



United States Department of Defense.

News Transcript

On the web: <http://www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint.cgi?http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2004/tr20040517-secdef0782.html>

Media contact: +1 (703) 697-5131

Public contact: <http://www.dod.mil/faq/comment.html> or +1 (703) 428-0711

Presenter: Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld

Monday, May 17, 2004 2:03 p.m. EDT

Remarks by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to the Heritage Foundation

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Applause.) Thank you. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you.

Well, that's amazing. (Applause continuing.) Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. I appreciate that more than I can say.

Midge, your many contributions to the cause are legendary. You're a friend. You're important to all that's good about this country, and we thank you so much for that.

Ed, you're right, I did tell you not to get a building. (Laughter.) But you didn't take my advice. (Laughter.) I hope the real estate values have gone up. (Laughter.)

You know, it's amazing. I had my family together in February. And I have six grandchildren, and I gave them that poem, "If." And I, this is last February; this is the middle of May, if you can think about it. And I said, "We're going to probably be together over July 4th, and it would be a good idea if y'all memorized it. (Laughter.) I'm prescient, or lucky.

But I then remembered reading that the terrorist organization put a -- I guess it's \$15 million on my head. And then I woke up one morning to CNN about a week ago where they said, about the Senate, "They're after his head!" (Laughter.) And then I remembered "If," and "If you can keep your head -- (laughter) -- when all about you."

And last weekend, before this last, the one before, I got a call from my wife, Joyce. She was in -- at the University of Colorado. And she was there for her 50th college reunion, and she just called up to tell me that it really wasn't necessary for me to give her all this publicity -- (laughter) -- on her return, after 50 years, to Boulder. And she went to the graduation, and the poem they read was "If." So --

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aw!

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Oh!

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, there is a great deal happening in our world and in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Some is bad. Some's good. Some is truly wonderful. And some of it's uncertain as to what it will mean.

I saw a bit of it last week, as I flew into Iraq. First, the bad news: You've all seen some of the pictures and reports about what took place at Abu Ghraib prison. That some of the guards abused those Iraqis who were in our custody and were our responsibility was truly a body blow. As we saw some of those pictures in the Pentagon and looked at each other's faces, you could feel the, the shock that we felt and disappointment that some in our country's uniform could sully it by that behavior.

There are now, I guess, six or seven different investigations going on. Two or three have been completed. We'll know soon how all this came about. And needless to say, those involved will be held accountable.

Last week I saw some of the finest young American men and women working around the clock to provide security for the Iraqi people, to be sure; recognizing that the transition to the Iraqis taking over their country is coming upon us in six or so weeks. The troops are doing their job well. They're doing their jobs with compassion and skill and courage, and we're so fortunate to have them doing what they're doing for our country and defending our freedom. (Applause.) They are truly remarkable and in, in their dedication, their conviction, their recognition that what they're doing is truly noble work.

We've also seen many brave Iraqis risk their lives to protect their country. We saw some reports that some of them did not engage the enemy and left their posts. That's true. There's over -- something like 200,000 of them now. They're getting better equipped every day, but they're not as well equipped as some of the enemies they've faced. And I worry about the impression that was left, because over 300 of these Iraqi security forces have already lost their lives. So it's not like they're not willing to engage; they are, and they're on a path to being able to take over the security responsibilities in that country.

There's a lot of intimidation going on. The former regime elements, the Ba'athists, and the terrorists are trying to intimidate the Iraqi people and to discourage them from cooperating, whether it's on a Governing Council or a judge -- as a judge, or a provincial council, city council, member of the security force, police, the civil defense group. Just hours ago, the head of the Iraqi Governing Council, Izzedine Salim, was assassinated by enemies of freedom. The Governing Council, however, has not been intimidated, it has not been defeated. And we must not allow terrorists or regime remnants to determine the fate of 25 million Iraqis.

In Iraq, the man on the street knows that he has been under a vicious regime for the past 35 years and he's free of that. He knows that Saddam Hussein is in prison, where he belongs, and that he'll be tried by a new Iraqi government in the weeks and months ahead for the crimes he committed against his people and his neighbors. Those crimes, too numerous to list, include the use of chemical weapons on ethnic groups resulting in mass deaths; the use of murder, filling many mass graves, as a tool of state;

the torture and abuse of children to instill fear in parents. In Houston right now are seven Iraqi businessmen that are being fitted with prosthesis devices to replace the arms that Saddam Hussein's personal military forces chopped off.

The fact that these actions defined the political culture in Iraq for 35 long years I think goes some way towards explaining why the transition to self-government is so difficult. Over the past year, since the military liberation, Iraqis are slowly settling into a new understanding of what their lives and their futures might be like. They know that among the 138,000 American troops in this country -- their country -- are people who have been not just providing security, but also building roads, fixing schools, fixing hospitals. There today are many times the medical care in terms of delivery of medicine, availability of doctors and clinics than was the case under Saddam Hussein. The oil fields are producing, except when terrorists try to damage them to disrupt them.

Since September 11th, we have known that we have a mission to complete. The global war on terror, like the Cold War before it, will be the work of a generation. Terrorists will strike at will. To defeat them, we not only have to eliminate their leaders, but we also have to wage a war of ideas to win the allegiance of a new generation that needs to see that freedom is a vastly better choice than terrorism and hatred.

We do not know precisely what will happen over the coming weeks because politics and power have too many human variables, but we do have plans and a good sense of what the possibilities are. On or before June 30th, this transition to the Iraqi will occur. It's not a magical date. Our forces don't suddenly head home on June 30th, and a mature state will most certainly not spring forth to be admired and praised by the world. Still, something truly significant should begin.

An interim government of men and women appointed in consultation between the Iraqi Governing Council; the Iraqi people; Mr. Brahimi, the United Nations envoy; will take power on an interim basis. There will likely be a president, a prime minister and a couple of dozen Cabinet ministries. The personalities involved will probably be a mixture of political people, leaders and technocrats. This new interim government will hold power for some -- power for some six months plus, until elections are held for a transitional national assembly. The assembly will be the legislature for a transitioning government that will serve for probably around a year. Its main task will be to write a permanent constitution, an Iraqi constitution, an Iraqi solution to their governing, and that then would be voted on by the Iraqi people.

All of this should be thought of as the infancy of a nation. In our lifetimes, we have watched Germany -- I shouldn't say "our" lifetimes; my lifetime. (Laughter.) It's a little longer than most of the folks here. We've seen Germany and Japan go through a process. We've seen India and Israel. We've seen Eastern European states that emerged from Soviet control. And most recently, we've been able to watch and assist as Afghanistan navigates along that difficult path.

It's always a difficult process. It is not easy. The men and women who undertake to lead Iraq will face a very sharp learning curve, and there will be some real bumps in the road.

Thomas Jefferson said, when our own nation underwent this process, he said, quote, "We are not to expect to be translated from despotism to liberty in a featherbed." Meanwhile, the Iraqis must build the institutions that are the heart of democracy. Coalition countries can consult, they can advise, but the Iraqis will choose what they'll listen to. And that's the way it is.

Is it possible that the country will revert to mayhem? Perhaps. But it's more likely that a set of serious, capable and educated men and women will find ways to make things work. Not our way, not necessarily the way of other coalition countries. Maybe slowly; indeed, very likely slowly.

There will be both successes and failures, and the failures will force people to in some cases give up, I'm sure, and step aside, and in other cases they'll get up off the mat and try again to find a better way of moving forward along that difficult path.

Before turning to questions, let me make a, a brief comment on Abu Ghraib. In the past two weeks, the United States has offered the world a seminar on what happens when things go wrong in a democracy. The world has seen those shameful pictures, but the same world has watched the United States government take responsibility and apologize to those individuals who were wronged. It's watched senior civilian and military leadership come to Congress to testify under oath about what was known and what has been done. It's watched a free media publish stories of all types, from the accurate to the grossly distorted. Iraq and the watching world have seen that in our country, no one is above the law, that we are a nation governed by laws.

They've seen that abuse by a few in the military was revealed and investigated by the military; not by the media, by the military. They're the ones who announced it. They're the ones who went public in early January, within a day or two of a soldier turning in material that raised that alarm, and they went public and told the world that there are abuses, that they are filing charges because of alleged abuses in that prison. The media have piled on, to be sure, but the public announcement was by the U.S. Central Command in Baghdad.

The world will see that Americans will not accept dishonorable behavior. These are important lessons, though we certainly would not have chosen to teach them this way. Terrorists are working to break the will of the United States government and the American people, and to break the growing confidence of Iraqis in their right and their ability to live in freedom. We will be able to claim success in Iraq when we can bring our troops home, leaving behind Iraqi security forces that can provide for the security of those people, leaving behind a nation of free people that is not a threat to its neighbors, leaving behind a nation that's respectful of the various religious and ethnic and minority groups in that country. And the existence of such a country can set a powerful example in that region.

And when the day comes, all who have been a part of such a great stride forward for human freedom will have the right to be proud of what they've done -- and most of all, the remarkable men and women in uniform who remained so steadfast during this testing of our nation's will.

And with your help and the good center of gravity of the American people, we'll see that day in the months and years ahead, but only if we are steadfast and only if we stay the course.

Thank you, and God bless you all. (Extended applause.) Thank you very much. (Applause continues.) I'm told that there are microphones here, and I'd be delighted to respond to some questions. I'll even answer some. (Laughter.)

You know, Midge's introduction was biased. She's -- she left out a chapter. When I was asked to go run the Office of Economic Opportunity, the War on Poverty, and -- Ed Meese remembers this -- I followed -- it's the first war that had ever been run by a Seargent. It was Seargent Shriver. (Laughter.) And the president wanted to try to get it fixed and get it on the right track and stop doing the things that didn't work and get some of the things working.

And I got home one night, and my wife has kind of an unusual sense of humor: there on the refrigerator was a little sign that said, "He tackled a job that couldn't be done." (Laughter.) "With a smile, he went right to it. He tackled a job that couldn't be done and couldn't do it." (Laughter.) You got to be tough to be married for 50 years to someone with that sense of humor. (Laughter.)

All right. We have microphones. Why doesn't somebody who wants a question go near a microphone? Then we can do more of them. Here's one right over here if someone has a question. Good, you can pass -- oh, good.

Q Oh. Mr. Secretary, it's the observation of myself and many of my friends that the issue of a free Iraq and the administration of Hussein is a powerful issue. However, I think the more important issue has been sublimated by that issue, and that is the war on terror. We're more concerned about the issue that it's being fought on their grounds by our terms, and the bodies are falling in Iraq and not on New York City streets. So I wonder why we can't heighten that awareness in most of what's issued by the various departments and the press secretaries. I think it's the most important issue, and so do many of my friends, and I don't think it's getting the attention paid to it that it should be. And I'd like to know what you think on that. Thanks.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I agree. I agree completely with what you're saying. There's no question but that the global war on terror is the challenge. If you think of where there have been attacks besides the United States, in Spain, in Madrid, that changed an election undoubtedly; consciously, as a result of terrorist intent, changed the outcome of an election. I just had lunch with President Aznar, who now is out of office, and he is convinced that that's the case. But also in Saudi Arabia, in Indonesia, and country after country we've seen these terrorist attacks, and as well as in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere in the region.

It is -- as I mentioned in my remarks, it's a task not for a battle, but for a generation as the Cold War was a generation. We have a whole host of people who are being trained in these schools to hate the West, to hate progress, to believe that it's in their interest to go out and kill innocent men, women and

children. And they have an enormous advantage; they can attack anywhere, anytime, using any technique, and you can't defend everywhere at every moment of the day or night against every conceivable technique. Defense simply doesn't work alone.

You have to defend, to be sure, but the only way to deal with it is to take the battle to the terrorists where they are, and find those networks. And they don't have countries, for the most part. (Applause.)

They have the advantage of using our technology, e-mails and computers and pagers and wire transfers and all kinds of technologies that they never could develop themselves, and use them against us. They have the ability of going to school on us, watching how free societies behave. Practically everything we do is public. And they see that. They, they test it. They watch behavior and then adjust their techniques to accommodate to that behavior.

So it's a tough job. It's going to be a while. It's going to take a while. And its going to take determination. Its going to take determination by this generation and, very likely, the next generation.

Question. Yes?

Q Mr. Secretary, I'm a little perplexed about Syria. I don't necessarily believe that embargoing will resolve the problem there, particularly when a lot of other countries that we would like to hope would be on our side are against us there. And I don't understand why we are just permitting all of this continuing problem to be handled in such a rather subtle or diplomatic fashion. Is there anything that we can see coming in the future that can deal with the Syrian problem as it's affecting our presence in Iraq better than what we've been hearing in the press and otherwise?

SEC. RUMSFELD: The fact is that Syria and Iran have both been unhelpful to what it is we're trying to do in Iraq. Neither government in any way approximates the kind of a system that we're looking forward to in Iraq, a free system. The dictatorship that exists in Syria is notably different than the model that we're hopeful Iraq will seize. The handful of clerics in Iran that lead that country, to the dismay of, I'm sure, a large fraction of their population, they're not interested in seeing a free Iraq, a system that is representative of the people and that is at peace with its other neighbors.

It's tough, it's tough to answer your question because what the president and the United States has been attempting to do is to go about our business in Iraq and try to get the Iraqis set on a logical, sensible path, and to dissuade, through a variety of different ways, the Syrians from making the kind of mischief that they can make.

I mean, they have -- that border has been porous and people, terrorists, have come across that border. Syria has been recalcitrant with respect to freeing up Iraqi assets that were frozen in their country, and large portions of it have been disappearing.

You say you're not sure the sanctions will work. I don't think anyone is confident that the

sanctions alone will change the Syrian government from the direction it's on to some much more acceptable behavior pattern. On the other hand, the Congress has passed sanctions, and they -- it is, in my view, appropriate that Syria not be rewarded. The hope is that through discussion, and debate, and consideration, diplomacy, that Syria will recalibrate its direction. Whether that will happen, I don't know. I wish I did know. But in the meantime, we've got to make sure that they do as little damage to what we're trying to accomplish in Iraq as possible.

Yes?

Q Mr. Secretary, first of all, thank you very much for your service. If there ever was a -- (interrupted by applause).

SEC. RUMSFELD: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Q If there ever was a right person in the right job at the right time, this is it.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

(Applause.)

Q I didn't know I was going to get so much applause! (Laughter.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: Thank you.

Q The second question is a little more difficult. (Laughter.) After you complete the second term with George W. Bush as president in the White House and you finish that four years -- (applause) -- would you consider -- would you consider staying on with a new administration in your present position for the following term? (Laughter.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Laughs.) Oh, my! (Laughter.) I'll have to talk to my wife about that. (Laughter.)

Yes?

Q Mr. Secretary, I also want to express my deep appreciation for the job you're doing as secretary of Defense.

And secondly, you spoke to Mr. Aznar, Senor Aznar. And I would be -- I would like to hear if he expressed any thoughts on his defeat, and what his thoughts are about the Spanish people in effect capitulating to the terrorists by electing his successor.

SEC. RUMSFELD: He is a, he's a very interesting man. He served, I think, two terms. He has a great deal of courage personally. He is, as he has said publicly, disappointed in the decision that was made by his successors.

He believes very strongly that what's being done in Iraq is the right thing to do. He plans to write and speak out and, and encourage the countries of Europe and the world to recognize that we simply cannot allow terrorists to determine the outcome of elections. And he believes deeply that that is exactly what happened in Spain and he believes that that is what the terrorists will attempt to do in other countries in the months ahead.

Yes?

Q I'd like to thank you as well, Mr. Secretary.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Thank you.

Q Thank God for you right now.

My question has to do with weapons of mass destruction. There's a question as to whether they existed, and of course we knew they did because he used them. The real question was where the heck are they? And in the news this morning –

SEC. RUMSFELD: Kind of like my wife. (Laughter.) Well, the answer is that the intelligence information in our country and in other countries that have excellent intelligence gathering capabilities was that they existed, that the government of Iraq was systematically deceiving the world about what it was doing. There was a great deal of evidence to that effect. We don't now know what actually happened.

We've got 1,200 people in the Iraqi Survey Group that are there in the country following up on leads, attempting to understand what was done, what took place. As you say, we know they existed because he used them on his own people and his neighbors. And everyone in the United Nations that I know of agreed that his declaration, that was supposed to be accurate, was fraudulent, that it was inaccurate. That was widely accepted.

The debate wasn't about whether or not he had weapons of mass destruction. The debate in the U. N. wasn't about whether or not the declaration was fraudulent. The debate up there was how much longer did one think that inspections should be allowed to continue the way we were going. And finally, after 17 or 18 resolutions, a decision was made that that was enough.

My -- I can't guess how much longer it will take to get what we will finally look and say was ground truth -- certainly months, maybe a year-plus. I just don't know how long it will take. We certainly won't just discover anything. I mean, we did not just discover Saddam Hussein, and he was hiding in a hole that was big enough to put chemical weapons in it that would kill tens of thousands of people.

And how was he found? He was found because intelligence people talked to one person who talked to another person and said this person might know something, and then tracked it down one after another after another, and finally somebody took them out there and said maybe around here. They

didn't find him. Finally, they allowed as how that person ought to look harder, and he walked over and said try there. And sure enough, they pull up this thing and he's there in the ground. Our forces had gone back and forth past that farm dozens of times. The only way you'll find it is not by discovery in a country the size of California. The only way you're going to find out what actually happened is if finally people are no longer intimidated, no longer frightened, and come -- are willing to come forward, and the terrorists know that. The former regime elements know that. That's why they systematically killed yesterday the president of the Governing Council, the Iraqi Governing Council, is, is to instill fear and intimidation.

Think of what terrorism is. Terrorism does not mean you blow up a building. Terrorism means you terrorize. The purpose of it is to terrorize. It's to change your behavior. It's to affect what you do. And the fear that exists in that country that that crowd might come back in, that we might leave prematurely and that these -- this vicious regime could take back over is real, it's palpable and it works. And the only thing that will dissuade people from that is time and success.

Q On the news this morning, apparently a mortar shell was found that had sarin gas in it. So we have found some of this material. And then a week or so ago apparently a large quantity was discovered in Jordan. So clearly the terrorists do have access to it. How does that change -- I would hope the media would maybe say some things about -- (chuckles) -- this in a proper way, but how does that change -- (laughter) -- how does that change how we approach things in Iraq?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, let me say this about that. The -- I've seen the intelligence on the matter you've raised. My personal view is the way we ought to handle it -- although it's not for me to decide -- is to recognize that what you cited, I believe, was a field test, which is not perfect, and what we ought to do is to get the samples someplace where they can be tested very carefully before coming to a conclusion as to precisely what it was.

Then we have to be careful. We can't say something that's inaccurate. So what we have to then do is to try to track down and figure out how it might be there; what caused that to be there in this improvised explosive device, and what might it mean in terms of the risks to our forces, the risks to other people, and any other implication that one might draw. And that's going to take some time. So. Question?

Q Yes. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Do you think that the United Nations should have a vital role in the rebuilding of Iraq? If so, why? If not, why not?

SEC. RUMSFELD: The president said so. (Laughter, applause.) Those were his precise words, and I agree with him. The more countries that are invested in the success in Iraq, the better it is for the Iraqi people. And the better it is for the Iraqi people, the more rapidly that country will recover and be a positive and constructive force in the neighborhood, which helps Jordan, it helps Turkey, it helps the neighboring countries.

So I do think it's a good thing we attempt to engage the rest of the world, whether it's the United

Nations or NATO or other countries individually. We now have something like 32-or-so countries with forces in Iraq, and that's a good thing. And if we can get another U.N. resolution, my guess is they'll be still additional countries that will be doing -- be willing to put forces in there. And that relieves the stress on our force and on our coalition partners, and that, in my view, is a help.

Yes?

Q Mr. Secretary, when the Ba'ath party took over Iraq in 1959, I believe, they murdered the king very brutally, and the prime minister, and many, many other people. Has there been any thought of returning the monarchy to Iraq?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I've seen speculation about that. I've seen people propose that. You may recall that in Afghanistan that was also suggested, and there was a big loyal jirga and a conclave to discuss those types of things. And I'm sure that there will be people who will propose that during the period between now and the time there's a constitution, and it will get sorted out and the Iraqi people will make a judgment about that. Yes?

Q I have a statement or an inquiry. It seems as though much of the world perceives us as being not evenhanded in our treatment of the Israelis vis-a-vis the Palestinians. And I can't help but wonder if that is an encumbrance to our efforts in Iraq and elsewhere.

SEC. RUMSFELD: That's been the case for most of my adult life. And the Palestinian people have not had a good deal over that time. There have been a lot of words spoken, a lot of bullets fired, a lot of people killed, but with the exception of President Sadat and Menachem Begin when the Sinai was returned and various decisions were made, there hasn't been much progress on the Palestinian front.

And the effect of that, of course, is to create a politically volatile situation in the countries of that region. And many of them have Palestinian refugees living there that are not their own nationals, that worry them, and they're concerned. They would like to see the Palestinian problem solved, and solved in the way that there is a Palestinian state and the Palestinians in their countries move back out of their countries and into a Palestinian state.

And that issue about what it might look like has been what's been going on for close to 50 years, 40-some-odd years. And, and it's, it is a complicated one. It's one where there is a great deal of emotion attached to it. There are times when both sides have felt they were quite close, but in the last analysis, the interlocutor on the -- particularly on the Palestinian side, Mr. Arafat, stepped away.

Where it will be in the period ahead, I just don't know. Certainly I think most rational people hope that they can find a way to solve it. Some people look at it from a distance and say, "Well, why doesn't the United States just grab them both by the scruff of the neck and shove them together?" And wouldn't it be nice. And we get that kind of hope expressed from countries in the region.

So there have been occasions when we've heard that hope from Israel.

But it doesn't work that way. You can't just shove people together and think that they're going to stay together. They've got to work this out. They've got to figure out a way that they can live together in peace.

And there's been a great deal of progress made; it just hasn't reached a solution. If you think about it, it wasn't too long ago there wasn't a country that had any relationship with Israel. Today any number of them have a variety of relationships, both formal and informal.

And so I think we have to keep trying. It's the kind of thing that if you're not working on it, it gets worse; and if you are working on it, it may or may not get better. (Scattered laughter.) But God bless all the wonderful people in the world who have worked on it over the years and tried to make it better and tried to see if we can't find ways that -- but if you think about it, there are very few countries today in that region whose position, formal governmental position, is that they want Israel eradicated and shoved into the sea. That was -- I mean, it wasn't too many decades ago that that was the mantra. But you don't hear that today. It's not considered really acceptable, except by terrorists, but not by the countries.

Question?

Q Mr. Secretary, I have a -- wonder if I can get your input on a military policy that's been evolving over the years and has become, I think, very evident in Iraq today. And that's the inclusion of servicewomen in the combat zone, where, even though they aren't in combat MOSs, they are engaged in close combat, being killed and horribly wounded.

I'm wondering if you view that as a contradiction to current social mores against violence in (sic) women. Is the notion of chivalry, the conduct of a gentleman, becoming an anachronism?

And also, are we opening up a Pandora's box of gender-neutral litigation, to include everything from Selective Service, the draft, and military uniform and physical fitness standards? Thank you. (Scattered applause.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Sighs.) (Laughter.)

Look, we've got terrific men and women doing a great job for this country. They don't do exactly the same jobs, as you well know. They do somewhat different jobs. There are a lot of things they do as well or better than the other sex. And my impression is that this is not something that needs to be adjusted at the present time.

I think that I'm so darn proud of what they do. And I go out there and I watch them, and I see the determination and the courage that these young men and women show. And to suggest that that isn't right, that they shouldn't be allowed to do that -- everyone's a volunteer.

It's not like you have conscription and we said you have to go do this, and you have to go do this this way. Every one of the people there stuck up their hand and said, "Send me. I want to do this." And that's a wonderful thing.

So I'm -- and I would add, just on the other subject you mentioned, I can't imagine our country going back to a draft. We don't need it. We're able to attract and retain wonderful people the way we're doing it as long as we provide the appropriate incentives. And certainly this is a country that's wealthy enough to do that. (Applause.)

We'll make this the last question, so make it a good one. (Laughter.)

Q Mr. Secretary, going to go back to your first statement. You referred to people -- young people, particularly, being educated to hate us. And I think we know the schools we're talking about. I'm curious, what are we doing domestically and/or internationally to shut down the funding for those kinds of schools, or another way to interdict them?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, the president and the team have put together something like an 80- or 85-nation coalition that are trying to use all elements of national power to put pressure on terrorists, financing of terrorism, teaching of terrorism, and to try to share intelligence and to make life difficult for people who would do that.

There is a battle of ideas. There's a struggle within that religion where some people are trying to hijack it -- a relatively small minority of the people in that religion are trying to hijack it. And they are feeding money into these schools that teach people that it's in their interest, religious interest, if you will, to go out and kill people.

We're not -- where we stand in the world on that is not satisfactory, from my standpoint. I'm just one observer, and each of you can make your own assessment. But I have a feeling that it's a tough job. I have a feeling that a great deal of that work is ultimately going to have to be done by people in that religion. They are going to simply -- millions and millions and millions -- hundreds of millions of moderate Muslims are going to have to take back their religion. And we have to try to find ways to help them. (Applause.)

It's amazing, when you think of it. We have such a wonderful country and we're so good at so many things.

We're good at communication. We're good at advertising. We're good at marketing. We are good at inventing things and creating value. And in this area, we're not competing. We're not really -- as a nation focused in a way that would help us engage in this battle of ideas and help those people, those right-thinking people all across the globe, and there are a lot of wonderful right-thinking people all across the globe who recognize -- I mean, think of what we have. Everything we have in this country is based on trust. That is why we are so productive. That is why this country is so creative. Because people are free, and they're free to do what they want and think things that are unorthodox and unusual and to

create just an amazing system.

When one compares this system, rooted in trust -- the fact that we can engage in a contract and for the most part expect that it stands up; the fact you can walk out of your door in the morning and not have to look around the corner and see if you're going to be shot; that you can send your kids off to school and you can trust that they're going to come back, that is a special thing and we are, because of the uniqueness of our society, we are the most vulnerable society on earth to terrorism. It strikes right at that trust. It attempts to alter our behavior and for us to be something other than what we are, a free people. And that is really dangerous.

It is something that takes -- is going to take a lot of thought by the best minds in this country, because we cannot afford as a people to find that incrementally we are giving up that which makes this country so special and so distinctive. (Applause.)
Finally, if you see someone in uniform, say "thank you."

(Applause.)

<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2004/tr20040517-secdef0782.html>