate as we have open amendment, open debate, take it to the floor, improve the bill that's on the floor, and we'll have it off before Memorial Day.

BLITZER: Let's talk about the surveillance programs here in the United States since 9/11. USA Today reported a bombshell this week. Let me read to you from the article on Thursday.

"The National Security Agency has been secretly collecting the phone call records of tens of millions of Americans using data provided by AT&T, Verizon and BellSouth. The NSA program reaches into homes and businesses across the nation by amassing information about the calls of ordinary Americans, most of whom aren't suspected of any crime. With access to records of billions of domestic calls, the NSA has gained a secret window into the communications habits of millions of Americans."

Are you comfortable with this program?

FRIST: Absolutely. Absolutely. I am one of the people who are briefed...

BLITZER: You've known about this for years.

FRIST: I've known about the program. I am absolutely convinced that you, your family, our families are safer because of this particular program.

I absolutely know that it is legal. The program itself is anonymous, in the sense that identifiers, in terms of protecting your privacy, are stripped off. And, as you know, the program is voluntary, the participants in that program.

And it comes to the reality -- it faces the reality that we're in the 21st century. And the only way to connect the dots, whether around the world or in this country, to prevent another 9/11, whether it's in the Pentagon or in New York or back in Nashville, Tennessee, is to connect those dots. And the only way to connect those dots is to use 21st-century technology that protects your privacy, and that's exactly what this does.

BLITZER: Can you tell the American people right now that over these past almost five years since the phone records have been collected -- I'm not talking about the warrantless surveillance, the warrantless wiretaps -- the phone records, that has resulted in thwarting one terrorist attack in the United States?

FRIST: You know, I am not going to comment on the program until the appropriate time. There has not been even a confirmation of the USA Today program itself. I...

BLITZER: But have you been briefed on one success story?

FRIST: I can tell you I've been briefed in a classified way, and I can tell you that I am absolutely, 100 percent sure, confident that this has protected and saved lives in the United States of America.

BLITZER: But has there been one success story that you can point to?

FRIST: I just don't want to be pulled in...

BLITZER: Without specifics, just tell us that there has been a terrorist attack that was plotted and, as a result of collecting these phone calls, was thwarted.

FRIST: You know, in appropriate hearings and settings, this will come out. But this is classified information about a classified program. You know, the more we talk about these programs, the more we're giving our playbook to the terrorists who are sitting out around this country right now, who did plan 9/11 and what happened at the Pentagon today. And they are in this country now. They are waiting. And the more we talk about these programs, we're giving them the playbook, and that empowers them to be able to have an attack on this country. And it's just not the right thing to do.

BLITZER: When are you going to introduce on the floor of the Senate legislation that would ban same-sex marriage?

FRIST: Sometime in early June, in early June. We're going to finish – the Senate plans will be that we will go through immigration. I'm going to do my best to bring the Kavanaugh nomination to the floor of the Senate. And then we have a break at Memorial Day. And very soon after that we will take the proposed amendment on having marriage be defined as a union between a man and a woman.

BLITZER: As you know, the daughter of the vice president, Mary Cheney, has got a new book out. She's a lesbian; she talks openly about it.

She was on "Larry King Live" earlier this week, and she spoke about this amendment that you would like to see passed that would ban same-sex marriage. I want you to listen to what she said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MARY CHENEY, AUTHOR: ... his position very clear, that he does not support the federal marriage amendment. When President Bush endorsed the federal marriage amendment, I did give pretty serious consideration to quitting the race, or to quitting the campaign, but I just couldn't. It was such an important election, and I believe so strongly in my dad."

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: She says her father opposes what you're about to try to pass. What do you say to the vice president and Lynne Cheney, when you look them in the eye and you say, "I want to ban same-sex marriage," knowing that their daughter clearly supports same-sex marriage?

FRIST: Yeah, I basically say, Mr. Vice President, right now marriage is under attack in this country, and we've seen activist judges overturning state by state law, where state legislatures have passed laws defining marriage between a man and a woman and that's it. And that is being overturned by a handful of activist judges around the country. And that is why we need an amendment to come to the floor of the United States Senate to define marriage as that union between one man and one woman.

BLITZER: Are you running for president?

FRIST: You know, I'm going to wait and see after I leave. Right now, as you well know, we've got a lot to work on here, so my number-one goal is going to be push this Republican agenda forward for the American people and, number two, make sure that we're in the majority next year in the United States Senate.

BLITZER: Senator, thanks very much for joining us.

FRIST: Great to be with you, Wolf. Thank you.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: And coming up, a top Democrat's take on the immigration fight, the domestic spying controversy, lots more. We'll talk live with Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont.

Then: Did the Iraq war spread turmoil across the Middle East?

My special conversation with Jordan's new foreign minister, Abdel Ilah Khatib, about where things stand in the region.

Plus, in case you missed it, we'll have some of the highlights of the other Sunday morning talk shows here in the United States. "Late Edition" continues right after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back. Joining us now with his take on immigration reform as well as the Bush administration's domestic surveillance program, is the ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, Patrick Leahy of Vermont.

Senator, welcome back to "Late Edition."

SEN. PATRICK LEAHY (D), VERMONT: Thank you. Good to be with you.

BLITZER: I want you to listen to what General Michael Hayden – he's been nominated by the president to become the

next CIA director – what he said about this USA Today report suggesting that, for almost five years, the National Security Agency has been collecting data on billions of phone calls here in the United States.

Listen to what he said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GEN. MICHAEL HAYDEN, CIA DIRECTOR NOMINEE: All I would want to say is that everything that NSA does is lawful and very carefully done and that the appropriate members of the Congress, House and Senate are briefed on all NSA activities. And I think I'd just leave it at that.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: All right. Are you convinced that everything the NSA has done, monitoring these phone calls, recording the patterns, listening in, not necessarily listening directly in but making sure phone numbers are recorded, has been lawful? LEAHY: No, I don't believe it's lawful. I do believe that General Hayden is a very competent, highly intelligence trained officer. And I appreciate that. But this is a question that goes beyond him. It goes to the White House. Is it legal? Is it proper? Does it follow the law?

And what we've been told in public leads me to believe it's not.

That's why I think it's very important that the...

BLITZER: What's illegal about it, potentially?

LEAHY: Well, there are very specific laws about when you can go and collect that. There's nothing that allows just a blanket going into your phone records, my phone records, everybody else that's listening.

And some might question: what does that give us? I mean, it's like drinking from a fire hose. We should be spying on terrorists, not spying on innocent Americans.

If you have hundreds of millions of phone calls you're trying to track a day, what do you get out of it? Remember, this is the same administration that had the information that could have stopped 9/11 from happening. They didn't translate it until September 12.

BLITZER: This has been going on, though since 9/11. Michael Hayden was the director of the National Security Agency. And he says that members of Congress, key members, Republicans and Democrats, were briefed on this program.

LEAHY: I've yet to hear anybody say they were briefed on the legality of it and agreed to it. And that's why the Judiciary Committee is going to have hearings on whether it is legal.

This is also, probably, why one of the telephone companies, Qwest, refused to go along with this. And nobody – I mean the administration, when they were, told we're not going to go along with it because we don't feel it's legal, if they really thought it was legal, they would have come right back in and said, no, you've got to give it to us.

Instead, they said, whoops, sorry, we're backing off. Does that mean that...

(CROSSTALK)

... if terrorists are going through one phone company, they're OK, and not through another, anymore than I believe that there are millions and millions of Americans involved in terrorist activity.

BLITZER: So did AT&T, Southern Bell and Verizon – did they violate the law, violate the privacy of their customers?

LEAHY: I do not find anything in the law that allows them to do this. This is why they're going to be invited to come before the Senate Judiciary Committee and explain under what law they acted.

BLITZER: Your colleague on the Judiciary Committee, Jeff Sessions, a Republican of Alabama – he responded to these reports this way. Listen to what he said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. JEFF SESSIONS (R) AL: We're in a war with terrorism. There are people out there that want to kill us.

And I don't think this action is nearly as troublesome as being made out here because they're not tapping our phones and getting our conversations; they're merely maintaining these numbers from which they have some system, apparently, to utilize those to match up with international phone calls connected to Al Qaida.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

LEAHY: Well, you know, the junior senator from Alabama has raised, basically, the White House talking points. The chairman of the committee, however, has said we're going to call them forward to find out what they did.

The fact of the matter is, it's almost as though, well, we can't tell you anything because we're fighting terrorists. Every time this administration screws up, whether it's with homeland security, after Katrina, a massive failure even though they spent billions of dollars to make sure that thing wouldn't happen, when they screw up along the border, when they get caught doing illegal surveillance of Americans, they say, well, but 9/11, 9/11.

Well, I'd remind them 9/11 happened on their watch. I think Americans are getting fed up with simply using an excuse for your mistakes and classify everything else so that you can't talk about it.

I want us to be safe. I don't think that this administration is doing it the right way. They screwed up with homeland security. They screwed up with Katrina. I mean, after all, they were told, go catch a 6'6" Arab running around Afghanistan, probably on dialysis, according to the press reports, Osama bin Laden.

We gave them everything they needed to go after him and they failed to catch him because they said, well, let's go to war in Iraq and then -- I mean, some of the declarations, Wolf -- I get very frustrated about it -- the president goes, several years ago, on an aircraft carrier and says, "mission accomplished," "mission accomplished."

BLITZER: He said major operations, combat operations were over.

LEAHY: Well, even that's wrong.

BLITZER: Yes, I know.

You spoke about General Hayden. You like him. You think he's highly qualified. The Republican chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Peter Hoekstra -- I interviewed him in "The Situation Room" earlier in the week -- listen to what he said about General Hayden.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE PETER HOEKSTRA (R-MI): Obviously the program has been going on for 4 1/2 years in one fashion or another sends a clear signal. The people walked out of those meetings believing the program was legal, essential, and it was making a difference.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Well, he was defending the program but he also didn't like the fact that General Hayden wears a uniform, active duty. He thinks a civilian should be running the CIA, not a military man.

What do you say?

LEAHY: I think somebody very competent should be running the CIA. I voted against Porter Goss as head of the CIA. He's a nice enough man but totally unsuited. It was just one more mistake by this administration. When they said, "We're going to protect you," they put a crony in who was then asked to hire other Republican cronies to run the CIA. We all know -- even this administration will admit -- that was a massive mistake.

BLITZER: Porter Goss. But what about Hayden? Your intention is to vote to confirm him based on what you know now?

LEAHY: No, I'm going to have to ask him a lot of questions. I said he's highly competent, certainly far more so than Mr. Goss was. But I want to know under what justification -- how does he justify the illegal spying on millions upon millions upon millions of Americans -- you, me and everybody else?

BLITZER: All right. Senator Leahy, stand by.

We're going to continue this conversation. Lots to talk about, including the president's address tomorrow night on immigration reform. We'll continue our conversation with Senator Patrick Leahy.

And don't forget to watch CNN's special coverage tomorrow night, primetime, the president's speech on immigration. It all starts in "The Situation Room" at 7:00 p.m. Eastern. My colleague Lou Dobbs will be joining me then. He'll follow the president's speech at 8:30 p.m. Eastern with a special edition of "Lou Dobbs Tonight."

Stay with "Late Edition."

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to "Late Edition." We're talking with the Senate Judiciary Committee's top Democrat, Patrick Leahy of Vermont.

Is it a good idea to send thousands of National Guard troops to the border with Mexico to prevent illegal immigrants

from trying to sneak across that border? LEAHY: I think what it is saying is our present immigration policy has failed. We have tried for years to get the administration to beef up our border patrol; they haven't done it.

Now that the governors want to call out the National Guard, that's fine, but let's start asking how thin they were. At one time last year, I think 50 percent of our forces in Iraq were National Guard.

BLITZER: About 40 percent National Guard and Reserve.

LEAHY: National Guard and Reserve. I mean, we're stretching them pretty thin now. We're going to make a border patrol out of them?

What I wish they had done -- and we asked them two years ago, why don't you fund the border patrol positions that the Congress has provided? You know what we got from Homeland Security for an answer? Nothing. Nothing at all. We gave them the money. We gave them the positions. They never filled them.

This comes to a question of competence. Having said that -- or incompetence, in this case.

Having said that, I think the president is right when he says we need a comprehensive immigration bill. I'll work with him and with some of my fellow Republicans in the Senate to do that. We passed a bill on a bipartisan vote out of the Judiciary Committee on immigration.

But, you know, there's a whole lot of parts. You're not going to arrest 12 million people -- I think we all agree on that -- and send them back. You just can't do it.

But what we ought to be doing is find a way to actually enforce our laws in employment situations. We don't. There's kind of a wink and nod to employees that are hiring illegal immigrants, paying them less than minimum wage but saying, "You can't say a word about it because we'll just call immigration."

BLITZER: But it looks like there's a compromise on the Senate side between Harry Reid and Bill Frist of the McCain-Kennedy language. It seems like that's going to go forward.

LEAHY: Yes. I've been...

BLITZER: Senator Frist, here on this program, said he expects by Memorial Day that to be passed in the Senate, and it'll have to be reconciled with a very different version in the House.

LEAHY: I applaud both Bill Frist and Harry Reid for getting together on that. I think they've done a service. I've been involved in these negotiations. We still have a way to go, but I think this is the way -- this is the way the Senate used to work, when you'd get together on these tough issues. And I think the president -- and I commend him. He spent about an hour and a half with a number of us a week or two ago talking about it. So long as we understand you're not going to pass simply an enforcement bill, it's got to be a comprehensive immigration bill.

BLITZER: Senator Frist also said that shortly after the Memorial Day break he wants to bring up an amendment to the Constitution that would ban same-sex marriage. He said that was going to be the next major issue on the agenda. Is that a good idea?

LEAHY: No, it's an election-year stunt. It's sort of like calling us into emergency session on Terri Schiavo to try to overturn very competent courts who looked at this terrible, tragic family issue.

These are the same Republicans who say, "We don't want the federal government trampling on our states." Well, the states have traditionally set the laws on marriage. They say what age you have to be to marry, whether you have to have your parents' permission, and so on. The states have done that. And what we ought to do is allow the states to do that.

Most states are going to say marriage is between a man and a woman. My own state of Vermont, because of our constitution, was given a question, would we support gay marriage? They said no. We'll have civil unions, which would give a gay couple legal rights of inheritance and so on.

But let the states work it out. They've always worked out these issues of marriage. That's the way it should be.

BLITZER: All right. One final question before I let you go.

LEAHY: Says the man who's been married 44 years to a woman I adore.

(LAUGHTER)

BLITZER: Especially on Mother's Day.

LEAHY: Especially on Mother's Day.

BLITZER: Let's talk about what Newt Gingrich said on "Meet the Press" earlier today. You remember, he was the



speaker in '94 when the Republicans took the majority in Congress with its "Contract with America."

A lot of Democrats are hoping the Democrats can do the same thing this time, recapture the majority. Newt Gingrich was skeptical you could do it. Listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NEWT GINGRICH, FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE (R-GA): They can't possibly put together a "Contract with America" because Howard Dean and Nancy Pelosi and their allies are all so far to the left, they can't be clear what they would do: raise taxes, create more big bureaucracy, have a much weaker system of defending America.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Is he right?

LEAHY: Well, he's so full of himself with this. You know, we need competence with accountability.

This is the man who was opposed to the Clinton plan to balance the budget. We balanced the budget. We brought about a surplus – a surplus which has now been turned by Republicans into the largest deficit and largest national debt in history.

This is the man who got so upset that he wasn't treated equally with the president on Air Force One that he was willing to shut down the government at a cost of untold millions.

If that's competence, I don't want it. I'm fed up with that. We can do a far better job, and we will.

BLITZER: All right, Senator Leahy, thanks very much for coming in. Appreciate it.

LEAHY: Thank you.

BLITZER: And coming up, it's been six months since the deadly terror attack against Jordan. We'll speak with that country's foreign minister. That's coming up.

But first, this: Mary Cheney, what's her story? The daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney is speaking out in her new book, "Now It's My Turn."

Cheney writes about being a lesbian and working for President Bush while the Republican ticket opposed same-sex marriage. She reveals she nearly quit the campaign when the president publicly supported a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage.

While Cheney says her family has always been supportive, she did not join them on the platform at the 2004 GOP convention.

Before joining the first Bush/Cheney campaign in 2000, Mary Cheney worked as a gay community liaison for the Coors Brewing Company. She currently lives in northern Virginia with her longtime partner.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to "Late Edition." I'm Wolf Blitzer in Washington. Six months ago terrorists, launched a deadly attack in Jordan's capital city of Amman.

On his visit to Washington this week, I spoke with that country's foreign minister, Abdel Ilah Khatib about Jordan's role in the war on terror and more.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: Foreign minister, welcome to Washington. Good to have you on "Late Edition."

ABDEL ILAH KHATIB, JORDANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER: Thank you. Good to be with you.

BLITZER: Let's talk a little bit about the aftermath of those terrorist attacks against the hotels in Amman back in November.

In February, the New York Times Magazine wrote this, printed this: "Jordan is home to many jihadis, young men from much the same milieu that produced Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and especially since the United States invaded Iraq nearly three years ago, Jordan has increasingly become a not-so-quiet place, a place where local Islamists cross easily into Iraq and back, a place where a jihadist underground can feel almost a normal part of a nation's life."

How bad is the terror threat facing Jordan right now?

KHATIB: Well, in many Muslim countries, there have been young people recruited by extreme groups. And I don't think

Jordan is a unique case but I think that the number of people who are being recruited is getting less and less. And I think that Jordan is doing a very good job protecting its border with Iraq.

I think that the explosions were shocking for the average Jordanian and I can say that the Jordanians at the civilian and security levels are more vigilant and there is a very strong drive against any terrorist activity in Jordan. And I think that the ability of these groups to recruit Jordanians is reduced tremendously.

BLITZER: It seems that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who himself is a Jordanian, has a special desire to undermine the regime, the kingdom, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Is that a fair assumption?

KHATIB: Well, he has not been successful in doing that.

BLITZER: But he's trying to do that.

KHATIB: He tried but he did not find any Jordanian to be recruited by him and to be sent across the border to conduct any terrorist activity.

BLITZER: Well, what about the terrorist activities ...

KHATIB: They were carried by non-Jordanians, non-Jordanian elements. Yes.

BLITZER: Non-Jordanians?

KHATIB: Yes.

BLITZER: Who was responsible? KHATIB: I think that the reports by the security agencies indicated -- they were public -- that Iraqis were sent across the border in that specific instance.

And there is a lady who is jailed and who will be sent to court -- I think she is already before court already -- and she is, again, Iraqi.

BLITZER: Were they sent by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi?

KHATIB: Yes, that was the case.

BLITZER: Al Qaeda in Iraq? That's the organization.

KHATIB: He was not able to recruit any Jordanians to conduct operations in Jordan for him.

BLITZER: The problem, though, exists...

KHATIB: Yes, of course.

BLITZER: ... because a lot of Americans love to go to Jordan for tourist attractions, beautiful sites. How worried should Americans and other foreigners be about visiting Jordan right now?

KHATIB: I think that the record of Jordan is very excellent, and I think that the security agencies in Jordan have been doing a great job. Of course, there is a threat for all of us. Not only in Jordan, throughout the region, and in Europe and the United States, the security and terror threat exists all the time. But I think that what speaks more importantly than anything else is the security agencies' record and the record of Jordan as a country in combating terrorism.

BLITZER: You obviously are trying to find Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. He is the most wanted terrorist in Jordan. He is someplace in Iraq. Is that fair?

KHATIB: Well, these are the media reports.

BLITZER: What do you think?

KHATIB: I think that he is most likely there and I think that he is being pursued by many, many security agencies throughout the world.

BLITZER: You'd like to get your hands on him, I'm sure.

Another issue that's come up in recent days is allegations that Hamas was involved in arms smuggling, trying to bring weapons into Jordan, maybe from Syria, maybe someplace else, causing a serious strain in Jordan's relationship with the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority. What's the latest information you have on this so-called plot?

KHATIB: There is a delegation from the Palestinian Authority in Jordan today discussing this issue, which we don't want to highlight, you know, publicly, because we care about the relations with the Palestinian Authority. We want to

maintain excellent relations with the Palestinian Authority, and we hope that we will be able to do that. And we care for maintaining our relations with the Palestinian people. It's very important not to allow any infiltration, any attempt to undermine our security, but it's also important for Jordan to maintain excellent relations with the P.A. and with the Palestinian people.

BLITZER: With the Palestinian Authority.

Here's what Sami Abu Zuhri, a Hamas spokesman said on April 19th. "We in Hamas reject and condemn these false accusations. We regret that the Jordanian government has used this to justify the canceling of the visit by the foreign minister, Mahmoud al-Zahar.

KHATIB: We did not need any justification to cancel any visit, and we have invited a delegation from both the government and the security agencies of the P.A. And my understanding is that the government preferred not to participate in that delegation.

BLITZER: Here is what President Bush says about Hamas and the U.S. refusal to deal with the Palestinian Authority led by Hamas. Listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BUSH: Hamas has made it clear that they do not acknowledge the right of Israel to exist. And I have made it clear that so long as that is their policy, we will have no contact with the leaders of Hamas.

Democratically leaders cannot have one foot in the camp of democracy and one foot in the camp of terror.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Is that a wise policy for the U.S., the European Union, Israel, to reject any talks, any negotiations with Hamas so long as they don't meet the requirements they put forward, recognized Israel's right to exist and terrorism and agree to all the Oslo, post-Oslo agreements that the former Palestinian Authority accepted with Israel?

KHATIB: You know that the new government has been in office practically for about five or six weeks, and it's early to make a final judgment. But it is our hope that they face up to their responsibilities and act as a government. There is a huge difference between acting as a resistance or opposition group and acting as a government. They are responsible for the welfare of the Palestinian people, for advancing the national cause of the Palestinian people, so let's hope that they move in the right direction.

BLITZER: Here's what the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, said the other day about Hamas. Listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

EHUD OLMERT, ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER: If they will accept these principles, then of course we are ready to talk. If we wait two months, three months, half a year, and we don't see any change, then most likely we are going to move forward without an agreement, without negotiations.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Now, Jordan, like Egypt, has a peace treaty with Israel. Are you encouraging, pressuring, telling the Hamas government to accept these conditions and accept Israel's right to exist?

KHATIB: It is our strategy in Jordan to move in the direction of achieving comprehensive peace, and we look at our peace treaty with Israel as part of the comprehensive peace, and we think that all parties have to go back to the negotiating table.

We believe that President Abbas is both authorized and willing to move in the direction of conducting negotiations with Israel, and we hope that the new Israeli government will move in the same direction, because we think at the end of the day, we will not be able to end the conflict unless there is a peace agreement, negotiated peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

BLITZER: But do you believe Hamas will accept those conditions? Is that foreseeable?

KHATIB: We hope that all the Palestinian Authority will be moving in that direction, but we know that President Abbas is willing and authorized – he has been democratically elected with a margin of 62, 64 percent – and he has expressed his willingness lately, repeatedly, but lately that he is willing to engage in direct peace negotiations.

BLITZER: That's President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority ...

KHATIB: And he is authorized ...

BLITZER: But his party, the Fatah, lost. It was Hamas that won.

KHATIB: But he is the authorized leader of the P.A. and of the PLO, and we believe that he is capable of conducting negotiations, because he is empowered by the basic law of the P.A. to conduct negotiations with Israel.

BLITZER: And just button up that one loose end that we didn't button up. Did Jordan have evidence that Hamas was plotting to get weapons into Jordan to use against Jordanians?

KHATIB: Well, there was an attempt to smuggle arms into Jordan, and, as I said, we tried to put the facts before a joint Palestinian delegation from the security agencies and from the government, and the Hamas government has decided not to participate in that delegation.

BLITZER: So but you did have evidence ...

KHATIB: Yes. BLITZER: Why would Hamas be trying to undermine the Jordanian government?

KHATIB: This is what we intended to discuss with the joint delegation from the security and the political authorities and the Palestinian government.

BLITZER: Ehud Olmert, the prime minister of Israel, says that if the Hamas government doesn't accept these conditions, then Israel will take unilateral action on the West Bank. Let me read to you what he said on March 29th.

"In the coming period, we will move to set the final borders of the state of Israel, a Jewish state with a Jewish majority. We will try to achieve this in an agreement with the Palestinians. If not, Israel will take control of its own fate, and in consensus among our people and with the agreement of our friends in the world, especially U.S. President George Bush, we will act."

Is that wise for Israel to take unilateral action, withdrawing from parts of the West Bank?

KHATIB: As I said earlier, peace has to be negotiated between the two parties, and an agreement has to be negotiated between the two parties. And the aim of the peace process should be ending the conflict. And I don't think that we will be able to end the conflict unless there is an acceptable agreement negotiated between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

BLITZER: So you would oppose unilateral Israeli withdrawal.

KHATIB: We will definitely push in the direction of conducting peace negotiations leading to a peace treaty between the Israelis and the Palestinians that will allow for the establishment of a Palestinian state, because this is the basic prerequisite for achieving lasting peace in the Middle East.

BLITZER: But what if Hamas continues to refuse the conditions?

KHATIB: We think that the vast majority of the Palestinians are still in favor of a negotiated peace that will lead to establishing a Palestinian state.

BLITZER: The prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, Ismail Haniyeh, said this in the "Washington Post" the other day.

"If the siege continues, the whole authority will be facing collapse, and if there is a collapse, there will be chaos in the region."

Clearly, Jordan's interests are at stake right now as well.

KHATIB: Well, everybody's interests are at stake, and Jordan is very, very close to the conflict, and we are affected by whatever happens between the Israelis and the Palestinians. And this is why it is the responsibility of all to preserve and protect and maintain the P.A. And let's not forget that the P.A. was created by the peace process, by the whole international community, and we should not allow for its collapse.

BLITZER: You have a long border with Iraq.

KHATIB: Yes.

BLITZER: Clearly, you have a lot of interests there as well. Do you believe there will be a stable Iraqi government that emerges in the coming days or weeks that unifies the Shia, the Sunni and the Kurdish communities of Iraq?

KHATIB: It will take a huge effort, but definitely it is our hope that there will be a national unity government which will be able to put Iraq on the right track, to be gaining its stability and to be reintegrated again in the region, to play its vital role.

BLITZER: How ...

KHATIB: Iraq is a very important country in balancing the situation in the region.

BLITZER: How worried are you that Iraq in the end will emerge as a Shiite-led, pro-Iranian regime with enormous influence from Iran in Iraq?

KHATIB: It's very important for everybody in the region, including Iran, to have a sovereign, independent and stable Iraq.

BLITZER: Are you worried, though, about Iran's emerging influence in Iraq?

KHATIB: We hope that all surrounding countries will cease any interference in the internal situation of Iraq.

BLITZER: The president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, sent a letter this week to President Bush, in which he said this, "Liberalism and Western style democracy have not been able to help realize the ideals of humanity. Today, these two concepts have failed."

What do you say to President Ahmadinejad?

KHATIB: Well, I say that the region is suffering from very heavy pressure emanating from the question of Palestine, the Palestinian- Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq. We don't need another crisis, so we are pushing towards a diplomatic solution for the crisis regarding the weapons of mass destruction and the nuclear file (ph) regarding Iran.

BLITZER: Does Jordan have a good relationship with Iran?

KHATIB: We have a normal relation, but Iran is a part of the region, an important part of the region. And as I say, we prefer to see a diplomatic solution negotiated between the parties.

BLITZER: One final question, Mr. Foreign Minister, before I let you go: Is the region better off or worse off following the U.S.-led invasion, three years ago, of Iraq?

KHATIB: Well, if we succeed to balance the situation in Iraq and if we succeed in maintaining the integrity, the territorial integrity of Iraq then we need to be moving forward to reform the situation in the whole region and to improve the economic and the political situation in the region.

BLITZER: So – but you're basically saying it's still an open question?

KHATIB: It's an open question and the challenge is to stabilize Iraq and to maintain the territorial integrity of Iraq.

BLITZER: Foreign Minister, as I said, welcome to Washington. Good to have you on "Late Edition."

KHATIB: Thank you. Thank you, Wolf.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BLITZER: Up next, the results of our web question of the week, "Does it bother you if the U.S. government collects data on your phone calls?"

Plus, in case you missed it, Sunday morning talk show roundup.

And for our North American viewers coming up right at the top of the hour, CNN reporters are "On the Story," including national security correspondent, David Ensor, on the domestic spying fall-out. You'll want to stick around for that, "On the Story with Ali Velshi," right at the top of the hour.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: And now, in case you missed it, let's check some of the highlights from the other Sunday talk shows here in the United States. On all of them, the controversy over the federal government's monitoring of Americans' phone calls was a key topic.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LAURA BUSH, FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES: It's a very interesting conversation that we're having across the United States about this right now because, if the intelligence activities had not been authorized by the president within the law as they are and we had a terrorist attack, people would – the question would be the opposite – why haven't you been trying to track Al Qaida or links to Al Qaida in the United States?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. JOSEPH BIDEN (D-DE) JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: Technology has probably gone beyond the status of our existing laws. And this administration has a pattern of excess. Rather than come to us and tell us how to amend the law to provide for them being able to do what they want to do, is they go ahead and just go ahead without any

congressional oversight.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NEWT GINGRICH, FMR. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: Just look at the specifics of what have they're doing. It is totally legal. The real problem is, the Bush administration refuses to come up front and explain it in advance.

If you go to the American people and say, we're in a long war with a irreconcilable wing of Islam. There are people who want to kill millions of us. Your government has to have an ability to track these people down.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. JANE HARMAN (D-CA) INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE: I think the administration is breaking the law. Its legal rationale that it offers, I think, is extremely shaky.

To this White House, the Constitution starts with Article Two, which is the power of the executive. They skip over Article One totally. That's the legislature. And Article Three is the courts.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Highlights from some of the other Sunday morning talk shows here in the United States. Highlights on "Late Edition," the last word in Sunday talk.

Our "Late Edition" Web question asked, "Does it bother you if the U.S. government collects data on your phone calls?"

Check out your answers: 78 percent of you said yes; 22 percent said no. Remember, this is not a scientific poll.

And that's your "Late Edition for this Sunday, May 14." Please be sure to join me next Sunday and every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. Eastern for the last word in Sunday talk.

I'm in "The Situation Room" tomorrow night, 7:00 p.m. Eastern for our special coverage of President Bush's Oval Office speech on immigration reform.

My colleague Lou Dobbs will be joining us right after the president's speech, a special edition of "Lou Dobbs Tonight" at 8:30 p.m. Eastern. Thanks very much for joining us. "On the Story" is next. Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers out there, including my mom and my wife Lynn.

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