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Menu

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### NEWS

[DoD News](#)  
[Advisories](#)  
[Contracts](#)  
[Live Briefings](#)  
[Photos](#)  
[Releases](#)  
[Slides](#)  
[Speeches](#)  
[Today in DoD](#)  
[Transcripts](#)

[American Forces](#)  
[News](#)  
[Articles](#)  
[Radio](#)  
[Television](#)  
[Special Reports](#)

[DoD Search](#)

[About News](#)  
[News Archive](#)  
[News by E-mail](#)

[Other News Sources](#)

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

Thursday, October 23, 2003 1:28 p.m. EDT

### DoD News Briefing-Secretary Rumsfeld, Mr Di Rita and Lt. Gen. Schwartz

(Participating was Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Lawrence Di Rita, Acting Assistant Secretary Of Defense for Public Affairs; Lieutenant General Norton Schwartz, Director For Operations, J-3, Joint Staff.) Photos of today's briefing can be viewed at <http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Oct2003/031023-D-9880W-100.html>  
<http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Oct2003/031023-D-9880W-076.html> <http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Oct2003/031023-D-9880W-046.html>.

**MR. DI RITA:** Good afternoon. We didn't have anything in particular, other than that we've talked to you over the weeks about getting General Schwartz in here now and then to give an update on operational activities. And we thought since it's been sort of quiet the last couple of days, it would be a good opportunity for him to come on down and do that. So, I don't have a statement, and I'll turn it over to General Schwartz, and we'll take some questions.

**GEN. SCHWARTZ:** Thank you, Mr. DiRita.

Good afternoon. I thought it might be helpful to give you just a quick synopsis of some of the operations that have occurred in and around Iraq and Afghanistan as we continue to seek out and destroy the enemy's effort to attack the coalition and our troops.

In the north, over the last 24 hours, the 101st Airborne Division conducted raids against several weapons caches. The operation yielded substantial amounts of high explosive rounds, fuses and the individual responsible for that particular cache. Also in the north, and I think of interest, is the Iraqi border police detained 18 Iraqis attempting to enter Syria north of Rabiya. The border police are proving to be an effective organization as they intercept suspect personnel illegally crossing the border.

In Baghdad, coalition forces conducted three simultaneous raids against individuals suspected of placing improvised explosive devices against coalition forces. Eight people were detained, along with six AK-47s, numerous RPG rounds, grenades and 1.3 million in Iraqi dinar.

And in the south, Operation Sweeney is having a notable effect on smuggling. To date, over 130 people have been detained, along with barges, boats, petroleum tankers, generators and fuel pumps and other paraphernalia associated with smuggling operations.

In Afghanistan, Operation Mountain Viper continues in the area of Kandahar, as well as Orgun, and has resulted in the confiscation of over 1,682 mm mortar rounds, numerous rockets, and smaller-caliber munitions.

In the context of homeland defense, we continue to provide metro and facility air patrols and alert aircraft for protection of United States airspace.

With that, ladies and gentlemen, we'll be happy to take your questions.

MR. DI RITA: Charlie?

Q Larry, has there been a decision yet on the who and how in handling the General Boykin matter? Who will handle it and how will it be handled? What IG will be involved? The Pentagon IG?

MR. DI RITA: It is going to be the Department of Defense IG. After some limited discussion on the best way to approach it, that was the general sense of it. I think in these kinds of matters, the Department of Defense inspector general works very closely with the relevant service. And I would imagine in this case, although I don't have a detailed feel for it, I would imagine in this case he'll be working with the Army IG.

Q What is the nature of this? What will he be trying to determine, whether or not there was a violation of military law or --

MR. DI RITA: He's going to do what General Boykin asked, which is General Boykin would like to clarify that he didn't -- that notwithstanding the specific comments he made -- and we've all said enough about that -- but is there any rule or regulation that needs clarification, is there anything that General Boykin did that may have been inconsistent with that? Those are questions that are relevant.

General Pace -- or General Myers, I should say, spoke to that to some extent when this first came out, that this is a gray area, so it's worth getting clarification about the gray area. And General Boykin feels that that would be useful, and we agree.

Q In other words, is he going to check whether these comments might not have just been injudicious, but might have actually violated federal law or --

MR. DI RITA: No, no, no, no. It's what is the -- what are the rules appropriate to this kind of activity, the rules in this -- the chairman spoke -- and I would simply refer you to what the chairman said. The chairman did speak to this on the first day about, you know, it's not a --when you're doing these kinds of speeches, and military officers doing these kinds of things, it gets down to a question very often of just the judgment of the individual officer, and not so much is it allowed.

And the chairman, I think, referred to a prayer breakfast. I don't know if that's an appropriate comparison, but -- it may or may not be; I'm not trying to evaluate that. But that's the kind -- the rulings on these things are gray areas, and it's worth reviewing them when situations like this occur.

Q So, again -- I'm sorry to press it -- you don't look for any kind of perhaps punishment or anything to come out of this, but simply to determine --

MR. DI RITA: The inspector general will review it and make his findings and then, probably, some recommendations. But I'd -- I'm getting very close to the edge of my competence on this thing, so I think I'll stop.

Bob?

Q Larry, in the Rumsfeld memo, the "hard slog" memo, he talked about progress against Taliban, al Qaeda. And then he referred to the Ansar al-Islam as the effort just beginning against them. I'm wondering why it's just beginning and what you're doing, what is the nature of the effort against them?

MR. DI RITA: I assume you're referring to the global war on terror memo.

Q Oh --

MR. DI RITA: I wasn't sure if I understood it, based on your description of it. (Laughter.)

I don't think this is the place to -- that was a memo of correspondence between the secretary and his senior subordinates, and so there's only so much we're going to be able to talk about details of the memo because it wasn't anybody's intention that you and I would be discussing it today.

What we've done with Ansar al-Islam to some extent we've been able to discuss and in some areas we've been unable to discuss. We know that they were ensconced in Iraq for a period of time. We know that they were -- we've had various engagements against them. We know that we've seen various activities by them since the war. But it's not really the place to be able to discuss in great detail what more might be done.

Q (Off mike) -- just beginning, I'm just wondering if that's -- why now, why --

MR. DI RITA: I've just described what's going on with Ansar al-Islam, and I'll just leave it at that. I don't think I have any more to clarify that.

Q Larry, Senator Kennedy -- I mean, I'm sorry -- Senator John Kerry today, talking about the memo, said he thinks it confirms what they've been saying all along, that the administration doesn't have a plan, they're not doing this right, and if the secretary is admitting privately what many have been saying publicly, it raises very serious questions about his leadership and the president's leadership. Is there a reaction to that kind of statement?

MR. DI RITA: I didn't see the statement. I'm prepared to accept most of what you just said as to what Senator Kerry actually said, but I don't -- the secretary's not trying to reveal some hidden truth. As I said yesterday, and as I think the secretary has said, these are questions he's raised, others have raised, consistently over a fairly significant period of time.

He's asked questions, for example, how do we measure risk across the board. And this is something that's reflected in this memo, how do we measure risk, and in this case the risk of capturing and killing terrorists versus not knowing how many may be being created at the same time. So it's a measurement issue.

He's asked how can we best organize the force, which is what's reflected in this memo. He has asked what key capabilities does the U.S. currently lack. And he's asked how can we measure readiness. And those are what's reflected in that memo.

What I've just read from you is something he testified to in June of 2001. Many of the same questions that he's talked about for two-plus years. So there's no -- it's to one extent gratifying that people are focused now in a way that they have not been focused before, on the very questions of transforming this department, transforming, more broadly, the United States government for a challenge and a set of tasks that's very different from those that were extant at the time that we first organized ourselves.

Q In that memo, though, he also makes statements like: the DOD is not capable of changing fast enough to succeed in the war on terror. Are those statements in that memo truly what Secretary Rumsfeld believes?

MR. DI RITA: Well, it's -- again, he's making assertions and raising questions in a way to generate discussion, admittedly in the sort of absence of the context that he knows that his -- that the combatant commanders and the chairman and others have, they have a context because this is the conversation that they've been having with him for a couple of years, and in which we're making a lot of progress. And when you step away from that context, these look like revealed truths. But the fact is, he's been asking these questions for a while. There's nothing about that memo that's overly -- I would

say, that diverges significantly from the kinds of things that he's got -- he's going about to do. He was asked to take this job with the eye toward transforming the department. He has engaged the senior leadership of the department to do that. In some areas there are things that the department is doing very well and reacting very well to the global war on terror. In their -- in other areas he's asking the question, are these things we should continue trying to do, are there other ways that it could be done better, either within this organization or elsewhere? And I really must emphasize that he -- these aren't the kinds of things that he tends to know the answer to. He's asking questions.

Q Lastly from me, is there an investigation into how a memo sent to four people ends up being leaked?

MR. DI RITA: There's no investigation. It's a -- it's a vexing question, though, isn't it? I'll stipulate, I accept the question. But there's no investigation.

Q But are questions being asked about how it was possibly being leaked?

MR. DI RITA: No. You could spend all day doing that. It's just there isn't.

Q Larry, could I also say that --

MR. DI RITA: I'll come back to you.

Q -- you -- you say that he asked the questions in this memo. But, in fact, he does make conclusions in this memo. He said there's no real metric way to measure success about how many terrorists are being caught, he said very different things about al Qaeda than he said in public. And you released this memo yesterday. So it's out in the public domain. This isn't something between --

MR. DI RITA: Correct.

Q -- obviously it was, because it was leaked before that.

MR. DI RITA: Right.

Q But you released it. Why did you release it, and what about these --

MR. DI RITA: I'll tell you why I released it. We released it because the memo itself is -- the memo is better read than having somebody characterize it. And the way it was characterized was -- was -- many felt significantly diverged from the actual intent and the tenor of the memo. So, we released it. And the fact was that --

Q (Off mike)

MR. DI RITA: -- prior to having it released, people in this room standing up in front of cameras with copies of the memo made it pretty apparent that it was -- it's a little bit -- you know, trying to put the horses back in the barn. So there was no real reason not to release it at that point.

Jonathan?

Q I want to go back to the Ansar question. In March the Ansar was the subject of an intense offensive led by U.S. Special Forces, handled mainly by about 7,000 peshmerga. They killed a bunch of them, but a lot of them escaped into Iran. Now, the secretary's memo indicates that they have reconstituted. And there are reports that they maintain a series of safe houses in Baghdad that are being used as bases to attack U.S. troops. So I'm wondering if you can be a little bit more forthcoming about what happened. How did this organization, which was subjected to a ground -- three- or four-day ground assault, air attacks, cruise missile attacks, many members of which escaped into Iran, is somehow reconstituted and is considered a threat to American forces.

MR. DI RITA: Do you want to take that?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: Sure. Terrorist cells are, by their very nature, resilient. And yes, we succeeded in the Qurnah area in attacking a location where they were concentrated. And yes, we've been paying attention to their presence in Baghdad and elsewhere. The key thing is that, as was recently reported, that we apprehended one of their principals. And this effort will continue, both to act against those that lead the organization and those soldiers who act against our troops. We will conduct offensive operations and we'll make sure that we minimize their capability.

Q The Iranians, who took many of these people prisoner as they crossed the border, and I was there; I saw what was happening -- did they actually release them with the intent or with the knowledge that these people were going to be returning back to Iraq and could be -- and would be a threat to American forces?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: I don't think I can speak definitively to that.

MR. DI RITA: But generally speaking, we have said, the secretary and others have said that some of the countries surrounding Iraq have been unhelpful in trying to influence events inside of Iraq. We know that terrorists from other countries, including countries bordering Iraq, are entering Iraq, foreign terrorists, and Ansar al-Islam is one of those groups. So, we're not in a position to characterize Iran's intentions. But there's no question that the countries surrounding Iraq have, in some cases, been certainly abetting the passage of terrorists into Iraq, and Ansar may be one of them.

Q (Off mike) -- they're not foreigners; I mean, they are Iraqi --

GEN. SCHWARTZ: And with your permission, I think it's important to acknowledge that there is a major effort going on to secure the borders. And that operation is called Chamberlain, and it is an effort both on the east and the west and the south not only to field Iraqi forces, the border police, if you will, but likewise, to use our coalition capabilities, surveillance and troops, as well, to better protect and seal the borders. That is a major undertaking that General Abizaid has underway, and it is part of that process.

Q Are you getting helpful information from the man who was captured? Could you tell us?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: I prefer not to characterize the results of that debriefing.

Q General?

MR. DI RITA: Tony.

We'll come back to you, John.

Go ahead.

Q Can you say whether you've found that Ansar al-Islam had a role in any of the major suicide bombings of recent weeks; and also, whether they're operating independently or whether they are operating with, you know, Ba'athist -- former Ba'athist loyalists of the regime?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: There are some signs of -- I wouldn't call it coordination, but some indications that there are linkages between the former regime loyalists and some of the AI seniors. But generally speaking, they are independent actors. Now, with regard to the other question, I think that AI, once again, is our principal organized terrorist adversary in Iraq right now and we are concentrating our resources on that.

Q And do you have any sense, I mean any knowledge at this point, any evidence at this point as to who has been carrying out those major bombings, the suicide attacks, attacks against U.N.

headquarters, against the hotel and so on?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: We do not have a case, a convincing body of information that would lead to a particular group. The basic sense of it is, though, that this continues to be former regime loyalists or recruited foreign fighters.

MR. DI RITA: Tony?

Q In the Sunni triangle apparently the level of violence continues to increase in sophistication and scope. Can I get your sense of why that is at this point? And capabilities, a la the secretary's allusion in his memo. Are the capabilities over there -- are we lacking some capabilities over there that the Joint Staff would like to accelerate fielding? More armor, radio jammers, things, capabilities that would help mitigate some of these attacks?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: We have -- the deputy secretary has undertaken an effort to scrutinize all the needs that might be required, and has, in fact, realigned several hundred million dollars to make that happen. This involves such things as up-armored Humvees, it involves such things as body armor, it involves things of a nature that would conduct surveillance on the borders and so on. So the short answer to your question is, those things that need to be done have been addressed and are aggressively being monitored by the departmental leadership.

Q What difference would some of those technologies realistically make, given the level of attacks over there, the sophistication -- (inaudible)?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: There's no silver bullet. And there's not a single thing. For example, there is not a single box that will stop improvised explosive kinds of activity. In some cases these are radio-controlled; in some cases not; in some cases they're on one frequency and another. So this is not a simple problem. What I would say is that what we are going to do is deploy the best material and our best capability that is available for our troops. But we should not unduly raise expectations that we have a silver bullet here.

Q Okay. And why the -- why the ratcheting up of attacks in the Sunni triangle, from your perspective?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: I think there is a -- they are -- have decided to engage us, and they are doing so. But I think it is important to recognize that some of that is a result of our own activity. The 82nd Airborne has been focused on the Fallujah and al-Ramadi area. That is where a lot of these attacks have occurred. So the bottom line is, this -- there's a combination of things: some elevation, as General Sanchez has indicated, in the attacks by the enemy, but likewise -- and he also indicated that we have increased our tempo as well to take these guys out.

Q General Schwartz?

MR. DI RITA: How about back here?

We'll come back to you --

Q In the wake of the Boykin incident, has the secretary or other high level DOD officials either issued new guidelines or re-stated existing guidelines for officers who want to speak publicly before groups?

MR. DI RITA: Not that I know of. The secretary certainly hasn't. The secretary has reiterated again what the president has said, which is this isn't -- you know, General Boykin's comments don't reflect the policies that the president has spoken to with respect to the war on terrorism. But he -- we've not -- I'm not aware of any revised policies. And I think that might be the kind of thing that would wait before we'd do anything for the results of the review anyway, also.

Q Doesn't an officer need to get clearance from someone to appear before -- in uniform?

MR. DI RITA: These are the kind of questions that people -- that General Boykin himself wants reviewed, and so we're reviewing them. I don't have an answer for you today, though.

Q General Schwartz, could I just follow up on a couple things you were saying, just to be very clear? Could you explain to us what exactly is the -- in your words, so we're not just interpreting, what is exactly the increased pace or spike of activity you see in the Sunni triangle? How is that increasing? And just a little perspective about the opposition forces: do you have a current sense of -- I guess the --

MR. DI RITA: And I think we're getting (close ?) here.

(Cross talk.)

MR. DI RITA: (Off mike) -- from the Midwest. I thought you could answer it, Barbara. I know it's better -- go ahead.

GEN. SCHWARTZ: Sir, the -- or, I'm sorry. (Laughter.)

Q Yes, thank you!

GEN. SCHWARTZ: Ma'am, the --

Q And do you still feel that the potentially unguarded munition sites are problematic?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: The answer to your first question is that we are experiencing in the neighborhood of 25 attacks a day throughout all of Iraq. And I think it's important to recognize that that doesn't mean that the amount of attacks are uniform across the country. The north and the south remain stable and calm. It is concentrated, as we've indicated, in the central, in the Baghdad area. That is up somewhere between five and six or seven attacks a day on average from several months ago. So that gives you a sense of the change in the numbers.

And with regard to the ammunition sites, it's important to understand that we've come across 6,000 ammo caches of various descriptions in the last few months, and we have cleared somewhere around 5,600 of them. So there is a major effort underway. There's over 6,000 personnel committed to that level of effort. We are currently protecting just under 100 of the remaining sites 24/7. There are others which are protected less than that, but that is based on a determination that the content of those sites is less transportable, less accessible and, therefore, less worrisome to coalition forces.

MR. DI RITA: Yeah, let me just give you one piece of context for that, too, on the question of ammo dumps. There was a report recently -- and the numbers aren't quite right here -- but in Bosnia, where we've been for seven-plus years, in the last period of time, and I don't know if it was a few months or recently, our forces there uncovered some few dozen tons of ammo of some sort.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Forty tons.

MR. DI RITA: Thank you, sir. I'm going to get away, because pretty soon we get somebody who knows what he's talking about! (Laughter.)

But 40 tons of ammo in the last -- whatever -- month, two months, at a place we've been occupying for eight years.

Q You have excellent assistance from your staff! (Laughter.)

MR. DI RITA: Yes, I do. He's the best action officer in the place.

And I'm going to actually get out of the way and let him -- (off mike).

SEC. RUMSFELD: I should underline what the general said, that the 6,000-plus ammunition dumps or caches or deposits or areas are only the ones we've identified. We're confident there are more because it is a discovery process. This country is a country that has just enormous amounts of weapons.

And today is the 20th anniversary, unhappy anniversary, of the attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. That attack killed 240-plus Americans. Shortly after the attack, I received a phone call from Secretary of State George Shultz, saying that President Reagan and he wanted to meet with me, and asked me to serve for a period as the personal envoy of the president to the Middle East. I remember that experience very well, and if you'll think back to it, it was a -- just an enormously violent event. And the photographs of it were photographs of a great many wonderful Americans in a building that had been nearly totally destroyed.

After that, the immediate reaction was a human reaction, and cement barricades were put up around buildings housing American troops, so that trucks couldn't willingly or easily get into and attack a major building; barricades somewhat like the ones you see around here. And of course, the next thing that happened was the terrorists starting using rocket-propelled grenades and lobbing them over those barricades. The barricades are fine for trucks; they're not so fine for airborne missiles of various types.

The next thing, if you went down to the Corniche in Beirut and looked up, you'd see embassy buildings draped with mesh, a wire mesh, the idea being that when the rocket-propelled grenades would hit the mesh, they'd bounce off. And so, the point being that terrorists go to school on you, and they adjust their tactics. The mesh worked for a short period, and pretty soon, they started hitting soft targets, people going to and from where they were working.

I mention this because it is a point that I've tried to make from time to time; namely, that a terrorist can, in fact, attack at any time, in any place, using any technique, and free people are not able to defend at every place, at every moment of the day or night, against every conceivable type of technique. The advantage is with the attacker. And the only way to defeat terrorists is to take the war to them; to go after them where they are, where they live, where they plan, where they hide; go after their finances; go after the people who harbor and assist them; and reduce the number of them, and the number of people supporting them and the number of people financing them, so that the numbers of new terrorists coming into the process, trained and financed and ready to go out and kill innocent men, women and children across the world, so that that number is reduced. That's the president's policy. It's the correct policy.

How many people looked up "slog" in the dictionary? (Light laughter.) Just be honest --

Q Quagmire, isn't it --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Huh?

Q Quagmire. (Laughter.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: How many of you did? How many -- some of you did. I'll bet you a few of you looked it up, you just don't want to admit it; you're embarrassed.

How many of you have heard that word recently?

Q Slog?

Q Recently?

Q It was in the memo! (Laughs.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: No, except for me! (Laughter.) I mean, I went home and my wife said,



"Are you sure that's a word?"

Q It's a British word, isn't it?

SEC. RUMSFELD: And I said, "Oh, I'm sure it's a word, but I just haven't heard it for about 20 or 30 years and" --

Q Thought you'd resurrect it?

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- I thought I'd bring it back into active competition.

The Oxford Dictionary, I'm told by Mark, has a definition of "slog," the preferred one, I believe, which is: "slog -- to hit or strike hard, to drive with blows, to assail violently."

And that's precisely what the U.S. has been doing, and intends to continue to do.

Q Is that what you thought it meant when you wrote it?

SEC. RUMSFELD: It's close enough for government work! (Laughter.) It's not only the Oxford Dictionary's preferred definition, it's mine.

We're finding these terrorists where they are, and we're rooting them out, and we're capturing them, we're killing them. It's difficult work. It won't be over any time soon. And I will close by saying it will be a long hard slog, indeed.

Q Mr. Secretary, Larry said that you were not trying to reveal any, quote, "hidden truth," were the terms he used, about the war on terrorism or the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. What do you think -- what does that mean? And are you disturbed that this memo was leaked?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No. I think I understand what happened. I sent it to four people. One of the people was out of town, and his office received it, thought, "Those are interesting questions. I'll staff it out." Circulated it to a number of people, so that by the time the boss got back he'd have their thoughts. And one of the people that it was circulated to, obviously, thought I'd issued it as a press release -- (laughter) -- which, I might add, was not the case.

Q But even though you've asked for investigations of numerous leaks in the department, you're not going to ask for an investigation to this? Can you --

SEC. RUMSFELD: First of all, I don't think I have asked for investigations in numerous leaks.

Q One time --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I can recall one time -- in my life I can recall one time.

Q Well, okay. Okay. Bill Arkin -- the Bill Arkin. But a lot of money and a lot of people were asked about that. There was this long investigation. So I just wonder if --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Just once, I believe. Not many. Just want to make sure everyone gets on the right wavelength here.

No, I certainly don't. I understand how it happened, and those things happen. Life goes on.

Q Was it a classified document, sir?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No. It wasn't. It was just a personal memo from me. It did -- nothing in it was classified -- or should be classified.

Q Mr. Secretary, regarding -- regarding your -- you're asking for thoughts regarding the possibility of a new institution to be created with the specific purpose of fighting terrorism better. You must have your own thoughts along those lines, and I'm wondering if you might be able to share them with us --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't, really. I really am at that stage where I -- I met with those combatant commanders, I listened to what they had to say. Each one is a serious, talented, well-organized, well-staffed, disciplined person. They reported what they're doing in the global war on terror, which they do every two or three weeks, to us. And as I listened to it, I started asking questions. I started taking everything they'd said, adding it up, and saying to myself, Gee, are we -- have we got our eyes up off the ground and across the horizon far enough? Are we looking out far enough in a way that would enable us to think of ways and approaches that might make us be able to do still better than we're currently doing? And that's -- that's what it had to do with. And it was --

I went back to the office, and I thought to myself that it would be useful to get that down, those things that just came to my head. And I started writing them down and sent the memo out to just four people with the thought that it would be helpful. I re-read the memo in the paper and thought, not bad. (Laughter.)

Q Mr. Secretary, what about the critics who are out there saying that the administration is putting a happy face on the war on terrorism publicly, but privately this memo indicates that things are not so happy, that, in fact, you --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Those that are attentive here in this room know that that's not what we've done here. What we have done is we've put out a very straightforward, accurate, to the best of our ability, and balanced view of what we see happening and what we believe to be the case. And there's been no mystery about the fact that this is -- from the very beginning we've said that this global war on terror is a tough one, it's going to take a long time, it's going to take the cooperation of a lot of countries, it's going to take all elements of national power. These were things that have been said and repeated consistently for 2- 1/2 years.

Q Do you believe that the DOD is not capable of changing fast enough to be successful in the war on terrorism?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Big institutions don't change fast. That we know. First of all, it isn't the task of the Department of Defense to be successful in the global war on terror, it's the task of our country, all of our governmental agencies, public and private, as well as 90-plus other countries. So no one department of government can do it all.

And the questions that I raised is, are we organized? First of all, I look my own department and say, are we doing everything that we can do within our capabilities and our statutory authority? And then I look beyond it and say, are there things that we're not arranged to do that we can, within our own resources, adjust ourselves as to how we're organized, trained and equipped, to do a better job for a new set of problems?

And I continuously ask questions like that. I've been doing it my entire life, and I probably will continue doing it.

Then the question beyond DOD is, is the U.S. government properly organized? And I think of things, for example, like the fact that USIA doesn't exist anymore. And is it appropriate -- might there be a need for some new element that -- a 21st century version of that that could help the United States as a country communicate with the world on some of these important issues? So it was more of a searching look that was involved in this memorandum.

Q Mr. Secretary --

Q Mr. Secretary, a point of information.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Mm-hm.

Q Disinclined --

SEC. RUMSFELD: You came late, and now you interrupt everyone else who's had their hands up.

Q You raised the --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I just can't imagine you doing that, Jamie --

Q You raised the point of -- (inaudible) --

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- to your friends, your associates here. It shocks me.

Q You know that's sort of a pet thing of mine.

SEC. RUMSFELD: What is?

Q Definitions of words.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh-oh. I didn't get into that (when you were here ?).

Q Disinclined though I am to be disputatious --

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Laughs.)

Q The American Heritage Dictionary --

SEC. RUMSFELD: There are a lot of different definitions; I know that.

Q Well, this is ITS preferred definition: to walk or progress with a slow, heavy pace; plod, as in "slog across the swamp."

SEC. RUMSFELD: Right, I've seen that one. (Laughter.) I read the one I liked. (Laughter.) And if you'd been here, you would have found out about that.

I'm going to take two questions. I've got to go back to work.

Q Wait, sir.

Q I --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Shhh.

Mr. Secretary --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Shh. I'm going to take two questions. And then I do have to go back to work.

You're number one.

Q If you're characterizing this memo as simply thinking out loud with your top aides, given the political climate in Washington, how problematic is it to have this thinking-out-loud memo out there

for Congress -- members of Congress, especially, to chew over; for presidential candidates to chew over right now?

SEC. RUMSFELD: It's life; it's the way it works in this town. If you don't -- I don't think anyone who's ever come into a position like secretary of Defense is asked to cage their brain and stop thinking. And my -- that is what we're here for, is to try to think of the best interests of the American people and to ask the kinds of questions that are important and are probing, and it seems to me that that's a very constructive, useful thing to do. I've been doing it all my life. I intend to keep on doing it. And I think that if they're fair questions, it's a good thing for people to chew them over.

And I must say, I was having breakfast yesterday morning with a group of congressmen, and Democrats and Republican alike; they ended up coming down here and talking about it. And I think that the memo served as a very useful vehicle for discussing with them important aspects of the global war on terror which they, as members of the Congress, consider as important, and I think they should consider them as important.

Last question.

Q Sir? You walked in here and talked about the 20th anniversary of that horrible day in Beirut, and you know that there was an investigation afterwards that concluded the Reagan -- the policy that put those men there was flawed from the get-go: untenable goals; they were put in a bad situation. To what extent does that lesson -- has that lesson driven your view on how U.S. forces should be mobilized for conflict? And have you rethought our policy in Iraq against that backdrop and those criticisms of 20 years ago and that bombing?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, there's no question but that the people in this department, civilian and military alike, go back to that; they go back to the Cole and they go back to all of the events that have occurred where terrorists have been successful. And every one that one looks at and thinks about reinforces the importance of what I said in my opening remarks; namely, that anyone who thinks that free people can just hunker down and find a way to hide and defend against what's happening in this world of ours are wrong, and that the only way to deal with the problem of terrorists is to take the battle to them. And that's what the president of the United States is doing.

Q A clarity of mission, though, and whether the military is being put -- given a mission that they're really -- they're not equipped to deal with; that was one of the criticisms there. The Marines were in an untenable situation with a religious civil war.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, I think the report on that was more complex than what you've just said. And my answer is yes, everyone here, civilian and military, do look at those.

And I wasn't kidding. I wasn't kidding. Two questions.

(Cross talk.)

I said two questions.

(Cross talk.)

Q Mr. Secretary?

Q Can we ask General Schwartz more questions? One more?

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