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# News Transcript

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

Thursday, May 20, 2004

## Stakeout After Classified Senate Operations and Intelligence Committee Brief

SEN. MAJ. LDR. FRIST: On behalf of the United States Senate, I want to thank the gentleman behind me, especially Secretary Rumsfeld and the Generals who are behind me for both today and yesterday and really on an ongoing basis, keeping us up to date in the United States Senate.

We've had a superb briefing over the last one hour. In that briefing, we covered a whole range of issues, some of which can be commented on in a very general way. It was a classified briefing. First and foremost, we're at war. It's a war on terror. Over the last several weeks, we've tried to give good balance between appropriate oversight, appropriate investigation and at the same time, allowing our Generals, and especially the Secretary, to oversee and conduct this war.

I've been very pleased on behalf of our United States Senators. I want to thank them for helping us achieve that appropriate balance with very good timely, swift and deliberate information. Mr. Chairman, won't you comment and, Mr. Secretary.

SEN. WARNER: Thank you very much. We've really had tremendous bipartisan effort here to elicit those facts that we felt necessary for a Senate oversight. I thank you, Mr. Secretary, for the full cooperation that you and General Myers and others have given us.

At this time, I think we got to begin to focus that this investigation regarding the prison incident is ongoing. There's much to be learned. Secretary was very forthright in telling us there are things that he is still learning every day. And in due course, we will have it out in perspective and accountability, but we've got to move on and complete our missions in both Iraq and Afghanistan and focus on this turnover. There's some critical turnover taking place on July 1 and we want to support the president's goal to get that done.

Mr. Secretary?

SEC. RUMSFELD Well, I guess I'd just say that we've been spending a good deal of time in

the Senate and the House over the past week and a half and have attempted to respond to this important issue and to do so in a way that is prompt and forthcoming and satisfies the members of the House and the members of the Senate.

WARNER: Any questions?

Q: Mr. Secretary is the prison investigation diverting [Inaudible]?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes. That is not to say it shouldn't. It's too bad, but that's life. An awful lot of us are spending an enormous amount of time on this subject and we've got the transition coming ahead of us here to sovereignty for the Iraqi people on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> and there's a great deal of work to be done. On the other hand, this was a situation that needed to be addressed. The criminal prosecutions are going forward. There are six or seven current investigations that are going forward. And it is perfectly proper in a democracy for us to demonstrate to our Congress under Article 1 of the Constitution and, indeed, the world that this is how the United States of America -- a democracy that has values and respects human beings and expects Americans to treat human beings as human beings -- ought to operate. And the world has a chance to see how we do this.

Q: Secretary Rumsfeld, do you know why the Iraqi Police and US Forces raided the home of Ahmed Chalabi? Were you aware that this was going to happen before it did?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I'm not as knowledgeable about it. I've been spending a lot more time on this subject that we just discussed upstairs than I have on that. And I certainly was not aware that there was going to be a raid on a home if, in fact, there was. My understanding is that the Iraqis are involved in this and I think it'd probably be best to ask the Iraqi leadership.

Q: Have you lost confidence in Ahmed Chalabi?

SEC. RUMSFELD: It is not for me to comment on this. To the extent authorities want to inquire of people, they can do that. And then, just as with the cases we've been discussing up there, the process should be allowed to work. People should see how it works and what transpires.

SEN. WARNER: Question from over here. Question -- right here.

Q: Why was Chalabi getting paid some \$300,000 plus by the U.S... [Inaudible]?

SEC. RUMSFELD: There have been a number of entities in Iraq that had been -- being paid money by the United States over a period of years. The Congress passed the -- I think it was called the Iraqi Liberation Act back in the late 1970s -- but both houses of the Congress, signed by President Clinton -- and it provided funds for that purpose.

SEN. WARNER: Thank you all very much. Appreciate it.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Thank you.

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