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# News Transcript

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

Thursday, June 24, 2004 2:45 p.m. EDT

## Secretary Rumsfeld Interview with Brit Hume, Fox News Live

Q: [In progress]: ... pleased to be joined from the Pentagon by Defense Secretary Rumsfeld. Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for doing this.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Thank you. It's good to be with you.

Q: Tell me about today whether this sort of matches your worries, exceeds your [audio gap] transition in any way?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, Britt, as you know, we have believed that the people who have been stating that they intended to increase the level of violence, the terrorists and these folks, were probably correct in that they would try and do that and they have been doing that. It's true in Afghanistan, as we move towards elections. It's true in Iraq, as we move towards elections and as the new government begins to take hold. There clearly are a relatively small number numerically of people who are determined to try to make enough noise and kill enough innocent Iraqis and coalition forces that they can derail this process towards a representative system in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Q: Can they?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No, there's no way they can prevail on the battlefield. Their numbers are very small. Obviously, a terrorist can go out and kill a group of innocent Iraqis or innocent Afghans anytime they want. That's a doable thing, just like we have homicides in the cities of the world every day. The only thing that could really be effective is if what they did was so dramatic that it persuaded people that, in fact, all was lost or it's not worth the effort or not worth the pain and we should throw in the towel. But the president's determined. I know that the Iraqi government is determined. The new prime minister is a courageous individual. And what we simply have to do is to see this through and see that we get the Iraqi and the Afghan forces sufficiently strong that they can begin to take over more and more of the security responsibilities in the country.

Q: Well, what about that, Mr. Secretary? That seems a tall order. The training efforts you've made so

far have not always succeeded, to put it gently. And you've now got to train in time for -- I suppose -- in time for elections in the near term, enough forces to keep order in the country while elections can go forward. Knowing what you know, can that be done in time?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I think so. If you think about it, we've gone from zero to 206,000 Iraqi security forces in the last year. They are not perfectly trained, they're not perfectly equipped yet, but that process is going forward and they're heading towards, as I recall, something like 260,000. The investment is being made by the Iraqis and by the international community to equipment. The training programs are in place. And in many instances, they've fought courageously. Over 400 Iraqi security forces have been killed in the line of duty, out there trying to provide security for the Iraqi people. So the reports that some of them didn't do well are true. But if you've got a group of Iraqi policemen and they're up against terrorists -- trained terrorists with AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades, it ought not to be surprising that they don't do well.

Q: Well, and then again -- I mean, they've got to do better, though, don't they and can they?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, sure. It just takes some time and some investment and training and equipment. And the other thing it's going to take is leadership and an Iraqi face on it. And the new prime minister is taking hold, his team is, his deputy prime minister is an able man. The president, the vice presidents and the ministers are picking up their responsibilities. And I think that it just simply is going to take some determination, some resolution.

Q: Mr. Secretary, I want to ask you about Fallujah. General Kimmitt said to me on this program about a week ago that that was unfinished business. The implication clearly was that the experiment there with the Fallujah Brigade had not delivered all that was hoped it would deliver and that the place was still a problem.

SEC. RUMSFELD: He's correct.

Q: If you had it to do over, would you have handled it the way you did or what?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I wasn't on the ground making the decisions. I think that you have to give the folks their credit for coming to a conclusion and that they thought they had a group of tribal sheiks and leaders in the city and from around the surrounding areas who could persuade the resistance in that city to behave itself. Was it worth a try, probably. Did it work, not yet.

Q: All right. Now you've begun to step up military action on our end. We've had a couple of air strikes in the past week. Is this the beginning of a major new offensive there or has this just been targets of opportunity?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, when you get good intelligence, you don't want to not use it. And they had good intelligence and they went in and they destroyed some large caches of weapons in a supply area. I saw the attack and saw the photographs and there were secondary explosions that went on for many

minutes after the attack. And 30 minutes later, there was a secondary explosion that was probably as big as the original attack.

Q: You're talking about the attack last weekend?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes.

Q: What about this more recent one that just happened in recent days?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I have not seen the photos from that...

Q: We understand.

SEC. RUMSFELD: ...but the reports are that they're pleased with the after-action assessment.

Q: Now all of this was thought to be an effort to attack the heart of this terrorist command center, if that's what it is, that Zarqawi is running. How much progress do you feel you've made against Zarqawi and his network?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, if the reports are correct about the last two attacks, he's going to be a little shorthanded for a period.

Q: A little or a lot?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I don't know how many he has. It's hard to know how many people are in that network in that city. He has a network that's bigger than that city. But with respect to the people in the city, my guess is that probably something in the neighborhood of 30 to 50 people are not operating at the present time.

Q: Mr. Secretary, thank you very much.

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