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Presenter: Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld Monday, June 30, 2003 - 1:25 p.m. EDT

DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers

(Participating were Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Slides from today's briefing are located at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2003/g030630-D-6570C.html>. Photos from today's briefing are located at <http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Jun2003/030630-D-9880W-021.html>, <http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Jun2003/030630-D-9880W-014.html>, and <http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Jun2003/030630-D-9880W-004.html>.)

Rumsfeld: Good afternoon. This Friday Americans will mark the 227th anniversary of our country's independence. We do so in a time of war, when our forces are engaged across the globe, defending our people against adversaries who have a desire to kill innocent men, women and children, and disrupt our way of life. And as we stop to give thanks for our freedom, we also give thanks for those who make our freedom possible: the men and women of our armed forces.

This year in Iraq, Americans saw our forces in action, but it important to remember that Operation Iraqi Freedom was just one battle in a difficult and dangerous war that is still going on: the global war on terror. Today and every day, brave men and women are fighting that war, risking their lives to defend our people from terrorism. On July 4th, a grateful nation stops to thank them all.

As we celebrate our liberty, it's worth taking a moment to reflect on the challenges that our country faced in its early years. It was a period of chaos and confusion. Our revolution was followed by a serious commercial depression. Britain's colonial ports were -- in the West Indies were closed to ships flying the American flag. There was rampant inflation and no stable currency.

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Discontent led to uprisings, such as the Shays Rebellion, with mobs attacking courthouses and government buildings. In 1783 demobilized soldiers from the Continental Army surrounded the statehouse in Philadelphia, demanding back pay. Congress fled for more than six months, meeting in Princeton, Trenton and finally Annapolis, to avoid angry mobs.

Our first attempt at governing charter, the Articles of Confederation, failed, in a sense. It took eight years before the Founders finally adopted our Constitution and inaugurated our first president.

That history is worth remembering as we consider the difficulties that the Afghans and the Iraqis face today. The transition to democracy is never easy. Coalition forces drove Iraq's terrorist leaders from power, but unlike traditional adversaries that we've faced in wars past, who sign a surrender document, hand over their weapons, the remnants of the Ba'ath regime and the Fedayeen death squads faded into the population and have reverted to a terrorist network. We are dealing with those remnants in a forceful fashion, just as we have had to deal with the remnants of al Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan and tribal areas near Pakistan.

Those battles will go on for some time. The liberation of Iraq is complete; the regime has been removed from power and will not be permitted to return. But our war with terrorists in Iraq, Afghanistan and across the globe continues. It will not be over any time soon. As Jefferson taught us two centuries ago, the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

General Myers.

Myers: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I'd like to begin with extending my condolences to the families of those soldiers who were killed and wounded over the weekend in Iraq. As the nation stops this weekend for backyard festivities, we must remember those Americans who have paid the ultimate sacrifice, as well as those forces who are deployed around the globe.

Our forces continue to engage in raids to root out elements that are endangering our troops and trying to prevent Iraq from staying on its path to becoming a free society. We completed Operation Desert Scorpion over the weekend, which resulted in over thirteen hundred individuals being detained, we confiscated 500 AK-47s, over 200 hand grenades, and over a thousand -- I'm sorry, one hundred rocket-propelled grenades. U.S. forces have also recovered over \$9 million U.S. and 1.5 billion in Iraqi dinars.

Yesterday we commenced Operation Sidewinder. The purpose of Sidewinder is to establish a secure and stable environment within the area of operations by clearing, destroying or seizing paramilitary forces, Ba'ath loyalists and weapons and ammo caches. Elements of the 4th Infantry Division have already conducted 27 raids associated with Operation Sidewinder since it began on Sunday, and, as a result of those raids, 61 individuals have been detained and several machine guns and assorted other ammunition confiscated.

Finally, as we move toward the 4th of July holiday, I would like to acknowledge the many communities around the country who are participating and hosting Tribute to Freedom events.

These events symbolize the unification of our communities and our military and serve to recognize our uniformed men and women who have served and continue to serve in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and around the world. And they do that so we may enjoy the freedom of our independence.

It's also an opportunity to thank all Americans for their unwavering support of our troops.

And with that, we'll take your questions.

Q: Mr. Secretary, General, what evidence do you have that the recent raids staged by U.S. forces have succeeded in knocking out the Iraqis responsible for recent attacks on U.S. and British forces? And what concern do you have that the U.S. show of force in these raids could actually antagonize ordinary Iraqis, perhaps increasing unrest, rather than the intended consequences of doing it?

Rumsfeld: Well, clearly, you can't have evidence that your raids will stop future attacks. Indeed, I just said quite to the contrary. We expect various types of attacks to continue in both countries.

If you think of what exists in Iraq, for example, you have looters who take advantage of opportunities that exist from time to time, just as they do in other countries around the world, when there's an earthquake or a sporting event or something. You have criminals that were let out of prison; the guess is tens of thousands of the Iraqi prisoners were put out on the street. You have the remnants of the Saddam Hussein regime: the Ba'athists, the Fedayeen Saddam, some army people, some Special Republican Guard people, some SSO (Special Security Organization) people. You have the -- if you'll recall, busloads of people came in from other countries, Syrians and -- over the Syrian border. We stopped some buses, others got in. And we are -- when we scoop up people in these raids, we find people from other nations who came there to oppose the regime -- correction, to oppose to the coalition. There are clearly people that are being influenced by Iran.

And if you take that full spectrum of people that are there to oppose the coalition and, frankly, the Iraqi people, who are -- the damage that's being done for the most part is to the infrastructure, and which is harmful to the Iraqi people.

So what one has to do is to keep putting pressure on all of those categories and know that no one raid or five raids is going to deal with the entire problem. The problem's going to be dealt with over time as the Iraqis assume more and more responsibility for their own country and are able to have an Iraqi face on the activities that are taking place in that country, which are for the benefit of the Iraqi people.

Q: May I do a follow-up, please, Mr. Secretary?

Myers: Let me just add something to that, and that is that the evidence in terms of what we're seeing and what we're being told by Ambassador Bremer and by folks in theater is that more and more Iraqis are helping the coalition find weapons caches and people that were regime officials that we want. And I think that's one measure of merit that we can look at that is a very positive trend.

Q: May I do a follow-up to all this, please, Mr. Secretary and General Myers? How important is it to find Saddam Hussein and his sons alive or dead? We're getting reports out of Baghdad that a lot of the anti-opposition to American forces and British forces is because of fear; some people think he will come back. And is part of Operation Sidewinder an effort to find them?

Rumsfeld: Well, as I have indicated, our first choice is to find all three of them. I think that the absence of closure is unhelpful in two respects. Number one, there are some who hope that they might come back, because they were privileged during the period they were there; they were part of the Ba'athist hierarchy. There are also those who are fearful that he'll come back or they'll come back. They're not going to come back, that's for sure. They may be alive, they may be dead. We may find them sooner or later. But the absence of closure has the effect I've described, which is unhelpful.

Q: But may I do a follow-up --

Rumsfeld: A follow-up on your own follow-up. I think -- (Inaudible.). (Laughter.)

Q: Mr. Secretary, could you provide additional details since we last talked to you about the June 18th episode near the Syrian border, in terms of what you know now about the role of the Syrians, and how they came to be involved and how many people were killed, that sort of thing?

Rumsfeld: I can try. I'm sure there are people that -- Larry can get precise details and Dick can calibrate me, but the five Syrians were wounded; they were treated; they're all back in Syria. There were something like 20 people captured, and some 17 were immediately released, and I don't know the disposition of the other two or three.

(To Gen. Myers.) Do you?

Myers: I do not. As of Friday, they were still in -- still being interrogated.

Rumsfeld: There's nothing anyone can add, I don't think, that would be helpful from our standpoint, beyond saying that we had good intelligence, and it indicated that there were people moving, during their curfew, close to the border in a convoy of SUVs (sport utility vehicles), and our forces went in and stopped them.

Q: Do the Syrians have any -- play a part in facilitating the movement of people back and forth?

Rumsfeld: I don't know that we've got perfect visibility into that question. We have things that would suggest that someone on the Syrian side was involved, but whether it was the Syrians, quote/unquote, as you put it -- meaning people connected the government, I take it --

Q: (Off mike.) -- I meant the --

Rumsfeld: Connected with the government, yeah. That I haven't got a definitive answer to. (Aside to Gen. Myers.) Do you?

Myers: No, I agree with that statement.

Q: Mr. Secretary, could I ask about troop levels? General Abizaid was testifying last week and he talked about that there would be a re-evaluation at the end of the month. We're now at the end of the month; do you plan to add more troops or will you be pulling some troops back from Iraq?

Rumsfeld: I've asked General Myers and the combatant command at CENTCOM to come back in an orderly way and walk through the amount of time that each unit that's in the country has been there, what the plans are, what their proposals are for a rotation of people, what the timing is of bringing in coalition forces and what the CENTCOM people feel they need by way of forces and what kinds of forces. And I understand, in his hearing, General Abizaid mentioned that he hoped to be able to do that by sometime this month. He's just gotten back there; he's going to be coming back here for the change-of-command ceremony in Tampa shortly after the 4th. And my guess is -- I don't want to put a timetable on him, but my guess is sometime between now and mid-month --

Myers: Yes, sir.

Rumsfeld: -- you all will be back at me with an indication of what a proposal is. Is that not right?

Myers: Yes, sir.

Q: Do you have any comment on that, General Myers, on whether we need more troops or whether U.S. troops can be withdrawn?

Myers: I'm going to wait until Central Command does their analysis and gets back to us, I think, before we answer that in any definitive way. As you know, we have just under 150,000 U.S. troops, and I think it's around a little over 12,000 coalition troops in-theater right now. We have two international, if you will, divisions that are gearing up to come in as well. So, as we look at all that and we work the troop rotation issue, it all kind of ties together.

Rumsfeld: It also is a function of what Ambassador Bremer judges are the kinds of things he may need, and a function of what General Dayton believes he needs, by way of capability, with respect to the Iraqi Survey Group that's pursuing a variety of high-interest activities. I can say this: we have -- do not now and have not had any requests for anything that has not been supplied.

So we don't have anything pending that has not been deployed and provided.

Q: I'd like to follow up on that troop level --

Q: Mr. Secretary, over the weekend some members of the Senate from both parties said they thought it was important to internationalize the forces, whether through the U.N. or through NATO or regional troops, to get away from the impression that it is strictly an American occupation of Iraq. I just wonder what your reaction is to what they had to say.

Rumsfeld: Well, obviously everyone agrees. We've been working for several months

internationalizing it. We have I don't know how many countries currently in there -- the U.S. and the U.K. And there are, I think, one or two other countries that have forces in. We've had at least two international force-generation meetings that have taken place -- one in New York, I believe, one in England, and I think one at CENTCOM -- maybe three.

The process -- we've been in discussions with something in excess of 20 nations about what they will be able to provide. I don't know how anyone can internationalize it more than that. The effort has been going on for weeks and weeks and weeks.

We have -- the military have been working with them as to what they're able to supply. For example, in the case of Italy, they have some Carabinieri, and in the case of other countries they've all specified the things they can offer up. And what CENTCOM has to do, then, is to take them and mix and match, in a way, so that they have assignments and know what kind of equipment they have to bring in, and then schedule the flow in. And that's been going on for weeks.

But we all agree with that. No one disagrees at all.

Q: Do you anticipate any time in the near future a large number of other countries' forces in Iraq?

Rumsfeld: We have been working for weeks to bring in additional countries' forces into Iraq. The flow, I believe -- I don't know -- of course, it's already started. We have three or four countries there now. (To the general.) But when do they -- it's in July and August and September --

Myers: The flow would start in August and probably -- or July, August and probably finish out in September. And it's -- right now there are two divisions, one led by Poland, one led by the United Kingdom, that would initially be in there. There's a potential for a third.

Q: Can I just clarify --

Rumsfeld: But they would not be solely those countries.

Myers: Right.

Rumsfeld: There would be a number of countries in the divisions led by the three --

Myers: There are five or six countries or more involved in each one of those divisions.

Q: So can you clarify that number? I think General Pace told one of the congressional committees about 20,000 foreign troops by the end of the summer. Does that 20,000 include the roughly 12,000 British forces that are there now, or is that above and beyond the 12,000?

Rumsfeld: I think the -- some of the British forces will be rotating out, and my guess is, it'll -- the 20(thousand) that he -- I'd have to go back and see what he said, but my guess is it included --

Q: So we're talking 8,000, roughly, new forces then, correct, with that 20(thousand)?

Rumsfeld: It depends on new and old. You mean additional --

Q: That's correct.

Rumsfeld: -- as opposed to new. There will be a lot of new with rotation.

Q: But 8,000 additional --

Rumsfeld: I hate to correct you like that, what that means -- (Laughter.) --

Q: That's okay.

Rumsfeld: -- but above all, precision. We wouldn't want people to go away misunderstanding.

Myers: That may be roughly right. We better go check the math, though, to make sure that's exactly right, but I think the secretary is exactly right, what he said. And a third division may be --

Q: Mr. Secretary, you're working with these other countries, but are you working institutionally with NATO? It seems as though there's a reluctance to bring NATO in as an institution.

Rumsfeld: It seems as though there's a reluctance to bring NATO in? I don't know that that's the case. The NATO is in the process of doing two things right now. One is getting prepared to take over the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) role in Afghanistan. And a second thing they're doing is working with Poland right now to assist Poland in the responsibilities that Poland has agreed to undertake in Iraq. Whether or not NATO might ultimately come in as a single entity in some role in Iraq, I don't know. That would be a matter for the 19 NATO nations to sort through.

Q: Is that something the United States would favor?

Rumsfeld: We have been encouraging NATO to become more involved, yes, and encouraged them to assist Poland. We also have encouraged them to undertake the responsibility for ISAF in Afghanistan.

Q: Mr. Secretary, I'd like to ask you about a couple of words and phrases that keep popping up in the commentary about what's going on. One of them is "guerrilla war," and the other one is "quagmire." Now, I know you've admonished us not to --

Rumsfeld: I never have admonished you.

Q: -- not to rush to any judgment about a quagmire just because things are getting tough. But can you remind us again why this isn't a quagmire? And can you tell us why you're so reluctant to say that what's going on in Iraq now is a guerrilla war?

Rumsfeld: I'll do my best. I guess the reason I don't use the phrase "guerrilla war" is because

there isn't one, and it would be a misunderstanding and a miscommunication to you and to the people of the country and the world. If you think what I just answered on the first question -- looters, criminals, remnants of the Ba'athist regime, foreign terrorists who came in to assist and try to harm the coalition forces, and those influenced by Iran -- I would say that those are five, if that was five items, five different things.

They're all slightly different in why they're there and what they're doing. That is -- doesn't make it anything like a guerrilla war or an organized resistance. It makes it like five different things going on that are functioning much more like terrorists.

I mean, if you think of what the Ba'athists and the remnants are doing, well, think what they did during the war, the Fedayeen Saddam. They put civilian clothes on, went around and took women and children and shoved them in front of them in Basra, as I recall, during the early part of the war, and attempted to use human shields and that kind of an approach. Now, that is not -- it doesn't fit that word.

So, I think I think that if one analyzes what is going on in that country, they would find a different way to characterize it. I know it's nice to be -- have a bumper sticker, but it's the wrong bumper sticker.

Q: Well, I know. But appreciating, as I do, your appreciation of precision in language -- (Inaudible.) --

Rumsfeld: You've got the dictionary definition?

Q: -- what the DoD definition of guerrilla war.

Rumsfeld: I was afraid you would have -- I should have looked it up. I knew I should have looked it up! (Laughter.) I --

Q: According to the Pentagon's own definition --

Rumsfeld: I could die that I didn't look it up!

Q: -- military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy- held or hostile territory by a regular -- (Inaudible.) -- indigenous forces. This seems to fit a lot of what's going on in Iraq.

Rumsfeld: It really doesn't. (Laughter.)

Now, the other part of your question. Quagmire. Quagmire. We have had several quagmires that weren't thus far, and I don't know -- I didn't look that word up, either. I should have, knowing you. But why don't I think it is one? Well, I opened my remarks today about the United States of America. Were we in a quagmire for eight years? I would think not. We were in a process. We were in a -- we were evolving from a monarchy into a democracy. What happened in Eastern Europe? Were they in a quagmire when the Berlin Wall fell down and they started struggling and working their way towards democracy? Was Afghanistan in a quagmire, as they went through

that awkward stage of trying to schedule a Bonn process and then a Loya Jirga, and now they still don't have a permanent government, nor is it perfectly peaceful there.

If you -- you call it what you want, and then be held accountable for it. My personal view is that we're in a war. We're in a global war on terrorism and there are people that don't agree with that -- for the most part, terrorists. And our goal in each of those countries is to get the terrorists out of Afghanistan, get the Saddam Hussein regime out of Iraq and allow the people of those countries to take over their countries and put their countries on a path towards something approximating a representative, civil society that's not a threat to its neighbors.

If you want to call that a quagmire, do it. I don't.

Q: General Myers --

Q: (Inaudible) -- what a quagmire suggests that, really is, whether you have a good exit strategy. The criticism would be that you're in a situation from which there's no good way to extricate yourself. And -- (Inaudible.) --

Rumsfeld: Then the word "clearly" would not be a good one. You would wish not to have used it, were you to do so -- (Laughter.) -- which, of course, someone as wise as you would not.

Q: General Myers, to wrap up this convoy strike twelve days ago: you said that the strike was initiated because of good intelligence. Is it accurate to say that, at first it was believed Saddam Hussein and/or his sons were in that convoy?

Myers: It was good intelligence about potential high-value targets, but we didn't know who, so, you know, we just knew there was an attempt to flee Iraq, and so we went after the targets.

Q: Saddam Hussein and his sons?

Myers: Like I said, it -- don't know.

Q: Okay. Is it believed that people got away, that you were looking for, in that convoy?

Myers: To be determined. They're still looking through the compound, looking through the other wreckage of the vehicles and trying to determine that. So it's just too early to tell.

Q: And the last thing --

Rumsfeld: But I would take a wild flying guess that it was night, it was a very short distance to the Syrian border; it's entirely possible people got away.

Q: The two people in custody --

Rumsfeld: We don't KNOW that --

Q: -- are they leadership?

Myers: We don't know that because we had very -- we had good coverage with various systems, but it sure is conceivable.

Q: General Myers --

Myers: I'm sorry, is that --

Q: The two people in custody -- are they leadership? The two people still --

Myers: Uh, to be determined.

Q: Mr. Secretary, on the possibility of getting an international peacekeeping force together, could you clarify, please? I mean, do you have a number in mind? Are you asking specific countries to contribute troops? Are they responding --

Rumsfeld: Oh, my goodness, yes. We've asked -- I'm going to guess we've asked 70 countries. We've been doing this for weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks. There's no secret to this.

Q: And out of 70 countries --

Rumsfeld: We'd like as many as we can get.

Q: And you have half dozen or so who have responded positively, in terms of committing ground troops?

Myers: Oh, more than that.

Rumsfeld: No, I think we already have -- I'm going to be wrong by 10, 15, 20 percent, with -- but just to -- and someone here ought to know the answer, and you can get the correct answer from Larry DiRita afterwards. So don't walk away with a wrong number. I'm going to guess there's four countries that already have troops in there. I'm going to guess that we've got another six that have agreed to do it. And I'm going to guess we're currently in negotiations and discussions with another 14. And I would guess there are probably another 15 or 20 beyond that who have indicated some willingness to talk or discuss or something else.

[Countries currently with troops on the ground in Iraq include the U.K., Australia and Poland. A total of 24 countries have made firm commitments to provide forces. We are involved in discussions with 12 other countries regarding their potential support.]

So it is a project that's been going on a long time. The Joint Staff has been doing it, working it hard. CENTCOM's been working it hard. The State Department's been working it hard. And people are queuing up, and it's not a simple thing to do. They've got to figure out what it is they've got to contribute, what it is we need, how they might fit in, what kinds of equipment they need, when they might be able to do it, how long they might be able to stay. It's a very

complicated thing. But the response has been excellent.

(Cross talk.)

Q: Isn't it something, however, that should have been worked out prior to the start of the conflict?

Rumsfeld: Prior to the time the president decided he had to go to war? No. It's something that started shortly after the war began. It's been under way. And we've got a number of troops currently in there, in the forces that are there, that are what CENTCOM has asked for and believes are appropriate.

Q: And do you have a number, a target number, for the number of international peacekeepers you would like to see join the U.S.?

Rumsfeld: Well, we -- the more that are there, the fewer of U.S. troops we have to have. So it's a -- and we won't know precisely what CENTCOM's going to want. We just answered that question, at the moment, whether they like what they have or they want fewer or more. But whatever it is, we will fill in with as many international forces as we can, and we will then be able to rotate some of our forces out and give them a rest.

Myers: As I recall, if you look at the plan that General Franks had before all this began, in terms of how stability operations might go, where you phased in international forces, I think, is very consistent with that plan that was -- notional plan that was put together a long time ago.

Q: Mr. Secretary, another multinational force question. What's the administration's latest thinking about Liberia, how to respond to the secretary-general's request for a multinational force? Is there a support role, at least, that the United States could play?

And related to that, what's your latest thinking about that evacuation operation?

Rumsfeld: We've spent time over the weekend -- a good deal of time over the weekend -- visiting among ourselves about that and thinking through different aspects of it. The reports out of Liberia tend to come up and go down in terms of urgency or lack of urgency. It was relatively calm there, the latest reports. And that's a call the president would make, if and when he decided to make such a call. And he has not, nor has the State Department requested an evacuation out of Monrovia.

Q: Mr. Secretary?

Rumsfeld: Yeah?

Q: At the very beginning, you said here today that the war on terrorists in Iraq, quoting you, would not be over anytime soon. That suggest, perhaps, that you've given some thinking to the timeline you are facing here. Can you shed any light on --

Rumsfeld: We don't have a timeline. I wish I could help people with a timeline, but it's just not

possible. What is taking place is complicated. It is to go from a vicious, repressive dictatorship to get them on a path towards a representative system that's something approximating a civil society that doesn't threaten its neighbors. Ambassador Bremer -- we talked to him again this morning -- is pushing as fast and as hard as he can to get Iraqis engaged in aspects of that process. The sooner that happens, in my view, the greater the likelihood that the people of Iraq will feel a stake in what's taking place. How long or how successful the remnants of the Saddam Hussein regime will be in attacking coalition forces and attacking Iraqi infrastructure, I don't know. We're going to try to find them. We're working very hard at it. We've got good people doing it. We're either going to capture or kill them or run them out of the country.

Q: Yes, but sir, perhaps an awkward question, but I've been wanting to ask this for several days now. On the screen behind you, during the war, you used to both show us the names, by name, of the people, the servicemen who died in Iraq. You haven't shown us that scroll of names, I believe, since the war ended. And I'm just -- you show us now, you know, pictures of people in the field doing their work, but you don't show us the names of the dead anymore. And I'm curious why you have not done that.

Rumsfeld: Well, we might want to do that. That probably would be a good idea, yeah.

Q: But can I take you back to Jamie's question of a little bit more precision? What's the danger if the news media begins to refer to the situation now in Iraq in shorthand as a guerrilla war or an insurgent war? Aside from you wanting us to be as precise as possible, is there a --

Rumsfeld: No. I mean, it's a free world; people can be as wrong as they want. (Laughter.)

Q: But sir, is there -- it seems to me that calling it an insurgency or a guerrilla war begins to bring to mind to people the last one that the United States had, which was Vietnam, which I think most people can agree was not a resounding success. You go from Vietnam, your classic quagmire, and --

Rumsfeld: There are so many cartoons where people, press people are saying, "Is it Vietnam yet?" -- hoping it is and wondering if it is. And it isn't. It's a different time. It's a different era. It's a different place. But I was asked a question, would I call it that? I said what I would call it.

Q: Which is?

Rumsfeld: Oh, I'm not going to repeat it, Pam. We'll get the transcript. It was the answer to the first question. If someone wants to call it something else, fine, do that, and be held accountable for being wrong, just as I'm held accountable for being wrong, and goodness knows I am from time to time. I try not to be, but I am.

Q: Mr. Secretary, going back for a second to Liberia, I wondered what your reaction is. The West African governments are asking for the U.S. to provide 2,000 troops. I wondered your reaction to providing troops to Africa, as well as what are your latest thoughts on any possible troops for any peacekeeping, peace-ensuring effort in the Mideast.

Rumsfeld: (Laughs.) You've gone from Liberia --

Q: To the Mideast.

Rumsfeld: -- to the Mideast.

Q: Supplying peacekeeping troops.

Rumsfeld: I see. The -- I thought I answered on Liberia. The president will make a decision on what he thinks. And I would give my advice to him, as everyone else on the NSC (National Security Council) process would, and then I would be supportive of whatever he decided. And we're looking at a range of options. And I believe the organization's called ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) that has been opining on this subject. And we, of course, the United States, has had forces in Nigeria, I believe, maybe somewhere else as well, Sierra Leone, possibly.

Myers: (Inaudible word.)

Rumsfeld: And we have trained Nigerian elements and Sierra Leone elements and, I think, Ghana, some other --

Myers: That's correct.

Rumsfeld: -- small units of these. They've been well trained. We've helped equip them. And to the extent they've been deployed, I've been told that they've handled themselves well. So those are things that are being sorted out by the Department of State and the White House at the present time.

Our time is up.

Q: Come back and see us.

Rumsfeld: Thank you.



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