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# News Transcript

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**Presenter:** Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld

Tuesday, April 15, 2003 - 1:30 p.m. EDT

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## DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers

(Also participating Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Slides from today's briefing are located at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2003/g030415-D-6570C.html>. Photos of the briefing are available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Apr2003/030415-D-2987S-080.html>, and <http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Apr2003/030415-D-2987S-067.html>.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: Good afternoon.

We are very grateful that seven American prisoners of war in Iraq have been recovered. But even as we celebrate, we note that there are still four U.S. service members whose whereabouts are unknown; and a number of coalition POWs that are still missing from 1991, a number of Kuwaitis and one American. We'll continue to work to find them until all have been accounted for.

Coalition forces now control Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, and only a few Iraqi cities remain contested. Our forces are now going back to the smaller cities and towns they initially bypassed, to deal with any regime forces that may remain. We'll continue these efforts until Saddam Hussein's regime has been removed from every corner of Iraq.

Once conditions on the ground permit, the civil administration team will deploy to Baghdad. Even before they do so, the coalition is beginning to hold regional meetings with free Iraqis from all walks of life to discuss the way ahead. The purpose is to begin a dialogue with Iraqis on the future of their country, to build momentum for the formation of an Iraqi interim authority, and to help pave the way for a free Iraqi government that will eventually be chosen by the Iraqi people. The first of these meetings was held today, in [An] Nasiriyah. It is noteworthy that even before the coalition's civil administration team has arrived in Baghdad, they are meeting with free Iraqis to discuss handing over authority to the Iraqi people. It underscores our intention to give responsibility for governance of that country to Iraqis as quickly as is possible.

The makeup and responsibilities of an Iraqi interim authority will be up to the Iraqi people, but we envision that it could take on at least two main tasks. First, it could allow Iraqis to have an immediate role in the administration of their country, including responsibility for running a number of the ministries. Second, it could take responsibility for laying the foundations of a new Iraqi government, including formation of a draft constitution, the reform of the legal system, economic reform, electoral planning and the outlines of a bill of rights, to assure a just system that guarantees that all Iraqis -- diverse population -- has a voice in the governance of their country.

The specific institutions of a new Iraqi government will be decided by Iraqis. A free society should really not be imposed from the outside. We can help by bringing Iraqis together, and by helping to create conditions of stability and security that are necessary for a free society to take root. But building a free Iraq is the right -- and indeed the responsibility -- of the Iraqi people.

Moreover, a free society is about more than just elections or specific institutions of government. Free nations across the world have different institutions that reflect their unique cultures and their traditions. What they share in common are certain principles that undergird those institutions: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, individual rights, equal justice under law, checks and balances, protecting minorities against the tyranny of the majority, and ultimately a government that is chosen by and answers to the people.

The interim authority will be a stepping stone in that process. This much is certain: It will be temporary. It will be large, involving Iraqis from all walks of life. And it will be open to participation by new leaders from across the country as they emerge from the shadow of Saddam Hussein's repression. It will evolve, to use the American phrase, from the "big tent" approach.

These meetings will help set in motion a process that will lead to an Iraqi government that does not threaten its neighbors, or the world, with weapons of mass destruction; that does not support terrorist networks, that guarantees the rights of religious and ethnic groups; that permits political freedom, individual liberty and rule of law to prevail, so that no Iraqi is forced to live in terror or fear.

General Myers.

GEN. MYERS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Well, General Brooks gave a complete brief this morning, so I don't have anything to add from an operational viewpoint.

On behalf of all of us in uniform, I would like to add our welcome home to the seven former POWs. We are very proud of them and wish them a joyful reunion with their families.

My congratulations go to the Marines who rescued them. Thank you for bringing them home. And as

the Secretary said, you can be sure that we will continue to look and hunt for those that are still missing.

I'd also like to add my condolences to the families of those service members killed in combat-related actions or accidents over the past few days. I think it reminds us the battlefield is still a dangerous place, and we need to maintain our focus on our day-to-day operations.

And with that, we'll take questions.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes?

Q: Mr. Secretary, there's an oil pipeline that runs from Iraq to Syria, through which traders say, despite denials from Damascus and Baghdad, that up to 200,000 barrels a day has flowed for several years, making millions of dollars for both countries in violation of the oil-for-food program. There are reports that the U.S. military has disabled or perhaps destroyed that pipeline. Can you clarify that or give us any information on that?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I am sure that no coalition forces destroyed a pipeline. We don't -- we have preserved infrastructure in that country. I am hopeful that they have shut it off, and I have heard that that has happened. But I cannot assure you that all illegal oil flowing from Iraq into Syria is shut off; I just hope it is.

Q: General?

Q: Mr. Secretary, there have been --

GEN. MYERS: I was going to say, just to back -- just to add a little bit to what the Secretary said, they would not destroy the pipeline or any of the other infrastructure, whether it's oil or other infrastructure. They did it with the -- upon the technical advice of engineers.

Q: Well, so they -- you say they have not destroyed it, but have they shut it off?

SEC. RUMSFELD: And I answered.

Q: You say there were reports of that.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I said we have been told that they have shut off a pipeline. Whether it's the only one, and whether that has completely stopped the flow of oil between Iraq and Syria, I cannot tell you. We do not have perfect knowledge. We do know that they were instructed to shut it down, and they have told us that they have.

Q: Mr. Secretary?

Q: Thank you.

Q: Mr. Secretary?

Q: Now that there's no longer a need for no-fly zones over the north and the south of Iraq, what's the future of the U.S. military presence in Turkey and in Saudi Arabia?

SEC. RUMSFELD: We have, with the Turkish government, discontinued the Turkish no-fly zone.

Q: As of when?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yesterday or the day before.

GEN. MYERS: You announced it, I think, up here.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Did I?

GEN. MYERS: The end of Operation Northern Watch. And the assets there that were supporting it have redeployed.

Q: Mr. Secretary, there has been --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Let me finish. The southern no-fly zone we're still flying out of, obviously, although it's not in a no-fly-zone mode. We're doing what we do, our folks are. The subject of a footprint for the United States post-Iraq is something that we're discussing and considering, and we don't have any announcements to make on it. But that will take some time to sort through.

Q: But the Incirlik operation has been not only closed down, but all the aircraft have left, I understand --

SEC. RUMSFELD: No, all we said was that the Operation Northern Watch has been shut down and the assets that were there for that sole purpose have been redeployed.

Q: So there are still U.S. assets --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I didn't say that. I've said --

Q: (Off mike.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know why this is hard. We have shut down Operation Northern Watch. The assets that were there for that purpose have been redeployed. We have not made final decisions with respect to the footprint of the United States in that part of the world, and won't for some months.

Q: Mr. Secretary, there's been some tough talk by you and by Secretary Powell and by the President about Syria, and --

Q: (Sneeze.)

Q: Bless you.

SEC. RUMSFELD: My goodness gracious. (Laughter.)

Q: -- saying, in effect, to Syria to cease and desist aiding and abetting those of the Saddam regime and also in building or harboring weapons of mass destruction.

The bottom-line question is, specifically -- underline the word "specifically" -- how does the Bush administration intend to make that happen? How can you prevent Syria from doing these things?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't have anything else to add on that. The President's spoken on it. Secretary Powell has spoken on it. I'll leave that to them.

Q: But you haven't said anything on --

Q: You mentioned a missing American pilot from '91. I'm assuming that's Captain Scott Speicher. Can you update us on the progress that's being made, or lack of it, in trying to account for him?

SEC. RUMSFELD: If and when we have anything to announce, we will. We, needless to say, have teams of people who have very much focused on the question of prisoners of war. They've had some good success thus far. We are working on the problems and hoping that we'll have success. But we have nothing that we can report.

Q: Mr. Secretary?

Q: Mr. Secretary?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes? Yes, Andrea?

Q: Mr. Secretary, given there was a lot of talk about needing to have a -- before the war, having a lighter, more mobile, faster-deploying force, and given the rapid, record speed that the 3rd Infantry --

SEC. RUMSFELD: You think we ought to slow down? Is that --

(Soft laughter.)

Q: That's not my question. That's not my question.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Just checking.

Q: Given the record speed that the 3rd Infantry, you know, got to Baghdad from Kuwait, would you say, first of all, do you now -- is that lighter, more mobile, faster force now a reality? And if it is, is that because of something that you and your -- and this administration has done, or was that started before this present administration and -- or is it a combination of both?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, first, I would say that the 3rd Infantry Division and the Marines and the other forces and units and elements that have been doing such a wonderful job in Iraq have all performed exceedingly well, including the Special Operations people and the Navy and the air assets.

The phrase you used of swifter or more agile or faster are things that militaries have been striving for, for decades. Hundreds of years they've been trying to learn to do things better than they've done them in the past. And my impression is that the armed forces of the United States had been focused on improving themselves for some time, are today and will be in the future. And I think that looking for the kind of demarcation you've suggested really is kind of chasing the wrong rabbit.

Yes, Pam?

Q: I understand that as troops are moving through, they're bringing much-needed medical care and some surprise to folks that they're coming across. However, in Baghdad there remain a great number of people who are seriously hurt, some of them from the bombing, and aren't getting proper medical care, according to reports that are coming out there and pictures that we've seen. At the same time there's a hospital ship that has 800 empty beds, and I'm wondering if there's any consideration being given to moving some of the folks, maybe the worst cases, in the Baghdad hospitals down there for more appropriate care -- special burn care, amputations.

SEC. RUMSFELD: The hospital -- I don't know which ship you're talking about, but I know one hospital ship has some, I believe, 307 Iraqi people that they have taken aboard and are providing first class medical treatment for. The medical situation as of the 13th -- today is the 15th, two days ago -- in Baghdad, the hospitals do have a heavy load. Jordan announced a plan to send a field hospital into the Baghdad area this week. Medical supplies have been flown into Baghdad last night -- on the night of the 12th for distribution by the ICRC. And the -- there is a massive effort, bringing people in.

The UAE has also announced that it is receiving individuals who need medical assistance, Iraqi citizens who need medical assistance. And that process is taking place.

Q: (Off mike) -- no plans to fill up those empty beds on the hospital ship.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know what empty beds you're talking about. The --

Q: It's a thousand -- it's a thousand-bed hospital ship, and the last briefing we had, there were about 200 beds full.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah. I just happen not to know --

GEN. MYERS: I think as a general rule we're making medical care available wherever we have it, and, you know, if it's appropriate. I would say since the 13th -- a couple of additional items. They opened two additional hospitals in north-central Baghdad that are under U.S. control and security. And the ICRC opened up the big 1,200-bed teaching hospital in Baghdad as well. The secretary said lots of medical supplies coming in, lots of help from several countries to help with the medical situation.

SEC. RUMSFELD: The medical situation -- you've got to remember two things. One is that hospitals and schools and mosques were used as headquarters for the Ba'ath Party and for the Iraqi military. And there was a lot of damage done to hospitals and schools and mosques as a result of that decision on their part -- their decision. Every day that has gone by since the United States has been in that country, the medical situation has gotten better than it was the day before.

Q: Mr. Secretary?

SEC. RUMSFELD: And that will continue on a -- at an increased rate in the days and weeks ahead.

Yes?

Q: Mr. Secretary, the meeting at Ur outside of [An] Nasiriyah was boycotted by Shi'a groups, subjected to protest --

SEC. RUMSFELD: It was also attended by a very large number of people.

Q: Well, you described the tent approach that the U.S. would like to see.

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Inaudible.) (Soft laughter.)

Q: What is the answer to the boycott? How do you get the groups that are boycotting inside the tent?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, you don't. We don't. What's going to happen is it's going to get sorted out on the ground, and that's fine. People demonstrate in the United States and boycott political rallies and

things; that's what free people do. And it ought not to come as a surprise.

Our attitude about it is that the Iraqis are going to have to sort this out. There ought to be a big tent; everyone who subscribes to the principles that I indicated in my opening statement today ought to be able to participate. What's going to happen is as that happens, they'll have meetings. And if you do something, somebody's not going to like it; that's certain in life. It's also true if you don't do something, somebody's not going to like it. But the fact is, if you do do something, somebody's not going to like it, and that's what's happening.

So, someone will come up and say something and somebody else, as happens in democracies, in free systems -- somebody's going to say, "I don't agree with that." And they'll either say it from inside the tent or outside the tent. And what's going to happen is that over each week that goes by, people are going to see that this is going to be a process that's going to go forward, it's going to include everyone in that country that wants to participate, based on fundamental principles that I've indicated, and they'll find that they've got a much better chance of affecting it from inside than they do from outside.

And therefore, you say, "What are you going to do about it?" What's going to happen is the Iraqi people will do something about it. If they don't want those people in and those people don't subscribe to the principles that we've set forth, and indeed, that the Iraqis have set forth -- I just read this e-mail on the statement they made, which is very interesting and very positive, in my view -- then they'll stay out, and that's life. Some people do that. Some people don't vote in our country. On the other hand, if they decide they want to have an influence and an effect on it, they'll decide to become a part of that process. And it's an interim process, it's a temporary process, and it's moving through phases towards a more permanent government. And then they'll have a chance to do that, and that's a good thing.

Q: Mr. Secretary, how confident are you that Iraq still has Scud missiles? And during your evaluation of the battle damage assessments of your bombing in the western part of Iraq, have you found any sort of evidence there?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Not to my knowledge.

Q: None at all? Not even like shells or anything like that?

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Mocking) "Please? A little?" (Laughter.) A half of one, is that what you want?

Q: (Off mike) -- transporter-erector-launchers or anything like that?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Look -- look, there are still people shooting and getting killed in that country. The western area where the Scud baskets were is enormous! It's enormous! And people are -- there's a handful of people out there -- Americans. I mean, there are just not large numbers of special operators out there. They went out there, they went to the Scud baskets, they were successful in dealing with the people that were out there doing things. And now we're in a stage where, as the fighting starts to end



and die down, there will be opportunities for individuals to then look around and see what they find.

Q: Mr. Secretary, you had mentioned earlier that you're still looking at a decision to be made on what size of footprint the U.S. would have in the region. Would you just clarify to make certain that -- you've always said that the U.S. will certainly leave Iraq. I would presume by that you're not saying in Iraq but in the region?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I'm just stating a fact, that right now we have forces in Iraq. Our first choice is to begin drawing them down, and we have been doing that. A carrier battle group, it's already been announced, is leaving. There will be other forces that will be drawn down over time.

We have forces in other parts of that region -- and I spoke of a region, not a country -- and we will be looking at what that footprint ought to be going forward, and it's not something that we've come to closure on.

Yes?

Q: Mr. Secretary, in your opening statement you talked about the political future of Iraq and letting the Iraqis decide. Are there, however, any specific conditions that we're attaching, such as bans on a particular party or an individual, or a particular size of an army or the type of weapons that they might have?

SEC. RUMSFELD: What we have said is fairly simple, and we've repeated it and repeated it from the outset, that Iraq ought to be a single country, and if people want to participate who think they ought to divide up that country into pieces, then we don't care -- we'd prefer they not participate. It ought to be a country that doesn't have weapons of mass destruction and doesn't threaten its neighbors, and if there are people who think it ought to, then our preference is that they not participate. It ought to be a country that sets itself on a path towards a government that is responsive to the people and respectful of minorities and different -- the diversity in the country, of religious diversity and ethnic diversity. And if people want to have a different kind of government, then we'd prefer they not participate.

Beyond that, we would -- we'd also prefer that people not participate who basically don't represent Iraq, but who think they represent some of the neighboring countries. And that would -- that's an unhelpful thing, it seems to me.

So those are basically the standards. And they're not complicated, and they're not restrictive. They allow for a great deal of variety and diversity within those basics.

Q: Who, if I may follow, would do the vetting of those conditions?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, we just keep repeating the conditions, and the people will do the vetting. People on the ground know these folks. They know the bad ones. And yeah, the -- I mean, we'll -- you

did ask about parties. There's no question but that this country's got to go through a de-Ba'athification process. The Ba'ath Party is not -- does not fit the conditions that I've described. We know what they think. And therefore we know that they ought not to be participants. And we would be hopeful that that's the case.

Yes, sir.

Q: Mr. Secretary, who is going to control Kirkuk and Mosul, since there is a lot of concern in Ankara, Turkey? In the meantime, any communication with the Turkish government vis-a-vis to the Kurdish people of northern Iraq? And above all, how do you comment on the cooperation which has been announced among Turkey, Syria and Iran vis- a-vis to the -- (inaudible)?

SEC. RUMSFELD: You want to respond on that?

GEN. MYERS: The situation that we have in northern Iraq with respect to coordination and cooperation with the Turkish military is that as soon as we had U.S. forces in Kirkuk and in Mosul, that we invited in immediately Turkish military liaison officers so we could establish together the ground truth in those areas. As you know, rumors start fairly frequently, and somebody has to establish the ground truth. And that's why we are in northern Iraq with U.S. forces and with Turkish liaison forces. That seems to be working very well. I've talked to General Jones, our EUCOM commander, today, who had been talking to General Ozkok in Turkey, the chief of the Defense staff there, who is, I think -- can be reported as pleased with this level of cooperation. And we think that's gone a long way to sort of dispelling some of the rumors that have come out of northern Iraq. The situation in Kirkuk is calm. The peshmerga are out of there. The situation in Mosul is a little less calm, but still very stable. And that continues.

Q: Mr. Secretary, on the issue of follow-on forces, you've said that this plan has been flexible from the beginning and that there were other forces in the pipeline, that you could turn off the spigot, if you will. Have you decided to turn off the spigot?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes.

Q: And how so, sir?

SEC. RUMSFELD: One of the elements that was in the queue has been taken out of the queue, and we still have other forces that are flowing in. In some cases they'll be additive; in some cases they'll be replacing other forces over time. And in some cases, portions of elements may not go. Portions would go.

We're also on a very active effort to attract and encourage other countries to offer forces for the phase four stabilization process. We've had good luck, good fortune. I was on the phone today with ministers of defense of the U.K. and of Poland and talking to them about the process. We all will be

coordinating through the CENTCOM liaison people and talking to other countries about forces that they may want to offer up to provide for a stabilization period so that, over a period of time, we'll be able to have the kind of security environment that is safe and allows a country to fashion a new government and a new approach to how they want to live their lives.

Q: If I could follow. General Myers, we've heard about the naval assets and the Air Force assets pulling out. What about ground forces pulling out?

GEN. MYERS: I think the Secretary covered that. Some of the reason that the forces that continue to flow are flowing is with a look towards in the future, to be determined by Central Command and by the Secretary, on when you might replace some forces that have been there for some time yet. So that's all part of the planning that Central Command is doing right now.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Jamie?

Q: Mr. Secretary, as impressive as the U.S. military operation has been, no military plan is perfect. Would you concede in retrospect that perhaps the plan failed to adequately protect Iraq's antiquities, particularly the looting, providing enough security for the museum in Baghdad?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Looting is an unfortunate thing. Human beings are not perfect. We've seen looting in this country. We've seen riots at soccer games in various countries around the world. We've seen destruction after athletic events in our own country. No one likes it. No one allows it. It happens, and it's unfortunate. And to the extent it can be stopped, it should be stopped. To the extent it happens in a war zone, it's difficult to stop.

The United States is concerned about the museum in Baghdad, and the President and the Secretary of the State and I have all talked about it, and we are in the process of offering rewards for people who will bring things back or to assist us in finding where those things might be. And I would suspect that over time, we'll find that a number of things were in fact hidden prior to the conflict. That's what most people in -- run -- who run museums do prior to a conflict, which was obviously well telegraphed in advance.

But to try to lay off the fact of that unfortunate activity on a defect in a war plan -- it strikes me as a stretch.

Q: But weren't you urged specifically by scholars and others about the danger to that museum? And weren't you urged to provide a greater level of protection and security in the initial phases of the operation?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Not to my knowledge. It may very well have been, but certainly the targeting people were well aware of where it was, and they certainly avoided targeting it, and it was not hit by any U.S. -- this was -- whatever damage was done was done from the ground.

GEN. MYERS: And we did get advice on archaeological sites around Baghdad and in fact I think it was the Archaeological -- American Archaeological Association -- I believe that's the correct title -- wrote the Secretary of some concerns. Those were passed to Central Command, and those sites around Baghdad were obviously -- we tried to avoid hitting those. To my knowledge, we didn't hit any of them.

Can I say this -- can I say this -- a bit on the plan piece? You know, some have suggested, "Well, gee, you should have delayed combat operations to protect against looting, or you should have had more forces, should have waited till more forces arrived." To that I would say this: The best way to ensure fewer casualties on [the] coalition side and fewer civilian casualties is to have combat operations proceed as quickly as possible and not prolong them. And so it gets back to the -- a matter of priorities. And we're dealing with some of those issues that you just brought up, Jamie, but the first thing you have to deal with is loss of life, and that's what we dealt with. And if you remember, when some of that looting was going on, people were being killed, people were being wounded, as I made reference to in my opening remarks. So I think it's, as much as anything else, a matter of priorities.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes?

Q: Mr. Secretary, you said that you had taken one element, one unit out of the queue to replace or reinforce the troops you now have. Can you describe your evolving philosophy of the kind of forces you now want in? It would seem that heavy armor is less and less necessary. So why are -- what have you taken out of the queue, and sort of what is your thinking at this moment as you begin to reassess what is in that queue and what you may need in terms of the type of things?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, this is a process that involves the Central Command, and they make an assessment of what they see on the ground and what they think they need, and then they discuss it with General Myers and with me. And over a period of days, we discuss the various elements of it. One element is how many foreign forces do we think we're going to be able to attract to come in and give us some assistance, because that affects the number of U.S. forces that we need. What's the mix of forces you need -- land, sea, air? What are the kinds of capabilities? Do you need heavy tanks or do you need people more engaged in peacekeeping-type activities?

And as the nature of the conflict winds down, which it most assuredly is, the need for certain types of things declines and the need for other types of things increases. And it is something that we talk about each day. We've been doing it almost continuously for some months now, first as to what ought to go in, and then what ought to come out. And it's not easy. There is no formula for it, and it depends on changing circumstances almost from day to day.

Q: What have you removed from the queue?

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Aside) Do we -- do we -- announced anything?

Q: First Cavalry?

GEN. MYERS: I don't know, have we announced --

STAFF: First Cav acknowledged they had a deployment order, sir, from previously.

SEC. RUMSFELD: They had an earlier deployment order and that they no longer do.

STAFF: That hasn't been --

SEC. RUMSFELD: That hasn't been announced? Then we'll not announce that. (Laughter.)

Yes? (Laughs.)

Q: What's your latest thinking on whether the senior Iraqi leadership had some kind of plan in place for a particular moment when U.S. forces arrived in Baghdad, and that's the reason that they all disappeared so suddenly and collectively, as if that plan was implemented?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I think we'll learn more about that as we go along. I think that the -- this is speculation, but I would speculate that they very likely expected Gulf War II, a long air war that would give them time to do whatever they thought they wanted to do, leave or take cover and what have you, followed at some distance by a ground war, and probably a massive ground war, probably including the 4th Infantry Division, which was still up in the Mediterranean. And it's entirely possible when people are interviewed after this is all over that we'll find that they did not expect a ground war to start before an air war and they did not expect a ground war to start without the 4th Infantry Division while it was still up in the Mediterranean. I also suspect that they didn't expect the first air attack that took place the day before the ground war began on the Dora Farms. But one can't know these things; you can't climb into their minds and know what they were thinking.

But we do know that because of the way General Franks conducted the conflict, a lot of bad things didn't happen. The oil wells were not set afire like they were last time. We don't have massive internally displaced people. We don't have a million refugees flooding into neighboring countries. We didn't have high collateral damage because we didn't have a long air war. We had precision weapons instead of dumb bombs. The ground war went so much faster, that the opportunity for people to reorganize and to reconstitute forces in areas where they could provide a more aggressive defense didn't exist; they were passed very rapidly. So there were a lot of things that -- there wasn't time to use ballistic missiles in the western part of the country to attack neighboring countries as happened last time. There's just a whole list of things that didn't go wrong, that could have been terrible and didn't happen, because of the way that General Franks and his team conducted that. They did a superb job.

Q: And what would that tell you about their whereabouts right now?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Not much. They're either dead or alive.

Q: Mr. Secretary, what are the concerns, Mr. Secretary, that former Iraqi regime leaders attempting to flee to Syria may not only be seeking a safe haven in Syria but may be attempting to set up a base of operations to plot and launch any kind of future terrorist attacks against U.S. targets or Iraq?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, I think that there is no question there are going to be some people who will escape out of that country. It's got porous borders and they'll go in many different directions. We'll find some of them. Some countries will cooperate in helping us to find them, and they will be pleased they did; and others may not be helpful. But life goes on.

Q: But given -- if I could follow up, but given Syria's support for terrorism, is there a concern that Iraqis could in fact -- former regime leaders could use Syria as a haven from which to plot and carry out terrorist attacks?

SEC. RUMSFELD: The -- I don't have anything else to say about Syria. The president's been discussing it. Secretary Powell's been discussing it. I've discussed it. And I don't know what one can add. Obviously, the people in Iraq who ran that government are on our list. And we'd like to have them. And we'll get a lot of them. We may even get most of them over time. And life will go on.

Tom?

Q: Mr. Secretary, each of the armed services has a very formal lessons learned process that within weeks or months they'll roll out. I'm curious where you stand today, sir, what lessons you learned about how the American military does its job that you think were good, things that need to be improved. Have you personally learned anything from this war that will influence how you conduct business in the months ahead?

And General Myers, if you could take a whack at that, I'd be grateful.

SEC. RUMSFELD: First of all -- I don't want to say that it would be a mistake for the services to engage in service-centric lessons learned. But to some extent, I will say it. This was not a war fought by the Army or the Navy or the Air Force. It was -- or the Marines. It was a war that's been fought by joint forces under excellent leadership. And there isn't any one service that could have done what was done. It was the force multiplier, the leverage that was achieved by the combined -- joint and combined effort between the United States and Great Britain and Poland and other countries. Therefore the lessons learned will be looked at not by service alone, but by the Joint Forces Command and others, who will do a very thorough job.

It started almost when the war started, the lessons learned process. When Dick and I meet every day with the people in the Central Command, sitting off the side you can see people who are on the lessons learned team. And they've been doing it in real time, at General Franks' insistence and at Ed

Giambastiani's insistence. And it will be a good thing, and it will be valuable, and it will save lives and save money and improve the capability of the armed forces of the United States considerably.

Have I learned things? You bet. But --

Q: Such as?

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- I'll save those things for another time.

Q: (Laughs.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: General Myers?

GEN. MYERS: I'm going to save mine for another time as well. (Laughter.)

But there are lots of them, and as the Secretary said, this process was started even before conflict began. It had senior mentors involved, as well as military people. And Admiral Giambastiani down in Joint Forces Command is overall responsible to gather the lessons learned that we'll see and the Secretary will see. And he's also going to try to pull together the Service lessons learned into that so we have, you know, a fairly good composite picture, and inform us how to proceed in the future.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And they'll relate to both war-fighting as well as the process of getting there, the flow of forces and how that works. There's -- this department's got a lot of areas that we can improve, and we're working like the dickens trying to improve it and trying to make it more efficient, more effective, so that it best serves the American people and our values and our principles.

Thank you very much.

Q: Mr. Secretary, has the war been won? Has the war been won, Mr. Secretary?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I'll let you know, Bill. (Subdued laughter.)

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