



**Interview of Dr. Joel Brenner  
National Counterintelligence Executive**

**With Rita Braver – CBS News Sunday Morning**

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**Transcript – As Aired**

MR. CHARLES OSGOOD (CBS NEWS): As most of Washington prepares to greet the new President, there are people in this city who are hard at work drawing up plans for the worst-case scenario. Rita Braver looks over their shoulders.

MS. RITA BRAVER (CBS NEWS): Their photo ops may be all smiles, but both men are deeply aware of the chilling possibility that looms over the transition of power from President Bush to President Obama.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: The most urgent threat that he'll have to deal with, and other Presidents after him will have to deal with, is an attack on our homeland.

MS. BRAVER: Which is why the Bush Administration has been preparing an unprecedented set of scenarios for a dark day that could come to the next White House.

MR. JOSH BOLTEN: In the post 9/11 world, this isn't just good mannered/good government. It's a national security responsibility.

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MS BRAVER: The Bush White House has laid out another key scenario too. One that many intelligence experts believe needs immediate attention from the new President's team. A cyber attack launched from overseas to disrupt critical computer systems. Joel Brenner is the government's top cyber security official. Why is it so important for the administration to be up to speed on this from day one?

DR. JOEL BRENNER: Because we're electronically undressed. Everything we do is done on electronic network. All the information that we create is created electronically.

MS. BRAVER: Brenner says it's unlikely that anyone could disrupt top secret government computers.

ACTOR FROM THE TV SHOW "24": People who broke through the firewall are controlling

one of my planes.

MS. BRAVER: But as terrorists did in a recent Fox TV show.

ACTOR FROM THE TV SHOW "24": Exactly what systems are vulnerable, Doctor?

ACTOR FROM THE TV SHOW "24": The top of the list would be the national power grid.

MS. BRAVER: He believes there could be disruption of air traffic along with targeting water and sewer systems, electricity grids and financial markets.

DR. BRENNER: If instead of attacking the Twin Towers al Qaeda had taken down a major bank, the economic consequences would have been an order of magnitude ten times greater than the economic consequences of 9/11. I don't say the personal physical damage. People were killed in 9/11. But the economic damage of taking down a piece of our banking system would be enormous and it would reverberate through the world financial system.

MS. BRAVER: All this comes after many in the Bush Administration came to believe that the Clinton team had not raised enough red flags about potential threats. But current White House officials insist they are not just trying to make sure that no one points a finger at them.

MR. GORDON JOHNDROE: You know, I think this is an effort to provide the incoming team as much information as we possibly can just because the world in 2009 is so different from when we found it in 2001. It is moving at lightning speed, and the incoming team is going to have a lot of incoming as soon as they get to the White House on January the 20th.

MS. BRAVER: Just two days away.