

**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DONALD RUMSFELD

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SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DONALD RUMSFELD: Does that sound reasonable?

Q: Perfectly clear.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Good.

Q: Background meaning you guys can talk about it it doesn't get traced back to secretary (unintelligible)?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Right. You can trace it back to Pace. (Laughter.)

Q: We tried doing that (inaudible.) (Laughter.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, we really do appreciate the fact that you folks have been so steady in your interest and your willingness to (unintelligible) time and talk to the folks here in the Department and hear what they have to say and then speak your minds about what you think about what's going on. I know we don't all always agree all the time, but that's understandable. People look at things from different perspectives. Mike's got a totally different recollection of our first meeting than I did. (Laughter.) Mine's right. (Laughter.)

MIKE: It makes a difference when you trying to sell something. (Laughter.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: Pete and I would be happy to respond to questions. The president – we just left him again this morning. He's very focused on this subject and he indicated that he's not comfortable giving his remarks before Christmas, and very likely it'll be early June. And he is talking to lots of different people. He's talked to some people from outside. He's talked to – this morning he spent – goodness knows – I don't know, two and a half hours almost with Casey and Abizaid and Pete and me and Mr. Gates and some other folks – Condi. He's, I guess, tomorrow coming over here and going to meet with the chiefs and hear their perspective on all of this. Earlier in the week he met with the folks at the State Department. He indicated he had a chance to talk to a number of people that were heading PRTs in Iraq. And he met with the Iraq Study Group, it's called, and various others and all of which is focused on a – essentially on Iraq, although this morning he spent a good deal of time talking about the broader context for all of this.

And if you think about it, and the case can be made that to some extent what's happening in Iraq is playing out a microcosm of what's happening in the region in terms of the Sunni/Shi'a divide, and it is – I have personally felt for several years now that I wish there were some way that we could keep Iraq and Afghanistan, and even Lebanon to some extent, in the broader context of the struggle that's taking place within that faith between the violent extremists and the mainstream Muslims. It is in my view very dangerous, very lethal. I look at the – I think it's growing because of the power of weapons is so – they're so lethal today. And we saw all of the weaponry that Iran passed through Syria to the Hezbollah, a demonstration of the advantages of

asymmetric and irregular warfare as opposed to conventional warfare against somebody like the United States. You have to assume that that lesson has been learned well.

You look at the lethality of IEDs and watch them – the speed at which they alter the methods of activating them. About the time anyone figures out how they got enough stuff deployed to deal with one technique, they develop a new technique. And they're good at it and they're getting help from Iran in Iraq. It is very clear that this conflict probably, in my view, is still not well understood. It's complicated. There's no – it's unfamiliar. There's no roadmap. There's no experience. It doesn't have anything to do with World War II and capturing Iwo Jima and when it's over, you own the island. That just isn't the nature of it.

People keep talking about going after the militias as though that they exist in a form, in a location where you can attack them, destroy them, and then that's done: they don't exist or they're captured. And of course, our guys go into militia – into that territory and these folks disappear, and they don't want to fight, and you leave and they're back.

So it is a very different circumstance and obviously they know it. They know that the center of gravity of the thing is here in the United States. It isn't out there. And that they're designing their attacks to have maximum effect politically to weaken the will of the American people. They're doing a pretty good job. They are a hell of a lot more skillful at it than we are and have a lot greater flexibility. They can lie. (The element?) of bureaucracy. They have media committees that they operate to manipulate the media and they do it very skillfully, but let's eat our stuff. What the hell? What he was, you know, listening to me jabber when you could be eating something?

Q: Mr. Secretary, it seems a uniform suggestion from everybody, the Baker Commission, folks I've talked to, troops in the field say that one of the potential advantages we have is training Iraqi forces. That seems to be something that is increasingly becoming job one, and time is limited. What's the best way to do this? Is it to take units that are in the field already and transfer them? Is it to move the unit from Fort Riley over there to get them started? Is it to build individual replacements to do that? A combination of all three? What do you see as a best way to stiffen or bolster or increase this effort?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I think the first thing we have to do is disaggregate Iraqi security forces: police, MOD, and MOI. They're very different. We've had the MOD from the beginning. The trainers did a good job, got them up on a step. The MC's done a hell of a good job and what you see is what you get. They're Iraqis, but they're not our guys but they're good and they're doing the job and they're reasonably reliable, and it's coming along.

The police situation is just a shame. We were fought tooth and nail in the Congress and in the State Department, weren't allowed to be involved in the police, the police were part of IML or whatever it was called over there and the congressional committees wouldn't let us be involved. And as a result, nothing got done and we're two years behind.

The Army – you have to also disaggregate between the old national guard, which were locally hired, and the army, which was hired across the country. So today if you get an army unit

doesn't want to move, it's undoubtedly one of the former national guard units and it's heavily one sect and either this leadership doesn't want to take them out of the area they're familiar with or they are worried about going into an area of a totally different sect. As that's the army. That's the only major problem that exists and that is declining as a problem – diminishing as a problem.

On the police side, you have to disaggregate between the national police and the local police. The local police are hired locally. They're not deployable or expeditionary, just like our Washington, D.C., police don't go to LA for a riot. The national police are not as reliable. They're being taken offline by Casey because he is convinced that they were part of the problem, and they're giving all the leadership a close look and re-vetting them, taking some of them out, changing their uniforms, putting them on I think it's four weeks, Pete?

GEN. PETER PACE: Yes, sir. I believe the nine brigades and he's doing two at a time.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And he believes that when that's done, they'll have a more reliable police element than they currently do, but the reality is that they're two years behind because of the bureaucratic nonsense back in the United States (unintelligible) so long.

Now, what's the best answer? I would answer this way: there is no one answer. You suggested it: all of the above. It varies, and fortunately our guys are so smart and so clever, they know that it's different in different parts. They know the trend and the direction to go, and the direction to go is to take our hand off the bicycle seat and let them ride, and you don't do it the first day, and it varies all across the country as to how fast you can do it, so what they're doing is they're embedding. And we were prohibited from embedding with the police until this year. We tried to get them and the ministry of interior wouldn't allow it. Two years ago when we started whenever it was we started embedding the Army, we were told that we must not do that, and our guys are – in some instances they put in 10 or 12 in the unit.

They have been doubling and tripling that as they decided it worked. They watched it. We were worried about it. We thought some of our guys would get killed – killed by Iraqis in that environment. It hadn't happened once. I was out in Bethesda last night talking to some of wounded and some of them were embedded – embeds – and they think it is working very well. They're very pleased about it and they say they're – not only are they not worried about getting shot by Iraqis, the Iraqis are enormously protective of them because they are the source of intelligence, they're the source of logistics, they're the source of leadership and advice, and they help to provide that ribcage. People say, what the hell you've been doing? You've been there three years. Think how long it takes to train a non-com. It doesn't take three years; it takes a little more. Some people who've never served in the military will say, oh, god, what's the matter with you? We train our people in a matter of x-number of weeks at (Great Lakes?) or in the Marine – at Pendleton or wherever. And like why aren't these people trained? The ribcage isn't there. The police getting to serve and protect like ours do. They went in and arrested people and threw them in the slammer or killed them.

So this is a big task. I'm pleased. I think it's moving. I'm sick about the police part of it, and obviously you know better than I do, but the army has one job and the police have a

totally different job. They stay there. And, by gosh, you can send the Iraqi army or our Army or anyone else in and do a job and then they leave; the police have to be there. They have to be reliable and they can't be (unintelligible). And I'll skip dinner or lunch, whatever you call it. I'm going to work on this soup and then stop talking.

Q: Mister Secretary, going back to what you said at the beginning, this broader vision, are you comfortable that we as a government are organized for combat. I mean, you know, (unintelligible) I think I've heard the chairman speak (about this, meaning?) that now we're talking about jobs, now we're talking about police. It strikes me – I wonder whether we need to think through as a nation how we organize the government to make sure the Department of Commerce and Agriculture –

SEC. RUMSFELD: We do. The only department that's – this is really off the record.

Q: Yes.

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Off mike) the war is us. The rest of them are expeditionary or deployable –

Q: And won't go.

SEC. RUMSFELD: They don't understand deliberate planning, so it's – when we work with the other departments and agencies, it's like an elephant talking to a monkey. There's no way to connect and fit. You're absolutely right. If we're in a period of irregular and asymmetric warfare, we can't lose militarily, but we can't win by military means alone, which means you have to have these other capabilities.

The government of the United States is not arranged that way. The international institutions are not arranged that way. And we simply have to – have to – get further down the road in terms of that ability because we aren't going to be around the world for the numbers of years it took Algeria, for example, to subdue an insurgency. We're just not going to do that. We have to build capacity on the part of others and you can't build capacity if the people get paid and there's no way to get the money to their families and they have to leave and go do that, so your 25 percent of your forces is en route out or back so that their family can live. We can't create that capability if when they get hurt, there's no medical system to take care of them.

I mean, hell, you go in to any hospital in Iraq today and you'll play hell finding anybody who's an American. They're very few. They are off the battlefield in an hour. They're in the stabilization place. They're off to Balad or Baghdad, and they're off to Landstuhl. The people that in there are Iraqis and they're Iraqi military, they're Iraqi civilians, and they're prisoners in some cases. But you count, that's who's there.

Q: Mr. Secretary, could you go back to (unintelligible) in terms of the malign influence of Syria and Iran? Lee Hamilton said on a couple of the Sunday morning talk shows that the road to peace begins and ends in Baghdad. He kind of looks at the road to peace as a traffic circle around (unintelligible). How do we get through –

SEC. RUMSFELD: He should be in the media.

Q: He's not that low yet, sir. (Laughter.) He may be working on it, but seriously, in terms of how do we convince people that we have to have a solution which is going to be designed around the idea of ending state sponsorship of terror in the future? How do we get there?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I wish I knew.

Q: (Unintelligible.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: Pardon me?

GEN. PACE (?): It helps out a little bit as far as Syria being a conduit for foreign fighters coming in, and Iran a conduit for (unintelligible) weaponry and financing of the Shi'a, so the more you can talk about that (off mike).

Q: Right.

Q: Well, we try to do that. I mean, you're absolutely right because I don't see how we can win this with Iran and Syria feeding the fight, because it gives the sheiks and others – they're getting resources coming in, and that makes it very difficult just to look at it as Iraq alone (unintelligible).

Q: Could you go back to the impediments that you faced and that we face in training the police? In other words, who put those impediments there? Who finally ended up in charge of where the fight was on the police side?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Pete?

GEN. PACE: You watched several impediments. First of all, our own laws about your military is allowed to do or not do – we're not supposed to try to train other people's police. Their armed forces yes, but not their police. So that's a State Department function. And then you run into problems, first of all, with State folks who understandably would want to want to retain control of the program; congressional committees that want to keep that responsibility inside their committee, because there are different (inaudible) different committees (unintelligible) for us.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Subcommittee jurisdiction – turf.

GEN. PACE: Which then leads to no funding if you want to do it (for essentially?) a couple of years to be able to convince Congress that the money should be allocated to the Department of Defense to do this when you're fighting both – fighting lots of fires that you knew about and some that you didn't know about it, as far as people trying to stop that.

Finally, you got that authority, and then you've got a reality on the ground which is individuals who, as the secretary and other people have said, said don't have the serve-and-protect mentality, so you really have to start almost from scratch trying to define what a police force is, taking the police that you have there and trying to vet them properly. Who's in the units that will be loyal to local authority, et cetera, et cetera? So you're really trying to take an old functioning -- and old organization that was designed to prey on people and turn it into an organization that is designed to serve the people, and doing it inside an environment that did not give you the resources you needed for the first couple of years to get that done.

Q: I'm still a little confused. And I realize this is off the record, but what subcommittees are we talking about that are fighting the allocation. Were the dollars finally allocated to the Department of Defense?

SEC. RUMSFELD: It was the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and subcommittees, and the people in the State Department like Armitage went up there and sandbagged it. The president decided he wanted the Defense Department to do it because they're the only ones who could do it, and we went up, both sides, and because it was new and because it was different, there was natural opposition. And then there were people in the bureaucracy who didn't want it to happen either and they'd go up and play off the echo chamber and (work it?) out. That's completely off the record, but this is --

Q: I understand. Did we finally end up with the responsibility and --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes.

Q: Okay. Good.

GEN. PACE: Yes, but you also had the problem of --

SEC. RUMSFELD: But two years late, when you think of it.

GEN. PACE: It's important.

SEC. RUMSFELD: God. And now it's critical to have police that are functioning today, and we don't, so you don't have the support system under the new government that could have existed had they done it right.

Q: This is really off the record, but do you think that this government can survive the unity government or they'll eventually have to go to an authoritarian one like -- you know, we came out of Korea, (Syngman Yi?) was really an authoritarian leader. Eleven years (unintelligible) the president was an Army major general in civilian clothes and they had their highest growth rates and did the '88 Olympics and they finally handed it over. The real question is, and we all hope the answer (unintelligible), but it's very difficult.

SEC. RUMSFELD: It is very difficult. You look at it and there isn't anyone smart enough to know the answer to your question.

Q: I think the answer's (unintelligible), but how do you get the right person?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I mean, Allawi had steel up his backside, and he wasn't well liked and wasn't perfect. He'd leave the country for long periods and stuff. He was not as attentive as he needed to be, it strikes me. But, good Lord, in terms of dealing with him, he was terrific. He would make a decision and he would kick some fanny to get it implemented, and you felt good about it. The fellow who preceded Maliki was like a windsock. You know, he was the last guy he talked to, and we're still off the record. (Laughter.)

Q: Mr. Secretary, we heard that windsock terminology over there from somebody else.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, man. He was something. Yes, he's a hell of a – a very pleasant guy, but good grief, the last guy he talked to. This fellow is better than the one before, but he's not Syngman Yi.

Q: But he's also sweet on Sadr, which is a problem.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know that he's sweet on him. He clearly is afraid of him.

Q: I guess that's a better (unintelligible).

SEC. RUMSFELD: He's respectful of the threat. Sadr of course – I suppose Sadr could kill somebody. He could send out some death squads. But his threat, in my view, is less military and more demonstrations and getting mobs in the street, or preventing something from working. He clearly wants to create a Hezbollah in that country, and he's working the health ministry. He's working the transportation hubs.

Q: (Unintelligible), Mr. Secretary, are we at a point where, as we were just told a few moments ago, Sadr's grip is growing and more and more young recruits, 14 to 18-year-olds every day kind of join this thing. Whatever we do in the way forward, don't we have at some point in time soon have to confront this guy, we being us and the Iraqis, politically and perhaps militarily, or over time there is a real possibility this particular thing – tit for tat – spinning out of control? You know, it's the old Abe Lincoln: nobody wanted war, but the war came. So you either paid me now or you pay me later.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I think so. I don't think you can ultimately have an armed – the government ultimately has to prevent coercive forces from existing outside of the government or it's not government and it's not going to be supported, so that over time has got to be done.

Q: So are we – that's really what (unintelligible). It seems like to me we're trying to help Maliki create a political coalition. The president spoke with Mr. Hakim (unintelligible) into the city I guess this week or whatever kind of gently (trying?) to encourage a new political coalition that may isolate Sadr in some way to minimize him. Is that one of the things he's trying to do?

SEC. RUMSFELD: That is -- I would say there's two things that Zal and his team and George Casey have been trying to do. They've been trying to encourage the Maliki government to govern from the center, not just be representative of the different elements -- you get this ministry, you get that one -- but to have the ministries governing in a manner that is non-sectarian -- very different from a unity government. It is. It is.

Q: It's not like Europe. It's not like Social Democrats and Christian Democrats. It's a different thing.

SEC. RUMSFELD: The suspicion and hostility is great. The second thing they're trying to do is get Maliki less dependant upon the UIA. Who knows what Maliki really thinks of believes, but it's pretty clear that his behavior pattern is constrained by his votes. And the UIA put him there and Sadr was part of that, so they're trying to find a way to weaken the grip that the UIA has on Maliki so that if he does demonstrate a desire to provide leadership, that he's capable of it without having (inaudible) his government fall down. That I think is (unintelligible). Is that what you'd say is their goal?

Q: Mr. Secretary, if I could just shift to the condition of our armed forces just for a moment, what's your -- and assuming we're going to be at this for a while longer, what's your sense of the -- what's the word I'm looking for? Morale is not the right word -- condition, if you will, of the people who are doing the heavy lifting, the Army and Marine Corps? Can you just do a little dipstick analysis of where we are in terms of everything from equipment readiness to personal readiness to rotation schedules? I don't want to get into the details; it's not important, but just a subjective assessment (unintelligible).

SEC. RUMSFELD: Do you want to start?

GEN. PACE: Sure, sir. I'd be happy to. Morale is high. You know that when you go visit the troops. They get it. They know what they're doing. They're happy to do it and --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Recruiting and retention are high.

GEN. PACE: God bless the ones we see in the hospital. They want to know how fast you can get them out of the hospital and back (unintelligible) so from the standpoint of the individual soldier and Marine, airman, sailor, they're out there doing their job. To put things in context, number one, if we had to go fight the North Korean intrusion tomorrow, could we do it? You bet. How do you do it? You freeze the force you have in place, you mobilize your reserve, and you go use your vast power of the Army and your Air Force and your Navy and you follow on with ground forces and you get the job done, and that is doable, and we know it's doable. Would it be uglier than you would want it to be? Sure. Because you have some precision weapons and precision systems fully employed (inaudible). So we should never ever say anything that would help our adversaries miscalculate what we are capable of doing. We're capable of squishing anybody we have squish.

Now, you're talking about sustaining the force in Iraq. Let's just say for the sake of argument that you're looking at the same size force for a protracted period of time. It doesn't

make any difference how long that is. Right now, our active force is deploying at the brigade combat team level for one year over, one year back, one year over. Over time, despite the fact that people trade out in those units and when it goes back a second time and goes back the third time, there are fewer and fewer people there in there the first time, there are still folks who are (off mike).

Importantly, in that one year that they are back, they have time to take leave, get reacquainted with their families, and then train up to go back because that's the mission they're going to on. So the combined arms training that you might get if you had two years back, you're not getting done. They're extremely well trained as fighters. They're well trained to go back into their mission they're going to do, but they haven't got the additional combined arms training that you would normally be able to give to them.

When they went over the first time, they took X amount of gear. Some of it got destroyed, some of it got used up, and some of it stayed for the next unit coming it because we're not just bringing – we're not bringing new sets of equipment all the time, just trying to save the country money by having people (unintelligible). So if you went over the 100 percent for the first brigade and 80 percent stayed and 20 percent came home to be repaired, over time that kind of decrease in the amount of gear available comes back and it goes to the depots, and it stacks up at the depots to be repaired. So your supply, although you've got the same number you (inaudible) with, X part of that supply is at the depots waiting to be repaired. And we were just helped in this most recent supplemental by Congress giving us money beyond one year a time so we can go ahead and hire the third shifts at the depots, because they had two shifts, but you couldn't go out and hire Pete Pace to go be a mechanic in Albany, Georgia, because you couldn't promise Pete that he's going to have a job come 30 September of whatever year it was. Now we can. We can go out and get that work done. So the money's there now to hire the force and can get the job done, but that takes time. If you were to stop today, you'd have about two years of work to do in our depots to get caught up. So that's –

Q: The reason I asked the question is that from the conversations I've had with members of Congress it really comes to – and how simplistically they put it to me is we see this in three parts: we see the part that says fix what we have now, we see a part that says add more soldiers and Marines or whatever, and we see a part that says modernize. And what they're wrestling with right now is what goes in what part and in what proportion.

SEC. RUMSFELD: They're having trouble because we're doing it all at once.

Q: Right. And so they're really conflicted about this.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, they're stuck in a mentality of how it used to be during peacetime, and it isn't peacetime. I would add some things to what Pete said. First, the Army and the armed forces of the United States are better than they've ever been in history, and they are the best in the world and the best in the history of the world. If you ask anyone that question, then they'll answer it that way (unintelligible) no matter what. If you ask the Army, where they're on readiness and they can show you some charts if you used the old readiness system where they take 2000 and you're at 70 percent and they take 2006 and you're at 20 percent.

Now, what they don't tell you or you have to ask is what were the requirements in 2000? The requirements were for 20 Humvees, and the requirement in 2006 is for 500, and you've gone from 20 or 15 where you were at 80 percent and you've gone to 500 of them, but it isn't 700 of them, therefore you're going down in readiness, and that is nonsense. The equipment, the numbers of things, the stuff on their bodies when you look at them – they don't look like anything you've ever seen six years ago. I was there all last weekend with them and they can hardly move they've got so god dang much stuff on them. And I was talking to a guy in the hospital last night who said he tried to – got hit in the leg and he tried to crawl and he had so much stuff he couldn't move and finally they had to come and pick him up, but they are – and the equipment and their readiness for what they're doing, as Pete says, is excellent.

They're also – to go back to when we came, it was a division structure moving to brigade combat team – much more capable at the brigade level. It is 33 brigade combat teams coming up to 42. We have authorized the Army to go from the level they were plus 30,000. They managed to get 26,000 of it, I think, at this stage – 21, 26 something like that. We've accelerated the modernization of the brigade combat teams to one light, one heavy. We'd added a Marine regimental combat team, and they're going to do a battalion I think next year and a battalion and a battalion. The recruiting and retention is up, and I think what your – the problem I got up on the Hill is this question of they voted something like 98 to nothing in the Senate to have everything in the bill – the authorization bill – and nothing in the supplemental, which of course is ridiculous.

Q: I wasn't (unintelligible). I guess what I'm reflecting is what I hear from everywhere. The other concern is the institution – is the institutional base. Education comes to mind.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure.

Q: The idea of the deferred – deferring intellectual growth is almost like a deferred maintenance. It's almost like an intellectual side of that depot that the chairman just talked about. When people don't go to war colleges and staff colleges and graduate schools, then you build a sort of human deficit as opposed to a material deficit that in war that values the human component as much as the technological component could come back sometime in the future to –

SEC. RUMSFELD: I would say that the other thing we've done is we're moving the military people who were functioning in civilian – appropriate civilian jobs out of the civilian jobs into military jobs, and we're decreasing the size of the institutional Army and increasing the size of the operational Army in those cases by some tens of thousands of people. If I had to comment on what you just said, I would say we've probably done too little of what you're worried about. We have not gone sufficiently on a war footing. We still have people – you know, four colonels up at the damned Council on Foreign Relations and people in Brookings and all these people doing all this stuff. They've only been about – what percent of people have actually been to Iraq or Afghanistan?

Q: Fifty?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Forty, I think. It's low.

GEN. PACE: Forty-some-odd percent.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And it's too much peacetime. It's too much business as usual for my taste. And if this goes on much longer, we're going to have to do what you're worried about, and that is something that one has to then say that's worrisome. You can only do it for so long. You don't want to eat your seed corn, but we haven't done it yet. We are not at a worrisome point in my view at all. I was so god dang mad: I turned around after we'd been in this war for two years and, by god, operation Bright Star in Egypt – was that the name of it?

Q: (Unintelligible.) (Laughs.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah, these (characters?). They wanted to send 15,000 ground forces to some damned exercise in Egypt. Everything in motion stays in motion, and to stop it or to alter it and put it on a wartime footing is just harder than hell. So we've done too little of what you're worried about in my view, and if this thing goes on much longer, we're going to have to do more of it.

Q: Mr. Secretary, do you think we're putting enough dollars, 4 percent (unintelligible) to the GWOT and modernizing?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No.

Q: Don't we need to be at 4.5 or 5?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know what the right number is. What the hell is this? It was 10 percent when I came to town. It was 5 percent when I was secretary those 30 years ago. And it's down to 3.8 percent, and this country can sure as hell afford –

Q: We just can't do it for 3.8.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, we're doing it, but –

Q: It's hurting.

SEC. RUMSFELD: There's still so damn much waste in these departments of government. It just is (off mike). It just – the taxpayer (off mike). It's good to have some pressure on it, but hell, we can afford 5 percent. (Off mike) and the other problem you've got is I look at Europe, who are basically our allies, and you see them – there's only four of them I think that are above 2 percent and they've got growing Muslim populations that are going to begin their voting, the demographics – the aging demographics, increasing Muslim populations, inevitably will effect the body politic, so the likelihood of getting that up from 1.1 or 1.2 and 1.5 percent, up into that 3.8 is very low, so you're going to end up five, 10, 15 years from now with a capability among our principal allies that will be relatively modest. And conversely, Japan is sufficiently worried about China and North Korea that they're migrating towards the reasonably

rational behavior of a major economic power, the second most powerful on the face of the earth economy, and they've been holding down at 1 percent and didn't even have a Ministry of Defense – an agency they had. They're going to start fixing that, I think, which would be a good thing.

Q: Mr. Secretary, let's go way the heck off the record again. (Laughter.) These guys do substance, I do politics as much as substance, but we're looking at a really rough two years coming. No matter how you slice it.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, man, and how.

Q: You've got a guy who's made a career out of opposing ballistic missile defense (inaudible) Senate Armed Services Committee, you got a guy who doesn't know Sunni from Shi'a taking over the House Intelligence Committee –

SEC. RUMSFELD: Is that something.

Q: Predictable, but the real point is what are the landmines you can foresee, not the obvious ones. We see these guys. What are the things that you see that's just below the level – politically below the surface that's coming out at a high speed with a big punch?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I mentioned one. It's not high speed, but the demographics of our allies ought to be of a concern. The second, the interest that the Chinese have in cyber warfare and cyber intrusions is clear, growing, and at a skill level that's high.

Q: I was told by a couple of sources that we are tracking on defense, intelligence, and industry computer networks over 100 attacks a day all coming from (unintelligible) province.

SEC. RUMSFELD: We are so dependent on digits. We've thrown away the shoe boxes with the three-by-five cards and, I mean, my God, the damage that could be done to us is really notable. Maybe it's because I was in the pharmaceutical business, but I still look at that (Dak Winter) Johns Hopkins study where you put small pox in three locations and you get 800,000 to 900,000 dead in a matter of less than a year. That is a big deal.

Q: But politically, what do those challenges turn into if you're not going to have a lot of sympathetic ears up there and something happens?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, that's what I was just going to say. I mean, this president's pretty much a victim of success. We haven't had an attack here in five years. The perception of the threat is so low in this society today that it's not surprising that the behavior pattern reflects a low threat assessment, and the same thing is in Europe with a low threat perception. The correction for that, I suppose, is an attack, and when that happens, then everyone gets energized for another period. And it's a shame we don't have the maturity to recognize the seriousness of the threats. My God, the lethality, the carnage that could be imposed on our society is so real and so present and so serious that you'd think we'd be able to understand it. But as a society, obviously, the longer you get away from 9/11, the less –

Q: Do we share some of the fault there in our inability to make the case? Is there an issue with those us, certainly not those at this table, but others in our profession that are reluctant to make that case out of fear of what? I don't know, getting the American people too agitated about these things?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know. I mean, you think of how much trouble Churchill had trying to describe the gathering storm and people ignored it. And then the minute that World War II was over he was tossed out of the office.

(Cross talk.)

Q: I'd just like to say thanks to your staff, Tara, Dallas (ph), Alison (sp), (unintelligible).

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, hell. Now they're going to want a raise. (Applause.) (So be it?).

Q: A couple of other points, too. I've been on three of the trips to Iraq and I believe that there has been significant, huge progress in the areas. I have been to Bethesda visiting with the kids and they all just want to go back.

SEC. RUMSFELD: They sure do.

Q: And stepping aside from that for a minute, I think that you have brought true leadership to this job. You had a vision. You had the wherewithal to bang people's heads when they wanted a dumb program or wouldn't get on board with a good one or whatever. One thing I noticed, and it's just important to me, but I think important to all of us, I think you really set a tone and a presence with the media in terms of communicating in general and specific messages and so forth. So as a citizen, I just want to say thanks.

Q: Here, here.

Q: Here, here.

Q: Mr. Secretary, do you care to comment on your 550 cord bracelet that you're wearing?

SEC. RUMSFELD: What did you call it?

Q: It's 550 cord. It's parachute cord.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, it's a parachute cord. Five fifty? Is that what it's called?

Q: Keeps the Army (strung out?) out and 100-mile-an-hour-tape keeps the Army and the Marine Corps strung together.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, it's a pain in the neck. It's hard to get on and off, and if you shower with it, it stains green right through (inaudible). (Laughter.)

Q: So that's his answer?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes. (Laughter.) This is the only institution I've ever served in where crap flows uphill. (Laughter.) I'll tell you this story. This is a terrible story, and this is really off the record. Casey came in to us and said, we've got to move the Stryker Brigade from Mosul or wherever it was into Baghdad –

GEN. PACE (?): That's where it was.

SEC. RUMSFELD: – and he said (unintelligible). And I said, fine. And then I started asking questions. It turns out some of them were already home, a lot of them were in Kuwait, and a number of them were halfway in between, and it was a big deal. They had the (unintelligible) signs already up in Alaska. And so I signed the damned thing, and then I said, "Well, by God, let's do this right. Let's make sure we talk to these people and get the brigade commander and Will Grimsley (ph) said was a good man and get him down to (unintelligible) with the families and the chief and the secretary ought to attend to this and get it done."

So it turns out I get invited by Stevens (sp) to go to Alaska for the Lend-Lease thing with the Soviet Union and the U.S. and all of that. I said, "Well, hell, I'm going up there. I'll say hello to those folks." And the secretary of the Army said he'd been up there talking to families and Chief of Staff Schoomaker said he'd been talking to the families and I said, "Hell, I'm going to (up clean up?) there." So I arrive up there and I go to this place – this great, big building, and the base commander – I said, "Tell me about how it went with Harvey and Schoomaker when they met with the families?" He said, "Well, Harvey just met with – went to a barbecue with 40 or 50 of them." And I said, "Well, what about Schoomaker?" "Well, he talked to 24 of the senior officers' wives." I said, "Well, what about the brigade commander?" "Well, he talked on a (unintelligible) to the same 24." And I said, "How many people are in the auditorium?" He said, "800 women." They had never talked to anybody.

Q: Toughest audience you ever faced.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, my God. So I said, holy mackerel, you've got to be kidding. Talk about crappy staff work. So he said, "Before you go in, I want you to see this," and he went and he pointed to this enormous ice hockey indoor arena, and there must have been 1,500 kids. It was daycare. These women had come from all over God's creation, put their kids in daycare, and then he takes me into this auditorium where all these women are, and – could I excuse you for a minute? I'm old-fashioned. I know your ears are not virginal, but – (laughter) – so well, I just can't get used to it.

So I stood up and I talked for about 15 minutes, and then I answered questions for about 30, and then I stood down below. The last question was a woman way on the right, handsome, 50-years-old, African-American, and she walked over and gave me this.

Q: I'll be damned.

SEC. RUMSFELD: So she said, wear it. I must have had photographs taken – I guess 150; shook hands, introduced to kids, (off mike) walked up to me, looked to be about 50, wiry, hard looking and she started walking right towards me and I thought, oh, god. I should have left 10 minutes ago.

She walked up and she leaned right into my ear and the security guards are wondering what the hell is going to happen now. She said, you got to have big brass balls to come into this crowd. Good for you. (Laughter.) I check every day to see if they're all home and they are. They're still (inaudible) in Kuwait cleaning up equipment and putting it on board ship, but the bulk of them are back and (unintelligible). I tell you, I could see that woman's face the rest of my life just wondering what she's going to say, but I've had it on ever since and stained a couple of shirts when I forgot to take it off. What do you call 400 and what?

PETE: Five fifty cord.

SEC. RUMSFELD: It looks like it's almost Iraq on the (unintelligible). It's almost the shape of Iraq. You see it?

Q: Oh, it sure is, sir.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Isn't that interesting? It's a nice little –

Q: Mr. Secretary, real quick like, and this is another one you may not even want to answer. You (love?) Zal. Since Zal was really a low level advisor to the president when all this started and then he ended up in Afghanistan, was a Pashtun and was sort of pro-Pashtun when he was there, then he ended up in Iraq and now he's leaving again. So what's he done for us?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I give him big marks – high marks.

Q: Okay.

SEC. RUMSFELD: He's got a lot of energy. He listens well. He – in Afghanistan, we stuck him with a guy who really knows his stuff named Mirron Zdrameki (ph). Mirron helped him fashion a warlord plan and a demobilization plan and he's unconventional. The guy who replaced him is just terrible – Neuman. I mean, he's a career Foreign Service Office. He ought to be running a museum somewhere. That's also off the record. (Laughter.) No, he ought to be assistant to the guy – (laughter) – I wouldn't hire the guy to push a wheelbarrow. And there he is. He succeeded Zal and it's just terrible. He just got off on – he immediately wanted to go back to a perfectly conventional embassy, and it's not a conventional situation. It's an unusual situation. And damn it, it's just terrible. (Unintelligible) about six months gap before he got in there, and now they're going to replace him, but, my God, it takes forever to do it. And they'll stick another (unintelligible) guy in there sure as (inaudible).

Q: One of the FSOs told me that – this is a quote. He says, “The SOB wants to make it like Copenhagen.” (Laughter.) That’s exactly what he said – make it like Copenhagen.

SEC. RUMSFELD: It’s nutty. And he goes into Iraq – Zal does – and he’s got high energy. He’s got guts. He’s willing to make a decision. He doesn’t have to go back and ask for instructions every five minutes. He gets on a CIVITS with the president and the president gives him guidance and he pushes back, and says, what about this, what about that, here’s the situation, what do you think?

GEN. PACE: I had a lot of time with Zal, sir. I don’t know any other individual, especially in Afghanistan, that could have – who could have done what he did. And then what he’s done in Iraq – he’s a special guy.

SEC. RUMSFELD: They’re starting to pick at him.

Q: What are you going to do with?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I think he ought to go to the UN if Bolton has to leave. I think Bolton is terrific, but if Bolton leaves I’d like to see Zal up there. I mean, how can you take an organization seriously if they stick Sudan out of the Human Rights Commission and the stuff they do? It’s nutty. I think he’s got a lot of talent and I think the world is unconventional, and I don’t think you want a conventional person. I think you need somebody who’s got some steel in them who’s going to go out and take a risk and throw the dice, which he does. They’re fussing at him now because some people are fly-specking him and saying, well, he’s too intrusive on the government.

Q: Mr. Secretary, we heard –

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Unintelligible) guys want to report back and say how crappy everything is. Zal is trying to make it better – fix it. Yes.

Q: Mr. Secretary, we’ve got a guy you know very well, al-Sadr, who came from virtually nowhere to become a player. In your opinion, what if lightning were to strike today and this guy was no longer on the scene. Would that make a difference?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I’d buy you a glass of champagne. (Laughter.)

Q: You’re talking to (Wayne?). (Laughter.)

Q: I would do that for a bottle of champagne. (Laughter.)

Q: I mean, I’ve seen people grow over time in conflict, and I don’t know that I’ve ever seen anyone grow in a conflict and gain so much strength, and apparently so much power over such a short period of time, and also be such a linchpin in possibly reversing some things, even though it’s short term.

SEC. RUMSFELD: You're right. This guy, what was he? A 30-year-old thug who was indicted for a murder.

Q: And lousy cleric at that.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And not a real cleric and not well respected. Sistani has of course all the respect and the (unintelligible) senior religious figure in the country, the Shi'a, and he doesn't like him. Sistani doesn't like him. He opposes what he does, but he at the present time has, (a), survived, and (b), does not have perfect control over the Sadr elements – Jam (ph) and his (whole?) army. There are factions. Some of them are not listening to him or doing what he wants. He's kind of a mugwomp at the moment. He's being enticed into the political process and wondering if he can go legit, in which case he's losing some of his supporters. Clearly it's not a military force in the country. He's a demonstrationist and a death squad – pardon me?

Q: Agitator.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes, an agitator. He could stop something from happening in the parliament and he's got some votes, but he's a danger and they're going to have to do something about him.

Q: And I guess (that's?) off the record, clearly is, why is the guy still even around? I find that –

SEC. RUMSFELD: Remember when Sharon went to meet with Al Haig and he walked out thinking he'd gotten a wink and a nod? I don't want you to think you've got one from me. (Laughter.)

(Cross talk.)

Q: Send me my bottle.

Q: Oh, hell. I'm out of here. (Laughter.)

Q: Clearly, this is not the last time we'll get to sit and talk with you.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, listen. I enjoy it.

Q: More than (the new SecDef?).

SEC. RUMSFELD: You folks really do a service because you've got the backgrounds, and you think and you care and you listen to folks and you come at it from a perspective that when it adds up is constructive for the people in the country, and we appreciate it.

Q: So what's next for Don Rumsfeld?

SEC. RUMSFELD: God knows. I'm going to take a couple of days off. (Laughter.)

Q: I think we're all saying 18 hours. (Laughter.)

Q: Who is the media now going to have to pound on?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, my God. You've got –

Q: Is it General Pace? I'm not kidding. This is a town that –

Q: We can certainly help get you right out there.

Q: We can certainly help on that, on the flipside, the transition on that.

Q: That's another key question. How can we help in this transition? What can we do to bridge the gap, I guess, between you and your successor and to make that transition (inaudible)?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know. He seems like a good guy. I've never worked with him before, but he seems like a good guy. I never worked with him before, but he seems like a good guy. I met with him two or three times now and I think he'll do a good job.

Q: Do you think it might be useful to give him a sort of state of the media as it relates to Iraq perhaps sometime (unintelligible)? Thirty minutes just to say –

SEC. RUMSFELD: You ought to tell him about the lunch and the suggestion –

Q: It would certainly prepare him for what's about to come because he's not a media – he's not used to be exposed to the media.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh my God, he was the president of Texas A&M. He had to deal with the damn faculty. (Laughter.) They all want part of him. The alumni want football and –

(Cross talk.)

Q: – David Gregory.

Q: Hey, also your favorite subject: looking back. What's become conventional wisdom, simply Shinseki was right? If we simply had 400,000 troops or 200 and 300? What's your thought as you looked at it?

GEN. PACE: I'm sorry, sir. I didn't take the (unintelligible). I apologize.

SEC. RUMSFELD: First of all, I don't think Shinseki ever said that. I think he was pressed in a congressional hearing hard and hard and hard and over again, well, how many? And his answer was roughly the same as it would take to do the job – to defeat the regime. It would be about the right amount for post-major combat operation stabilization. And they said, "Well, how much is that?" And I think he may have said then, "Well, maybe 200,000 or 300,000."

GEN. PACE: I think he said several.

Q: Several, yes, several hundred thousand.

(Cross talk.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: Now, it turned out he was right. The commanders – you guys ended up wanting roughly the same as you had for the major combat operation, and that's what we've have. There is no damned guidebook that says what the number ought to be. We were queued up to go up to what, 400-plus thousand.

Q: Yes, they were already in queue.

SEC. RUMSFELD: They were in the queue. We would have gone right on if they'd wanted them, but they didn't, so life goes on.

Q: Well, the issues are winning the war and then winning the peace after the war, right, and that's a different question for a different number of people and different departments.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes, that's right. Well, gents, thank you.

Q: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

(Cross talk.)

Q: Secretary, before you get away, I want to – I don't even know if (inaudible).
(Laughter.)

(Cross talk.)

Q: Thank you.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Very nice of you. God bless you.

Q: Thank you.

(END)