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Face the Nation transcripts February 10, 2013: Graham, Reed and Rogers

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ROGERS: Well, I know one thing. We have first-rate problems. When you look at the disintegration of security in northern Africa, the growing and metastasizing of Al Qaida in the northern Maghreb area...

SCHIEFFER: But, I mean, do you think these people are up to the job? Do you think Mr. Cheney is right or is that maybe a little beyond where you would -- how you would...

ROGERS: It may be a little beyond where I'm going. I do believe that the policy formation that we're walking into here, when it comes to Syria, which is -- by the way, there is now no good solution in Syria today. It is -- the best thing we can hope for is the best worst option moving forward. We need very quickly to turn the tide in Syria. And I don't mean to win it. I mean just to get us in a position where we can mitigate what bad things are going to happen in Syria in the months ahead. Same with northern Africa. We have got huge, dangerous challenges approaching the United States, and I don't believe we've configured ourselves, our resources or our policy to confront them in a way that will make an impact.

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SCHIEFFER: I want to ask you this whole situation about drones, when we should use them, how we should use them. First off, has the administration been straight with Congress in sharing information on what the rules are about using these weapons?

ROGERS: I think they have. Listen, for months -- there's a change in 2008 in July under the previous administration, George Bush, that changed the way we could use air strikes to target belligerents or al Qaeda, who are planning to kill Americans. That changed in July of '08. And it ramped up. And that was taken over when Barack Obama became president. And as the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, even as a member, was aware and part of those discussions. And now as chairman, even before they conducted that first air strike that took Awlaki -- and remember, this is the guy that was trying to kill some -- a whole bunch of U.S. citizens over Detroit on Christmas Day. This guy was a bad guy. So our options were limited. This was a tool that we could use to stop further terrorist attacks against Americans. I supported it then. Monthly, I have my committee go to the CIA to review them. I as chairman review every single air strike that we use in the war on terror, both from the civilian and the military side when it comes to terrorist strikes. There is plenty of oversight here. There's not an American list somewhere overseas for targeting. That does not exist. And I think there has been some sensationalism, Bob. This is a serious matter, but I do think that the oversight rules have been, I think, consistent...

SCHIEFFER: It is an extremely complicated matter. But what about the argument that civil liberties groups make that if a person is a U.S. citizen, even if he's a bad guy, he has certain rights under the Constitution. And you can't just say, OK, we're going to kill him.

ROGERS: In the United States, that's true. If you join forces with the enemy, we have a long-standing tradition in this country that, that in and of itself, you lose your constitutional protections. You are engaged in belligerent activities against the United States. And this happened in World War I, in World War II, where Americans would join forces with people who were in -- at war with the United States, and when you do that, you sacrifice your rights. So this is someone who had sworn off his citizenship, had been actively planning terrorist attacks against the United States, the most notable was the one over Detroit on Christmas Day. And but for a quarter of an inch of an injector, that would have gone off and killed hundreds on the plane, and if not thousands on the ground. This was a -- he was a serious al Qaeda player. He picked his team. This is not an American citizen of the United States. Does not apply, none of this. This is only enemy belligerence, joined forces with the enemy overseas. SCHIEFFER: We're going to ask you to stick around for "Page Two," because we're going to talk about this whole idea of, is the United States vulnerable to a cyber attacks and how much of a problem that is. I know you have some thoughts about that. So we'll be interested to hear what you have to say. You'll be with us with a panel of experts on "Page Two." Mr. Chairman, until then, thanks. I'll be back in a moment now with some personal thoughts.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SCHIEFFER: Those of us in journalism spend a lot of times worrying about the wrong things, such as whether newspapers and books of the future will be printed on paper. It's an important question, but one over which we have little control. The truth is, technology will decide how we get the news. What we need to be thinking about is not the delivery systems but the information being delivered, all

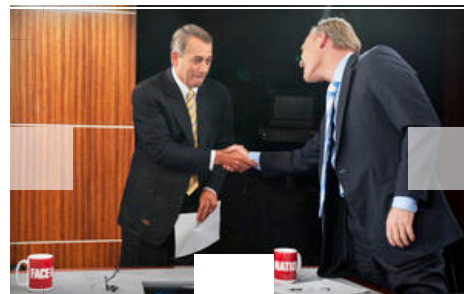
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of which was underlined this week by the inexcusable hacking of the Bush family's personal email accounts. In the past, when journalists got personal information about public figures, we normally didn't publish it, unless we determined it was, first, true, and, second, was in the public's interest to know. Did it show the person was dishonest? Did his private life impact on his public responsibility? Publishing the Pentagon Papers revealed a government making public statements about the Vietnam War that it knew to be false. The Watergate revelations revealed a cancer of government corruption. Making public personal phone numbers and family conversations about the health of an ill father are no one's business but the family. For the most part, the mainstream media handled the Bush email hacking with restraint. We reported the hacking. That is news, but little else. Still, the episode is a less-than-gentle reminder of how technology is redefining our culture, the whole idea of privacy, and, yes, the respect or lack of it that honest citizens should have for each other. These are the things that all of us, not just journalists, may want to think about. How the news is delivered will take care of itself. Back in minute.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SCHIEFFER: Some of our stations are leaving us now but for most of you we'll be right back with a lot more of FACE THE NATION.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SCHIEFFER: Well, welcome back to FACE THE NATION "Page Two." The House Intelligence Committee chairman, Mike Rogers, has stuck around for some more. He is joined by his former colleague on that committee, California Democrat Jane Harman, now the head of the Woodrow Wilson Center here in Washington. Also with us, James Lewis, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. And our own CBS News justice and homeland security correspondent Bob Orr. Jim Lewis, I want to start with you, because when I was trying to get myself read in and studied up about what the questions I ought to ask before the presidential debate, I went to see you, and we talked for a while. And I asked you how serious was threat of a cyber attack on the United States? And I asked you what kind of what kind of defense we have. And I will never forget what you said.

JIM LEWIS, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES: That we had a faith-based defense. And a lot of it is like asking people...

SCHIEFFER: Basically we pray that it will never happen.

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