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LOU DOBBS TONIGHT

New Iraq Message; Video Allegedly Shows Western Hostages in Iraq

Aired November 29, 2005 - 18:00 ET

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LOU DOBBS, CNN ANCHOR: Good evening, everyone.

Tonight, the Bush administration searching for an Iraqi exit strategy. Opposition to the war is growing and violence in Iraq tonight is intensifying. Why a major speech by the president tomorrow could set the stage for a significant withdrawal of our troops next year.

President Bush has ended his two-day trip to our nation's broken borders and is being blasted by critics who say he is merely playing politics with our nation's security. Why the president's border push could backfire on the White House.

And then, Congressman Curt Weldon joins us here tonight. His battle to free the Able Danger taskforce members to speak before Congress is well under way. The congressman will be our guest to respond to comments by former 9/11 Commission member Tim Roemer last night on this program.

In Miami tonight, bracing for an aggressive new security sweep that could happen at any time, anywhere. I'll be talking with the head of the Miami Police Department about his controversial anti- terrorism plan.

And saving the U.S. Capitol from a very PC Christmas. The fight is on once again to call the U.S. Capitol Christmas tree exactly what it is, a Christmas tree.

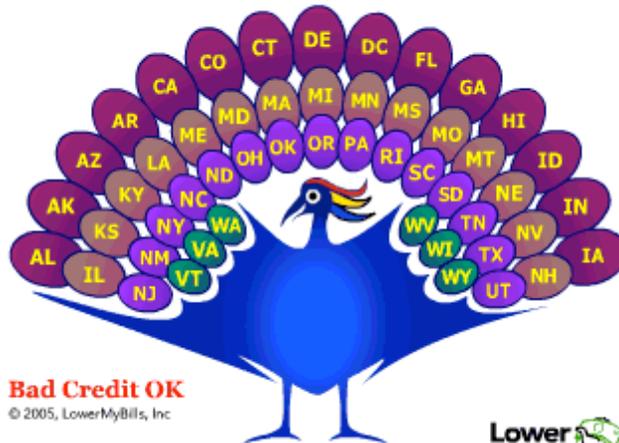
We begin tonight with the Bush administration's new efforts to stop the slide and support for the war in Iraq. Tomorrow, President Bush will insist that Iraqi force are taking over key security duties from the American military and are increasingly able to defend their country. The speech could set the stage for a withdrawal of tens of thousands of our troops from Iraq next year.

Dana Bash is live tonight at the White House with a preview of the president's address.

Jamie McIntyre live at the Pentagon.

Aneesh Raman in Baghdad, the scene of a new wave of terrorist kidnappings and violence.

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We begin tonight with Dana Bash -- Dana. DANA BASH, CNN WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Well, Lou, the president will attempt to retake control of the political debate over Iraq by trying to flesh out the issue of the day, withdrawing American troops.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BASH (voice over): In a preview of what the White House is billing as a major speech on Iraq, the president suggested troops could start coming home soon but warned too soon would be a terrible mistake.

GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: I want our troops to come home, but I don't want them to come home without having achieved victory. And we've got a strategy for victory.

BASH: The president will try to define that strategy, aides say, in more detail than ever before, focusing on progress Iraqis are making in securing their own country. A senior official says Mr. Bush will admit it's taken more time than expected to properly train Iraqi security forces, but he'll cite some 120 Iraqi battalions in the fight, 40 leading missions, and tout specific regions, like a road formerly known as "Death Street" that are now safe and under Iraqi control.

NICOLLE WALLACE, WHITE HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR: This is a clear road map for the conditions being in place for Iraqis to defend and secure their own country, which is, of course, the condition that has to be met for United States troops to come home.

BASH: The president still says he'll make that decision based on advice from his military commanders.

A Democrat just back from Iraq who wants U.S. troops to stay reports progress but warns it may be slow-going.

SEN. JOSEPH LIEBERMAN (D), CONNECTICUT: Militarily, the Iraqis are beginning to show much more self-sufficiency. They're a long way from being able to take it on their own, and that's why we have to be careful not to withdraw too soon. But progress really is being made.

BASH: The White House has tried several times before to turn around slumping support for Iraq with speeches billed as major. After Cindy Sheehan captured August headlines, Bush aides promised to explain their Iraq policy better with this VFW speech. That was two months after using the same tactic with this prime-time address.

BUSH: Is the sacrifice worth it? It is worth it.

BASH: Yet, they lost support. In June, 52 percent of Americans said it wasn't worth going to war. Two months later, 54 percent. Now 60 percent. Six in 10 Americans say Iraq wasn't worth it.

BILL MCINTURFF, PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES: What the headlines say every day in Iraq is how many poor people got blown up and how many American soldiers were killed. That's the reality that's shaping opinions about Iraq.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BASH: And Bush officials say they believe Americans are willing to stay in Iraq if they think they can win. And that's a word the president is using more often. And aides concede the public yearns for a plan, which is why the White House is going to release or declassify a 20 plus-page document tomorrow they say proves that there is a plan -- Lou.

DOBBS: It's extraordinary, Dana, that there should even be a discussion at this point as to exactly what it is the American strategy in Iraq. That, of course, the first obstacle that the Bush administration has to overcome.

Dana, thank you very much.

BASH: Thank you.

DOBBS: Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld today insisted that U.S. forces will not exit Iraq until their work is done and Iraq capable of defending itself. But questions persist tonight over whether Iraqi forces will ever be strong enough to fight without a strong American presence.

Jamie McIntyre reports from the Pentagon.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

JAMIE MCINTYRE, CNN SR. PENTAGON CORRESPONDENT (voice over): The Pentagon's exit strategy or victory strategy, as the Bush administration prefers to call it, hinges almost entirely on the fighting ability and political loyalty of Iraq's often maligned security forces. On the eve of the president's Iraq policy speech, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld set the stage with a ringing endorsement of the Iraqi military.

DONALD RUMSFELD, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: By golly, the people who have been denigrating the Iraqi security forces are flat wrong. They've been wrong from the beginning. They're doing a darn good job, and they're doing an increasingly better job every day, every week, every month. And they have to, because it's their country.

MCINTYRE: Rumsfeld cited a number of milestones which he said demonstrated the growing capability of Iraq's army and police, including the turnover of some 29 military bases to Iraqi forces, as well as control of the vital Airport Road to Iraqi police. Rumsfeld said last year there were only 96,000 trained and equipped Iraqi security forces. Now he says there are more than 212,000.

Last year, the Pentagon listed just five Iraqi battalions as in the fight. Now it says the number is 95.

The number of Iraqi army divisions grew from zero to seven. The number of special police battalions, including commando units, has jumped from none to 28. In an interview, Iraq's national security adviser predicted up to 30,000 U.S. troops could leave next year because of the improving Iraqi military. That's not out of line with U.S. projections which are not being made public.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

MCINTYRE: In his Pentagon briefing, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld indirectly answered critics who say it's time for the U.S. to either pull out or at least pull back. "Quitting is not an exit strategy," Rumsfeld declared. He said that would invite more terrorist violence and put the American people at still greater risk -- Lou.

DOBBS: Jamie McIntyre, thank you, from the Pentagon.

In Iraq today, two American soldiers were killed when the vehicle they were riding in was struck by a roadside bomb. The attack took place north of Baghdad this morning. The soldiers were assigned to Taskforce Baghdad. Their deaths bring the number of American deaths killed -- number of American troops killed so far to 2,110.

Also in Iraq tonight, insurgents are once again targeting foreign worker in a new wave of terrorist kidnappings. Tonight, an American citizen, Tom Clox (ph), a father of two from Clearbrook, Virginia, is one of four foreigners now being held by radical Islamist terrorists after being kidnapped in western Baghdad.

Aneesh Raman reports from the Iraqi capital.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ANEESH RAMAN, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Video broadcasts on Arabic news channel Al-Jazeera shows four Western aid workers in the custody of insurgents. All of them seated as militants point guns to their head.

I.D. cards are also shown. Incredibly difficult to make out.

The group that has the aid workers in custody, previously unknown, calls itself Swords of Justice. They say the four aid workers are "spies."

The aid workers were kidnapped in the capital on Saturday, part of a group called Christian Peacemaker Team, a group that's been in Iraq since October 2002, a group meant to catalog human rights abuses.

Now, also, German's chancellor, Angela Merkel, announcing that a German woman and her driver have been kidnapped in Iraq. The woman and her driver have been missing since Friday.

The nationalities of the aid workers, one of them American, one of them British, two others Canadian. All of those governments now, in addition to the German government, actively seeking the return of their citizens.

Aneesh Raman, CNN, Baghdad.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

DOBBS: And as President Bush prepares to deliver his major address on Iraq, we'd like to hear what you think on the issue. What would you want to hear from the president tomorrow, we'll withdraw troops over the next six months, we'll withdraw troops as our commitments to Iraqis are realized, we'll be sending more troops to Iraq, we'll stay the course?

Please vote, casting your vote at LouDobbs.com. We'll have the results of course later here in the broadcast.

The president today traveled to the U.S.-Mexican border near El Paso, Texas, as part of his brief two-day focus on border security issues. President Bush spent only a couple of minutes touring the border. The president did not even get out of his car once during the entire tour.

President Bush is being criticized for continuing to support a guest worker program for illegal aliens that many call an amnesty program. Once again, President Bush defended his program.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BUSH: One of the ways to make sure we have a rational border control policy is to make work legal. Not amnesty, but work legal on a temporary basis. People ought to be given a (INAUDIBLE) proof work card, come here and do jobs Americans won't do, and then after a set period of time go home.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

DOBBS: Later in this hour, Casey Wian will be reporting, taking a closer look at the president's border tour. And Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona, a staunch advocate of border security, will be among our guests.

We're also bringing you a surprising comment from Defense Secretary Rumsfeld on our nation's broken borders crisis, a comment that could come back to haunt him and this administration.

Also ahead tonight, China making friends with some of the world's most dangerous regimes just so it can have access to oil. Our special report on China's energy push.

And for Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, a chance to snub American politicians on his own turf. We'll have the latest for you on a Chavez insult to America.

And the latest tonight on the Able Danger controversy. Congressman Curt Weldon pushing forward with his fight for a hearing on Able Danger. He's our guest here coming right up.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez isn't giving up on his campaign to embarrass the United States and President Bush. Just days after Chavez announced plans to sell cheap home heating oil to working Americans, six congressmen say Venezuela refused to allow them into the country.

Christine Romans is here with the story -- Christine.

CHRISTINE ROMANS, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Lou, a high-level congressional delegation to Venezuela never got farther than the Caracas airport yesterday. Six congressmen from the International Relations Committee were on a Latin American trip led by Congressman Henry Hyde and Tom Lantos.

They were held on board their airplane, and they say harassed by Venezuelan customs officials for two hours. The Americans say they were not allowed to disembark or attend their scheduled meetings.

Now, the foreign ministry of Venezuela denies that it held a delegation on the ground and says the congressmen simply decided to continue on their way.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ROMANS (voice over): It seems Hugo Chavez is making a career out of needling the United States government. He's called the American president an "assassin," "Mr. Danger," a "crazy man" and labeled the United States the largest terrorist organization in the world. He proclaimed that President Bush is the cause of world poverty and vowed to give cheap energy to America's forgotten poor.

Last week, Chavez made good on his pledge. Venezuela's CITGO brought discount heating oil to 45,000 needy families in Massachusetts.

Santa Chavez' bag of goodies comes to the Bronx next week. Eight million gallons of heating oil at a 40 percent discount.

MICHAEL SHIFTER, INTER-AMERICAN DIALOGUE: He's trying to needle the United States and needle the Bush

administration to show that the richest country on earth, the most powerful country, can't take care of its own.

ROMANS: Yet, even as Chavez uses his petrol dollars to win favor with American consumers, his relationship with policymakers is strained. Congressman Hyde's office called the Venezuelan government's airport snub "capricious and unexplained," especially given "the purpose of the mission was to seek ways to reduce strains in the increasingly troubled relationship between the United States and Venezuela."

(END VIDEOTAPE)

ROMANS: And troubled it is. American lawmakers surprised and angered by their airport debacle, but the foreign ministry is insisting it did nothing wrong, that a Spanish defense ministry claim was being processed first and the congressmen simply decided not to wait, they left on their own accord -- Lou. DOBBS: And I suppose we can expect this sort of thing to continue so long as the best -- that an American congressman who is insulted this way, the best he can do is come up with the words "capricious and unexplained." Oh, Chavez must be trembling after that response.

ROMANS: Yes, Chavez definitely takes the cake in the words that he uses to describe American policymakers.

DOBBS: What in the heck was Congressman Hyde doing there anyway? Don't we have a State Department that takes care of this sort of thing?

ROMANS: The International Relations Committee got a little lesson in international relations, I think.

DOBBS: And doing such a boffo job, they decided to expand their success all the way to Venezuela.

Thank you very much, Ms. Romans.

Reaction to the Treasury Department's claim that China is not manipulating its currency appears to be unanimous. And the reaction is outrage.

Even the National Association of Manufacturers is blasting Treasury Secretary John Snow for that decision. Usually the NAM is in the tow of this administration, or vice versa. The head of NAM released a statement calling upon the White House to stop talking about take action on China's currency manipulation and start taking action.

China's currency manipulation is one of the only areas where the NAM and the AFL-CIO agree. The AFL-CIO called the decision a slap in the face to American workers.

Another slap in the face to American workers is a shipment of American jobs to cheap foreign labor markets. That's the subject of our quote of the day.

The chairman of Wachovia, Ken Thompson, today said, "We are buying products manufactured in low-wage countries. That's good for consumers in the U.S. It creates job loss in the U.S., but to try to staunch that, in my view," he said, "would be like putting your thumb in a dike to hold back the Atlantic Ocean."

And Senator Arlen Specter adding to the day. He may actually be coming to the defense of star wide receiver Terrell Owens.

Specter has accused the NFL and the Philadelphia Eagles of treating Terrell Owens unfairly. Senator Specter said he even might make this a United States Senate matter.

The Eagles suspended Owens earlier this month for conduct detrimental to the team, as it was put. The team also deactivated Owens for the rest of the season. The case has been decided by an independent arbiter on the side of the team and its management. Senator Specter, however, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and also, he says, an avid Eagles fan, says he is considering referring the matter to the Antitrust Subcommittee.

Specter says it was vindictive and inappropriate, in his words, for the NFL and the Eagles to prevent other teams from talking to Owens. Senator Specter says it's a restraint of trade for them to do that.

Senator Specter did make it clear that he doesn't support Owens' actions. This, obviously, a political judgment and posture. The senator from Pennsylvania said he was "madder than hell" at what Owens did to ruin the Eagles' season.

It is almost liberating to know that the United States Senate would take up such an important issue given all of the trivialities that Americans, millions of us, must contend with day in and day out.

You may send your response to, of course, Senator Specter. I'm sure that will be an expression of gratitude on the part of all of us.

Just ahead here tonight, red storm rising. China buying oil from some of the world's most dangerous regimes, helping to facilitate China's explosive growth. We'll have a special report.

And President Bush promising to secure our nation's borders. But one very high profile member of his cabinet isn't so sure that's even possible.

That story, as well as our special guest, Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona.

And an aggressive show of force against terrorism in one American city. Miami's police chief, John Timoney, joins us to talk about his new strategy, one that is controversial with, say, the ACLU.

Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin says the weeks of chaos and rioting among young Muslims all across France amounted to something that he would call social unrest, certainly nothing more. De Villepin spoke with our Christiane Amanpour and explained why, in his view, the unrest, as he put it, in France was minor, compared, for example, to the LA riots in 1992.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DOMINIQUE DE VILLEPIN, FRENCH PRIME MINISTER: I'm not sure you can call them riots. It's very different from the situation you have known in 1992 in L.A., for example. You had at that time 54 people that died. You had 2,000 people wounded. In France, during the two-week period of unrest, nobody died in France. So I think you cannot compare this social unrest with any kind of riots.

CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR, CNN CHIEF INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: What do you call it then?

DE VILLEPIN: Social unrest. You have to understand also that there were no guns in the streets, no adults. Mostly young people between 12 and 20. So it is very special movement.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

DOBBS: A special movement, as he put it. Nine thousand cars were burned in the unrest, 100 buildings were burned and damaged in the unrest, and 130 policemen injured.

Some special movement.

Tonight, China is feeling its aggressive military growth by buying up the world's energy resources. Some of its suppliers for the oil, the world's most dangerous regimes.

Kitty Pilgrim has the report.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

KITTY PILGRIM, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice over): China has invested some \$8 billion in Sudan, owns 40 percent of Sudan's oil consortium, and imports more than 60 percent of Sudan's oil. And in return, supplies the repressive Sudanese dictator with weapons.

NILE GARDINER, HERITAGE FOUNDATION: China, in many ways, has helped to prop up this brutal dictatorship. It is supplying a lot of weaponry to the Sudanese government, who are, of course, supporting the Janjaweed militias and who are continuing to conduct a campaign of genocide against many civilians in the Darfur region.

PILGRIM: Human rights groups charge that Chinese weapons are used by militias to massacre the civilian population of the country and chase them off oil-producing areas. Two million displaced, tens of thousands dead.

Roger Robinson is the vice chairman of the congressional U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission and says China is aggressively going after oil production. China's National Petroleum Corporation workers are on the ground in Sudan.

ROGER ROBINSON, U.S. CHINA ECON. SEC. REV. COMM.: So long as you have China with upwards to 10,000 workers on the ground building a 900 mile pipeline, this is providing vital life support to the Khartoum regime.

PILGRIM: Despite the desperate poverty of Sudan, its president this week bragged oil production will double to reach one million barrels a day by the end of 2006. That will do little to alleviate dire poverty but only add to strengthen the country's corrupt rulers.

REP. CHRIS SMITH (R), COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: In an octopus-like way, China is spreading its tentacles and forging friendships where they ask no questions about human rights, but they then take these very valuable minerals, oil, and the like, and in exchange provide weapons and cash.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

PILGRIM: Now, Sudan is also on the U.S. State Department list as a state supporter of terrorism. Yet China provides Sudan with diplomatic protection. And critics say China refuses to support any U.N. action against Sudan and the United Nations, all in the interest of keeping its oil imports flowing -- Lou.

DOBBS: And it's remarkable. Those who are concerned about the genocide taking place in the Sudan, the United Nations and its limited action that has put forth so far, no one is focusing, aside from ourselves and a few others, on the role of China in supporting these regimes and the conflict that results in this event.

PILGRIM: Many of the people we spoke with today said this conflict would be over by now except it's being funded.

DOBBS: Perhaps John Snow could be -- turn to the Sudan to work things out with his recent successes and currency manipulation with Beijing.

Thank you very much. Kitty Pilgrim.

Coming up here next, a serious trip or a publicity stunt? We'll have the latest for you on the president's tour of our broken borders. Arizona Senator Jon Kyl is our guest.

And then, Able Danger. Congressman Curt Weldon among our guests as well. He's here to tell us firsthand the sounds of his efforts to free Able Danger members to speak to the U.S. Congress.

And Miami's controversial show of strength. Ordinary citizens are going to soon be caught up in Miami's terrorist sweeps, says the ACLU. Miami's police chief, John Timoney, will be here to talk about it.

Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: President Bush today wrapped up his brief two-day focus on border security with a trip to the U.S.-Mexican border near El Paso. During this tour, President Bush had an opportunity to make real substantive progress on our nation's border emergency.

By continuing, however, to push for a guest worker program that is fiercely opposed by conservative Republicans and most Americans, in point of fact, if surveys are accurate, President Bush may have made the goal of securing our broken borders even more difficult. Casey Wian reports.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BUSH: I spent a lot of quality time in this part of the world when I was the governor.

CASEY WIAN, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice over): That may be true, but this time President Bush spent just a few minutes touring the border. He only saw a four-mile stretch of the Border Patrol's 266-mile El Paso Sector. And during the tour, the president didn't even get out of his car.

ROBERT BOATWRIGHT, EL PASO BORDER PATROL: He was able to see some diverse infrastructure and technology in place, areas that have been resourced, as opposed to areas that have not been completely resourced. Urban environment versus a little bit of a rural environment.

He was able to see what the benefits of infrastructure and technology can do for us.

WIAN: What he also saw was one of the small sections of the border where the United States has effective border security. He skipped the vast desert stretches where alien and drug smugglers fight for control with the Border Patrol every day.

When he spoke to reporters after the tour, he continued to promise a crackdown.

BUSH: Step one of a border control strategy is increase the resources so the people standing behind me are able to do their job.

Step two, is when we catch somebody, don't release them. Capture and release has been a long-standing policy of the federal government and we're going to change that.

WIAN: But the president has not backed off his public support for a guest-worker program, raising suspicions that his new found desire for strict border security is purely political. He did make time for political fund raisers Monday night in Phoenix.

BUSH: Jon Kyl understands clearly that the role of the federal government is to enforce the border.

WIAN: And in Denver Tuesday afternoon. During his border visit, the president emphasized the additional resources his administration has committed to the border. But a key member of his administration, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld admitted failure at home when speaking about Iraq's borders.

DONALD RUMSFELD, DEFENSE SECRETARY: The borders can't be protected. We can't protect our own border!

(END VIDEOTAPE) WIAN: That candid admission is not likely to help the president in his efforts to convince the American public that he's serious about border security, Lou?

DOBBS: Well, it was a moment of candor from the defense secretary, talking unfortunately about what is nothing less than a crisis in terms of our border security and illegal immigration. What has been the response?

WIAN: It certain was.

DOBBS: What has been the response, Casey? Have you had an opportunity to talk with our border patrol agents who have the very tough job of trying to carry out their responsibilities against an administration that has no political will to either defend the border or to create a rational humane immigration policy?

WIAN: The border patrol agents we've been able to speak to in the past couple of days have been supportive of the fact that the president is making this a national issue, is coming and visiting the border.

What a lot of people have remarked on, though, is the fact that the president spoke extensively, several times about border security, said absolutely nothing new, yet Secretary Rumsfeld was able to sum up the situation in about seven words, Lou.

DOBBS: Its amazing how honesty is usually rather succinct. Thank you very much, Casey Wian.

Well, the president of Mexico, Vicente Fox, was quick to respond to President Bush's comments about stronger border security. President Fox says the way to solve the illegal alien crisis in his judgment, is with agreements, not with heightened security. And President Fox says Mexico should have a say in how many of its citizens work in the United States.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

VICENTE FOX, PRESIDENT, MEXICO: They do continue enormously to the U.S. economy, to U.S. competitiveness, and what we need to do is to define and agree upon how many, in which way, for what sectors of the economy, should Mexicans be working in United States.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

DOBBS: It's rather, I think, gracious of President Fox to have offered to discuss an agreement, since right now he's effectively in control of U.S. immigration policy. Unilaterally deciding how many of his citizens will enter this country to work illegally for those employers who are hiring illegally. President Fox strongly, by the way, supports the president's guest-worker program.

As Casey Wian reported, President Bush attended a fund raiser for Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona. Senator Kyl has introduced immigration legislation and border security legislation that puts first and foremost, our borders. Senator Kyl joins me now from Phoenix. Good to have you with us, Senator.

SEN. JON KYL (R), ARIZONA: Thank you, Lou.

DOBBS: Your bill makes it mandatory for illegal aliens living in this country to leave and re-enter legally. Your bill puts

pressure and precedence on border security, first and foremost. Now this is far stronger than anything the president is even beginning to discuss, is that correct?

KYL: I'd say right now it is. I think the president is moving in the direction of understanding that he's got to talk about enforcement first before people are going to listen about any plan he has for temporary workers. And I think his visit here to Arizona yesterday was part of that effort.

DOBBS: It was -- I thought, magnanimous of the president to point out that you understand border issues, Senator. But the question really was, even though he was patting you on the back, and I know you were appreciative, just how much of it does he really understand.

KYL: Well, it was appreciative. And he's acknowledged to me that when he first began talking about a temporary worker program, he, frankly had just assumed that, of course, we would be having a component of enforcing the law at the border, and came to realize that the United States government was committed to enforcing the border, and they wanted the commitment to be demonstrated by some kind of government action.

I believe that in the bill that he signed about a month ago, that allocates \$9 billion in money for next year to enforce the border he understood that it was important to talk about that enforcement first. And again, that's I think what he was trying to do in his visit here.

He appreciates that you've got to secure the border. I think that before people though are going to be open-minded to a temporary- worker program, that he and the rest of us also need to be talking about the essential component of an effective program. And that is, enforcement at the workplace. If it's not enforced at workplace, it's still not going to work.

DOBBS: I couldn't agree with you more, Senator, and I think most people who are thoughtful on this issue couldn't agree with you more. Yet the president keeps talking about the contribution that illegal aliens are making to the country.

They're making those contributions to employers, illegal employers, who are hiring them and exploiting that illegal labor. Why is this president continuing to suggest that there's some sort of overall halo effect and that there are willing workers being matched up with willing employers? This is frankly obfuscation of reality in extreme terms.

KYL: Well in certain sectors like agriculture, for example, and some of the very, very difficult agricultural jobs here in the southwest, it's undoubtedly true that Mexican and Central American laborers are doing work that most Americans do not want to do.

It becomes more problematic when you get into construction or the resort industry, those kinds of things. Because in the past, those jobs had been done by Americans. In this time of high employment and high growth, it may well be that we can accommodate both foreign workers and still have very low unemployment of American workers.

What I fear is that when you get into an economic downturn, into a recession and those Americans are willing to take jobs that pay less, what are you going to do with foreign workers if they've been given a permanent right to remain in the United States?

We'll have a mess on our hands. That's why what you want is a temporary program and not permanent legal status.

DOBBS: You would temporary, you want something rational and ...

KYL: ... that's calibrated to the work requirements.

DOBBS: Calibrated to the requirements of the economy, of the nation, not to a bunch of employers hiring illegally.

KYL: That's right.

DOBBS: You know, I'm one of those fellows whose had the great opportunity to work with migrant workers. I've worked in the citrus industry in Arizona. I've worked alongside those folks, covered them, as well, as a young reporter.

The fact is, it's about pay. And so long as we exploit people and we don't pay them -- you use the expression the president is using -- Americans, jobs they don't want. I mean, that idea scares the dickens out of me, to be honest, Senator.

Because we once celebrated work in this country. We respected men and women who worked, no matter what their job, and we demanded that people be honored with some in terms of dignity in terms of that pay. We've gone a long ways.

And now we're talking about not paying people, and we're rationalizing, permitting illegal immigration, while we're saying, effectively, whether you're liberal, conservative, Republican, Democrat, we're saying we're going to exploit them in the national interest? I mean, this is disgusting, isn't it?

KYL: In fact, what happens is that while you may be able to get by with paying less for your labor, the American taxpayer perhaps, not paying it as a consumer, is still paying it as a taxpayer for the cost of education, of health care, and most importantly all the costs of border control and law enforcement that goes with it.

So it may well be that the cost to Americans would be less overall in a net sense if we had control of the borders, because then you wouldn't have all of these extraneous expenses, you'd simply be paying a little bit more for the head of lettuce or the hotel room. DOBBS: Senator, you have been an important advocate in this debate. Do you think we're going to see an honest, national debate on illegal immigration and border security and port security as we approach the midterm elections?

KYL: Well, we'll have a debate about it. It's very politically charged and so I'm not sure how honest it will be. This is a very complex and difficult problem, and it's not easily susceptible to the sound byte solution.

DOBBS: Not sound byte solutions, but I sure to heck hope that you're wrong about one part of that, and that it is susceptible to honesty and candor as we move toward those elections.

KYL: Let us hope so.

DOBBS: Senator Kyl, we thank you for your honesty, as always.

KYL: Thank you.

DOBBS: Take a look now at some of your thoughts on the president's speech about the border and from the border.

Hugh in Alabama said: Maybe border security means keeping them out, not deporting them after they're in.

Interesting thought.

And David in Florida: I wonder why it took the president five years to address illegal immigration. Did someone just tell him about it?

Well, actually he started talking about it a little over a year ago.

Chris in North Carolina said: Regarding immigration, this is supposed to be a national security issue, not a political issue.

Well, you just heard Senator Kyl on that.

And Jeff in Washington, D.C.: It's easy to demagogue the issue of illegal immigrants, however there are many sectors of the nation's economy that rely on these individuals to perform jobs that legal workers will not perform.

Richard in Illinois with a fairly good response to that view: "Lou, they say that aliens are taking jobs that Americans don't want. There is no such thing as a job that Americans don't want. More accurately, these jobs are those for which American business refuses to pay a fair wage. It's no wonder Americans don't want them."

And Harriet in California said, "the President's speech today sounds more like surrender than border security."

And Ricky in Tennessee. "Were the campers that were arrested outside of George Bush's ranch illegal campers or were they simply undocumented campers?"

B. Jean in Massachusetts writes, "Please keep delving into subject that politicians and big business want to bury. Thank you for being the voice of openness and truth on all sides."

And Phyllis in Missouri asks, "Question: What is the latest hot item for antique collectors? Answer: Anything made in the USA."

We love hearing your thoughts, send those thoughts to us at loudobbs.com.

Coming up next here, Congressman Curt Weldon's campaign for the truth about Able Danger.

And a preemptive strike against terrorism in one American city. The police plan to launch a new show of force. Miami's police chief, John Timoney is our guest here, next. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: It's been 11 days since Congressman Curt Weldon sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld demanding Able Danger officials be allowed to testify before congress. The letter was signed by more than half of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives. And as of tonight, Secretary Rumsfeld has not responded.

Last night here on this broadcast former 9/11 commissioner Tim Roemer said Able Danger hearings should be allowed to go forward, but he continued to defend the 9/11 Commission for not including any mention of Able Danger in its final report, despite claims by Able Danger officials they had identified Mohammed Atta and other 9/11 terrorists more than a year before the attacks.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TIME ROEMER, FMR. 9/11 COMMISSION MEMBER: We couldn't put a chapter in our books saying that people thought they saw a chart without having the evidence of that chart. So we need substantiation that there was a chart. This is about the evidence involved in factually presenting a chart that shows that Atta and the other terrorists were investigated or identified ahead of time, and finally, I'd say, let's get to the bottom of it.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

DOBBS: Congressman Weldon joins us from Wilmington, Delaware. First of all, you have to be at least gratified that Tim Roemer, a member of the commission, said we should get to the bottom of this?

REP. CURT WELDON, (R) HOMELAND SECURITY CMTE.: I appreciate Tim saying that. You know, it's amazing, Lou. We spent \$15 million and they hired 80 staff people and yet the 9/11 Commission has been more involved with spin since the Able Danger story has broken than they have been at getting at the truth. American people want the truth. Now you have a 9/11 Commission where the 9/11 family members are saying we don't trust what you reported. We don't believe you. You have the FBI director Louis Freeh saying, if we had the Able Danger information, we might have been able to stop the hijackings.

What's the 9/11 commission trying to hide? Are they worried about their linkages, their consulting contract with the Defense Department and the intelligence agencies, or do they really want to get to the truth.

If they want to get to the truth, Lou, they'll stop talking about what they didn't do and start talking about getting to bottom of the whole story.

DOBBS: The whole story, according to several of the former commission members, is all about that chart. Is there any evidence that the chart did exist? And how do you respond to putting forward the chart as the basis to move forward?

WELDON: That's a red herring, it's not about a chart. The Able Danger team amassed 2.5 terabyte of information about al Qaeda. That's equal to one fourth of all the printed material in the Library of Congress. This was a briefing that was given to the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, General Sheldon.

It's not about a chart. That's their red herring to try deflect criticism away from them. It's about information about al Qaeda that we had before 9/11, and they owe it to the American people to help us find out the status of that information and why we didn't act on it.

DOBBS: You have more than half of the members of the U.S. Congress signed on with you, with your letter, seeking the opportunity for public hearings to free up the former members of Able Danger to testify before Congress, and the secretary of defense has not responded to you, what do you do now?

WELDON: I had a good meeting with the deputy secretary of defense, Gordon England. Rumsfeld was out of country last week and England told me that he would meet privately with Rumsfeld. I assume he did that over thanksgiving.

Gordon England and Rumsfeld are honorable men. I expect an answer this week, and this story's not going to go away. One hundred and three Democrats and 143 Republicans are saying we demand a public hearing, not a private session where people can hide or distort what's being said, an open public hearing.

Both the number two Democrat in the house Steny Hoyer, and the number two Republican in the House, Roy Blunt, signed this letter. It's time for us to get truth to the American people.

DOBBS: Congressman Curt Weldon, trying very much, trying as hard as anyone could to put forward the truth. Thank

you very much for being with us, congressman.

WELDON: My pleasure. DOBBS: We'll have much more on the Able Danger controversy tomorrow evening. Former FBI Director Louis Freeh will join us, he's blasted the 9/11 Commission as well for what he calls its incomplete investigation. He'll be our guest tomorrow night. Please be with us.

Coming up at the top of the hour on CNN, "THE SITUATION ROOM" with Wolf Blitzer. What have you got?

WOLF BLITZER, CNN ANCHOR: Thanks very much, Lou. We're following several important stories, including 1,000 execution, a man who was scheduled to die gets a last minute reprieve.

And the war of words. President Bush lays out his vision for victory.

Plus a look what's really going on inside the White House.

Plus Saddam Hussein's makeover. How he went from a hole in the ground to dyed hair and a clean suit.

Also bashing booze, police say they may now know who smashed up the store and kidnapped its owner. Is there a religious connection? That and much more, all in "THE SITUATION ROOM." Lou?

DOBBS: Thanks, Wolf. Looking forward to it.

Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin today launched his election campaign just hours after a no-confidence vote against his Liberal Party. Canada's three opposition parties voted to bring down his liberal government following a scandal involving campaign fraud and money laundering.

Prime Minister Martin set the new elections for January 23.

Coming up next -- the Miami Police Department's new strategy to deter terrorists in this country. Miami's chief of police John Timoney is our guest next.

And wishing you a happy and healthy nondenominational secular non holiday fourth Sunday in December. Looking forward to another PC Christmas? Well, we're talking about Merry Christmas and backing it up here next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: The Miami Police Department has announced a new strategy designed to deter terrorists. A department spokesman said the plan would include an in-your-face, as they put it, show of force in public places around Miami. It's part of what they call Operation Miami Shield. Police will arrive suddenly and unexpectedly at public places and hand out leaflets on how the public can help fight terrorism.

Miami Police Chief John Timoney joins me tonight from Miami. Chief Timoney, thanks for being here.

The launch of this initiative, is it in response to any credible terrorist threats that you've received in your city?

CHIEF JOHN TIMONEY, MIAMI POLICE DEPARTMENT: No, it's something we've been working on since the spring, and really, we were going to announce it about -- about two months ago, but unfortunately we had two hurricanes that we had to deal with. So I wanted to make sure we got it out before the holidays that are upon us.

But, no, there is no specific threat. We've had some threats in the past in Miami, like other cities, but recently nothing right now.

DOBBS: Well, in doing this, you, presumably, Chief, will move massive force in to make a statement and do what?

TIMONEY: Well, ideally, you have a police officer in every location 24/7. That's impossible, doesn't work, it's too expensive. There's not enough police officers. But we still need to defeat the complacency. That's the one enemy we have in the police department, but also in the public. And this is a program that will spontaneously and without warning have officers in both uniform and plain clothes descend on an area, to target-harden that area, to engage civilians in conversation, give them pamphlets. Because there is a role for the business community, for the residential community in this fight on terrorism.

DOBBS: There's a role also, as you know, Chief, for the ACLU. They are saying this could be problematic. Is the stage set here for a conflict between your department and the city of Miami and the ACLU?

TIMONEY: No, I don't think so. There was some word out there, incorrectly saying that we were going to ask people

for identification. Absolutely not true. We are there to give out information, to let people know how they can assist in this process to target-hard multiple locations and institutions throughout Miami. No, I don't see any possibility of a conflict with the ACLU.

DOBBS: I'm sure the ACLU is relieved to hear that, Chief Timoney. The idea, right now, that our borders are insecure, only 4 percent of our ports are having inspections, 4 percent of the cargo being unloaded as you know. Our borer is frankly -- border security is nothing but a sham in this country, as I think you are obviously aware.

What is your sense of where we are right now in terms of security against from your perspective in Miami, against terrorist attack?

TIMONEY: Clearly, we're better than we were before 9/11, but as you point out, there are huge vulnerabilities, the southern border being the most egregious example. But I'm starting to get this feeling that people -- because of people like yourself prodding Washington, that it will finally get the attention that it deserves.

You know, I'm an immigrant. I was born and raised in Ireland, and so I'm very pro-immigrant. But there's a right way to do it, and a wrong way to do it.

DOBBS: And I'm with you, Chief. I'm pro-immigrant as well, legal immigrant.

Thank you very much for being with us.

TIMONEY: Good seeing you, Lou.

DOBBS: John Timoney, chief of Miami Police Department.

Still ahead here, a bold attempt to take the PC out of Christmas. Imagine that! We'll have the story next. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: And finally tonight, merry Christmas and happy holidays. This special time of year again for many is simply another PC Christmas. This year, at least some people are beginning to take political correctness out of Christmas. They're even going so far as to call a Christmas tree a Christmas tree! Imagine that. Bill Tucker reports.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BILL TUCKER, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): On the Web, it's still going by the name of the holiday tree. Too late to change it, says a spokesman for the Web site. But on the West Lawn of the Capitol, it will be known as the Capitol Christmas Tree. House Speaker Dennis Hastert declared it so, issuing a simple fiat through his spokesman. "The speaker believes a Christmas tree is a Christmas tree."

ANTHONY PICARELLO, BECKETFUND.ORG: It's basically a truth in advertising problem. If you have a tree around this time of year, it's a Christmas tree. And if you try to call it anything otherwise, people are going to look at you funny, and for good reason.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It's a big Christmas tree.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Well, it's going to be decorated, and it will be a Christmas tree.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm not from here, so I guess it's a Christmas tree?

TUCKER: While it may seem perfectly obvious to many, the city of Boston had a moment of controversy when its Web site announced the lighting of its holiday tree. The mayor made it clear what he will be calling it.

MAYOR TOM MENINO, BOSTON: When I grew up, in my world it was always a Christmas tree. So it's going to be a Christmas tree as long as I'm around.

TUCKER: Except, apparently, on the Web, where it remains a holiday tree.

MATTHEW STAVER, LIBERTY COUNSEL: You don't change the name of Kwanzaa to something else, you don't change the name of a Menorah to a candlestick, nor do you change the name of a Christmas tree to a holiday tree.

TUCKER: And legally, no one has to.

SARAH WUNSCH, ACLU: Supreme Court has said that a Christmas tree is a secular symbol. So governments can

put up a Christmas tree. They can even call it a Christmas tree.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

TUCKER: But just to be sure, the Alliance Defense Fund and Liberty Counsel, lawyer groups with religious ties, Lou, they will have over 1,500 lawyers standing by.

DOBBS: You know, the political correctness, we fight against it every night on this broadcast, as everyone watching us knows, but the fact is, it's liberating. We're starting to see people actually use common sense and judgment. This could be the beginning of a major movement in America!

Bill Tucker, thank you very much. And merry Christmas.

TUCKER: Merry Christmas to you.

DOBBS: Now, the results of our poll tonight. An overwhelming response: 74 percent of you would like the president to say in his major address on Iraq tomorrow that we'll withdraw our troops over the next six months.

Thanks for being with us tonight. Please join us here tomorrow when our guests will include former FBI Director Louis Freeh, and Senator Carl Levin, the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

For all of us here, thanks for being with us tonight. Please join us tomorrow. Good night from New York. "THE SITUATION ROOM" starts right now, with Wolf Blitzer -- Wolf.

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