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Presenter: Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz

Saturday, October 25, 2003

Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Roundtable with Sunni Clerics

DEPUTY SECRETARY WOLFOWITZ: Fifteen years ago I was the American Ambassador to Indonesia and I guess you know there are 200 million Muslim people who live in Indonesia. And they taught me to begin all my speeches by saying Salam Aleikum (inaudible). I don't think I have sat around a table with so many imams since I was in Indonesia. In Indonesia they call them (inaudible), but it is the same idea and it's the same religion and they taught me we all pray to the same God. So I come here with enormous respect for your religion and enormous respect for the Iraqi people, and I thank God we are rid of the Saddam Hussein regime. I have been very encouraged by what I've seen, the last time I was in Kirkuk in July and again today, because before the war many people said the Kurds will kill the Turks and the Turks will kill the Arabs and the Arabs will kill everybody and there will be civil war in Kirkuk. And that hasn't happened. And I think that speaks wonderful things of the people of Kirkuk. And as the spiritual leaders of those people you must have had a lot to do with that. So I thank you for what you have done and I'm here to get your ideas and suggestions. Most of all I came here to get your thoughts.



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