

**OPENING STATEMENT AS PREPARED  
FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DONALD RUMSFELD**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
AUGUST 1, 2007

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, you have requested that we appear today to discuss our knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the death of U.S. Army Corporal Patrick Tillman.

First, I want to again extend my deepest sympathies to the Tillman family. Corporal Tillman's death, and the deaths of the thousands of men and women who have given their lives in our nation's service, have brought great sorrow in the lives of their families and loved ones. Theirs is the grief felt by all who have had the privilege of serving alongside those in uniform.

The handling of the circumstances surrounding Corporal Tillman's death could only have added to the pain of losing a loved one. I, personally, and I am sure all connected with the Department, extend deep regrets.

One of the Department of Defense's foremost responsibilities is to tell the truth -- to the some three million military, civilian, and contract employees who dedicate their careers to defending our nation, to the military families who endure the extended absences of their fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, sons and daughters, and to the American people, for whom all connected to the Department go to work each day to protect.

In March 2002, early in my tenure as Secretary of Defense, I wrote a memo for the men and women of the Department of Defense titled "Principles for the Department of Defense." I have attached a copy to my testimony (Attachment #1). You will note that principle number one -- the very first -- was:

"Do nothing that could raise questions about the credibility of DoD. DoD officials must tell the truth and must be believed to be telling the truth or our important work is undermined."

Mr. Chairman, in your invitation for today's hearing, you asked that we be prepared to discuss how we learned of the circumstances surrounding Corporal Tillman's death -- when we learned of it, and with whom we discussed it. I am prepared to respond, to the best of my ability, to questions which pertain to these matters.

In December 2006, I sent a letter to the Acting Inspector General of the Department of Defense, Mr. Thomas Gimble, describing my best recollection of those events, which by that point had occurred about two and a half years before. The Committee has been given a copy of that letter (Attachment #2). I would like to quote part of that letter:

"I am told that I received word of this development sometime after May 20, 2004, but my recollection reflects the fact that it occurred well over two years ago. As a result, I do not recall when I first learned about the possibility that Corporal Tillman's death might have resulted from fratricide. I am confident that I did not discuss this matter with anyone outside the Department of Defense."

What I wrote in December of 2006 remains my best recollection today of when I was informed, and whom I talked with, before May 20, 2004. I understand that the May 20, 2004 date was shortly before the Tillman family was informed of the circumstances on May 26, 2004.

Your invitation to appear before this Committee also asked about my knowledge of a "Personal For" or "P-4" message dated April 29, 2004. That message was not addressed to me. Nor do I recall seeing it. There are a great many, indeed thousands of communications throughout DoD that a Secretary of Defense does not see.

I understand that the Acting Inspector General's Report concluded that there were "errors" among some of those responsible for some of the initial reports. Any "errors," in such a situation, are most unfortunate. The Tillmans were owed the truth -- delivered in a forthright and timely manner. And certainly the truth was owed to the memory of a man whose valor, dedication and sacrifice to his country remains an example for all.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Attachments:

1. "Principles for the Department of Defense" (3/18/02)
2. Secretary Rumsfeld letter to DoD Acting Inspector General (12/15/06)

**Testimony by Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld  
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
August 1, 2007**

**Attachments:**

1. "Principles for the Department of Defense" (3/18/02)
2. Secretary Rumsfeld letter to DoD Acting Inspector General (12/15/06)

# ATTACHMENT 1

March 18, 2002 1:56 PM

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld

SUBJECT: Principles for the Department of Defense

1. Do nothing that could raise questions about the credibility of DoD. DoD officials must tell the truth and must be believed to be telling the truth or our important work is undermined.
2. Do nothing that is or could be seen as partisan. The work of this Department is non-partisan. We have to continuously earn the support of all the people of the country and in the Congress. To do so we must serve all elements of our society without favor.
3. Nothing is more important than the men and women who work in this Department—they are its heart and soul and its future. Our country's success depends on them. We must all treat them with respect; show our concern for them and for their lives and their futures, and find opportunities to express our full appreciation for all they do for our country.
4. The public needs and has a right to know about the unprivileged and unclassified activities of DoD. It is our obligation to provide that information professionally, fully and in good spirit.
5. Help to create an environment in DoD that is hospitable to risk-taking, innovation, and creativity. This institution must encourage such activity if we are to transform and be successful.
6. Work vigorously to root out any wrongdoing or corruption in DoD. Waste undermines support for the Department, and robs DoD activities of the resources they need.
7. Consistently demonstrate vigilance against waste. DoD funds are the taxpayers' money, earned by people who work hard all across this land. We owe it to them to treat their dollars respectfully, and we owe it to the importance of our responsibilities to see that every dollar is spent wisely.
8. Reflect the compassion we all feel when lives are lost, whether U.S. or coalition service people or innocents killed by collateral damage.
9. Demonstrate our appreciation for the cooperation we receive from other nations and for the valuable contributions coalition forces bring to our

efforts—whether in peacetime by way of strengthening the deterrent, or in wartime by securing victory.

10. Because of the complexity of our tasks, DoD must work with other departments and agencies of the federal government in a professional manner, respectful of others' views but willing to raise issues to the next higher level up the chain of command, as necessary.
11. DoD personnel—civilian and military—must not compromise classified information. It is a violation of federal criminal law. Those who do so are criminals. They are individuals who have lost their moorings and are willing to put the lives of the men and women in uniform at risk. They must be rooted out, stopped and punished.
12. The Legislative Branch is in Article I of the Constitution; the Executive Branch is Article II. That is not an accident. We must respect the Constitutional role of Congress, learn from those who have knowledge that can be helpful and work constructively with revolving coalitions to achieve the important goals of the Department and the country.
13. Finally, the President of the United States is our Commander-in-Chief. Those of us in DoD—military and civilian—believe in civilian control, are respectful of it and must be vigilant to see that our actions reflect that important Constitutional obligation.

# ATTACHMENT 2



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

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DEC 15 2006

Mr. Thomas Gimble  
Acting Inspector General  
for Department of Defense  
400 Army Navy Drive  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Gimble:

I understand that you have requested my recollection of the manner in which I learned of the details involving the tragic death of Corporal Patrick Tillman.

I am told that I received word of this development sometime after May 20, 2004, but my recollection reflects the fact that it occurred well over two years ago. As a result, I do not recall when I first learned about the possibility that Corporal Tillman's death might have resulted from fratricide. I am confident that I did not discuss this matter with anyone outside of the Department of Defense.

I trust that this information will be of assistance as you conclude your review. I hope your review brings some additional element of closure for friends and family of this courageous young man. I appreciate the effort that you and your team have devoted to this matter.

Sincerely,

5 Dec 06