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Presenter: Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld

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DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers

(Also participating Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Slides from today's briefing are located at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2003/q030624-D-6570C.html>. Photos of today's briefing are available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Jun2003/030624-D-2987S-105.html> and <http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Jun2003/030624-D-2987S-023.html>.)

Rumsfeld: Good afternoon. Regrettably, four American soldiers were killed during the past eight days in Iraq, three in grenade attacks, and another who was shot on guard duty at a propane distribution center: Specialist O.J. Smith, Specialist Paul Nakamura, Pfc. Michael Deuel and Private Robert Frantz. I also want to express sorrow that the British forces have sustained some losses in the past 24 hours. Certainly, our thoughts and prayers are with their families and the families of all those coalition forces who have died in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Their deaths are a sober reminder that while major combat in Iraq and Afghanistan is over, our country and coalition forces remain engaged in a difficult and dangerous war: the global war on terror. That war will not be over anytime soon. Every day in Iraq and Afghanistan, throughout the world, brave men and women risk their lives to defend us all from terror. They will certainly be called upon to do so for the foreseeable future.

While terrorist regimes have been removed in Baghdad and Kabul, many who wish our people harm remain at large in those countries and elsewhere across the globe. We're putting pressure on them each day. Yesterday, for example, the president designated Ali Saleh Kahliah al-Marri, who was sent to the U.S. as an al Qaeda operator, as an enemy combatant and transferred him to the control of the Department of Defense.

In Iraq, difficult work remains. Coalition forces have captured now some 32 out of 55 of the most wanted, and an additional two were killed. And they continue to pursue those that remain at large. They're making progress against the dead-enders who are harassing coalition forces. Just as they were unable to stop the coalition advance in Baghdad, the death squads will not stop our commitment to create stability and security in postwar Iraq.

To help ensure long-term stability and security, we are beginning the process of forming a new Iraqi army. You may have seen the announcement that Walt Slocombe made within the last 48 hours in Baghdad on that subject.

The search for Iraq's WMD continues. We're still early in the process, and the task before us is sizable and complex, but we do know this; before the war, there was no debate about whether Iraq had weapons of mass destruction programs. Virtually everyone agreed they did: in Congress, in successive Democratic and Republican administrations, in the intelligence communities here in the United States, and also in foreign countries and at the U.N., even among those countries that did not favor military action in Iraq.

If Saddam Hussein had, in fact, disarmed, then why didn't he take the final opportunity the U.N. afforded him to prove that his programs were ended and his weapons had been destroyed? Why did he continue to give up tens of billions of dollars in oil revenues, under U.N. sanctions, when he could have very simply had those sanctions lifted, simply by demonstrating that he had disarmed? Why did he file a fraudulent declaration with the United Nations? Why didn't he cooperate with the international community, just as Kazakhstan, Ukraine and South Africa did? If he had in fact disarmed, he had everything to gain and nothing to lose by cooperation with the U.N., yet he continued to lie and to obstruct the U.N. inspectors.

It's now less than eight weeks since the end of major combat in Iraq, and I believe that patience will prove to be a virtue.

General Myers.

Myers: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I also wish to extend my sincere condolences to the families of the Marines and soldiers who have lost their lives the past several weeks in Iraq, and also to the families of those U.K. personnel, families and friends, who were killed and wounded just recently in southern Iraq. As the secretary said, these losses are a reminder that Iraq remains a dangerous place, but we must continue to stand firm. Our forces' role in establishing and maintaining security is critical to the stability and security of Iraq, and also to our war on terrorism.

While we have brought home some 130,000 -- I'm sorry -- yes, 130,000 troops from the region, currently 146,000 U.S. forces remain in Iraq. And we continue to be aggressive in rooting out pockets of resistance made up of paramilitary forces and Ba'ath Party personnel. In recent weeks, we have achieved considerable success with operations such as Desert Scorpion and Peninsula Strike. These operations consist of a series of coordinated raids designed to counter the efforts of those who still oppose Iraq becoming a free nation.

Last week, as some of you have already reported, one of our task forces, Task Force 20, conducted a raid near the Syrian border. This raid was based on intelligence gained from the recent capture of leaders of the toppled regime. We struck two elements of a convoy, one on a highway and one in a compound. We are continuing to gather information from the strike, so we don't have any additional details at the moment.

In Afghanistan, coalition forces initiated Operation United -- Unified Resolve, consisting of offensive operations in eastern Afghanistan. Coalition forces are been coordinating with the Afghan central government and local authorities to block designated crossing points and routes of egress along the Afghan-Pakistan border. Our intent is to deny sanctuary to anti-coalition forces in two eastern provinces and to disrupt cross-border activity.

And finally, we have some news involving a rescue at sea. Early this morning 27 crew members of the Green Glory, a sinking Egyptian flag cargo vessel, were rescued approximately 350 miles of the coast of Oman by the U.S. and British navies. The U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet directed the United States Naval Ship Concord, a U.S. supply ship, and a P-3 maritime reconnaissance patrol aircraft to provide additional assistance in the rescue effort. An MH-60 utility helicopter from the Concord deployed two rescuers, who boarded the Green Glory, assisted in "abandon ship" efforts and helped deploy their lifeboats. Within an hour, the helicopter began to pluck sailors from the Green Glory's lifeboats and take them aboard the British royal fleet auxiliary, the Sir Tristram, where they were medically evaluated, fed and clothed.

And with that, we'll take your questions.

Rumsfeld: Charlie?

Q: Mr. Secretary, General Myers spoke of aggressive operations to put down opposition in Iraq, and he spoke of the raid last week upon the convoy. Has the United States authorized U.S. forces to move into Syria in hot pursuit of suspected former officials? And did in fact that happen last week in that raid?

Rumsfeld: As -- two things. As General Myers indicated, we don't have any really final or conclusive information, beyond what Dick gave you, to impart at this moment as to where that border is. And as you know, we don't discuss rules of engagement.

Q: Well, Iraq hasn't -- I mean, Syria hasn't even protested, and a defense official told us yesterday that there's been no official exchange with the Syrian government over this. You --

Rumsfeld: I don't know that that defense official's correct. It would be shocking to everybody, I'm sure, if a defense official were not correct. (Laughter.) But in this instance, I cannot verify that. I know there have been exchanges, and I don't know what your definition of "official" is. But --

Q: But you can't say whether or not -- or won't say whether or not the United States has authorized, in a hot-pursuit situation --

Rumsfeld: I've responded.

Q: Mr. Secretary, could you give us some explanation of how the Syrians became involved in this operation? Did they shoot upon the U.S. forces?

Rumsfeld: The details that Dick gave, I think, are about what we'd like to give at this moment. You know, quote, "defense officials," unquote, have the freedom of not being quoted and of not being -- needing to be right. There's no penalty for being wrong. (Laughter.) We do have to be right, and therefore, we need to allow some time so that people can sort through what took place and then get back to us, and then when we talk about it, we like to talk about it in a way that you can feel that we have done our due diligence and we know precisely what took place. Borders are, you know, not always distinct in life, and I just would rather wait and give you the straight story.

Q: What about the current circumstance, though? I mean, there are some Syrians being held. Can you say how many and why they're being held?

Rumsfeld: There were a very small number of Syrians, and "being held" I don't know is quite the right word. There were several that needed some medical assistance. They were provided medical assistance, and a process to see that that's worked out is

under way.

Q: Mr. Secretary, why is this raid, this convoy strike, different than others? This is now six --

Rumsfeld: We didn't say it was.

Q: Well, it's six days later. Usually you have information to provide us soon after events occur in Iraq. Why is it taking so long?

Rumsfeld: First of all, I guess it's -- I first heard about it late Wednesday, early evening. So that's not six days ago.

Q: So it's five.

Rumsfeld: Five and a half. (Laughter.) I got to keep him sharp.

Q: He'll be right by tomorrow. (Laughter.)

Rumsfeld: Second, it was in a remote area and a considerable distance from Baghdad. And third, people were busy doing a variety of things that involved seeing that people did not escape from the convoy, seeing that the proper people were retained and the people that did not need to be retained were released, and attempting to get the right types of equipment to see what took place; and they were busy doing that.

Myers: They're still busy.

Rumsfeld: And they're still busy doing that, and they may be busy doing that for another day or two.

Q: How will the identification work as far as who was killed in this strike? Do you believe that senior Iraqi leaders were in fact taken out?

Rumsfeld: I have no reason to believe that. And I know what Defense officials said for a few days, and what they've now seemingly stopped saying. But I can't say that, so I don't.

Yes?

Q: Who do you think might have been taken out in that convoy? If it wasn't senior leaders -- and I assume you're talking about Saddam Hussein --

Rumsfeld: Don't know. We're trying to find out.

Q: But I assume --

Rumsfeld: Don't assume.

Q: -- you had some idea who you were targeting?

Rumsfeld: Pardon me?

Q: I assume you had some idea who you were trying to target?

Rumsfeld: Sure. It was night, in fact, late at night, early morning. And there were reasons, good reasons to believe that the vehicles that were violating the curfew that existed in that area were doing it for reasons other than normal commerce. And they were close to the Syrian border. And there were perfectly logical rules of engagement that dealt with that situation.

Q: Did some escape in the convoy?

Rumsfeld: See, now you get into a level of detail -- how would one know that? It was pitch black --

Q: But I assume you were following the convoy in some manner.

Rumsfeld: And the answer is that it's -- I don't know the answer to the question, and I suspect it may never -- we may never know the answer to that question, except through -- possibly through interrogations.

Q: Mr. Secretary, you said --

Rumsfeld: General Myers is ready for a question.

Q: Oh, General Myers, then. General Myers, you've said that U.S. troops are having considerable success inside Iraq. Yet in the past 24 hours, there were 25 separate attacks against U.S. forces, six Brits were killed in two separate attacks down near Basra, and there was a rocket attack on the civilian mayor's office at Fallujah. That doesn't sound like success. Do you -- can you tell us what the U.S. military thinks is happening? Is there an increase in the tempo of attacks? Are they better coordinated today, those

conducting the attacks? Or is there a change in their strategy?

Myers: First of all, as we look at this, we look at trends, of course. And -- but you've got to be careful of the snapshots you take. And there has been a lot of action lately, a lot of it instigated, as I was talking about in my remarks -- a lot of it instigated by coalition forces.

I think the basic analysis, notwithstanding what happened in the last 24 hours or 48 hours, is that the security situation is a little uneven in the country in the north and the south, relatively secure in the Sunni area, central-west and northwest of Baghdad, where you have the biggest issues. I think it's undetermined at this point how coordinated these efforts are. We know that there are Ba'ath Party members that don't want this country to go to a democratic form of government that they don't want. They prefer to return to the old ways. And so, they are still out there. There are other paramilitaries, probably, that have joined them. How organized is yet to be determined, and that's one of the things, of course, we've got intel -- intelligence looking at.

Q: We were told last week it was not organized by General Ordierno of the 4th Infantry Division. Now, you're saying it's uncertain?

Myers: I'd say at this point, it's uncertain. That's right. I mean, things -- you can expect things to change on the ground over there, and they may be changing. But I can't -- it's hard to say one way or the other at this point.

Rumsfeld: The other reason you may be able to find a seam between what the general said and what Dick Myers said is because he may be referring to a certain area.

Q: Well, his area's the size of West Virginia.

Rumsfeld: I understand. That does not naysay what I just said to you. People may -- you may see things that appear to be coordinated in a particular area that are not coordinated throughout the entire country, which is a country the size of California.

Q: But you referred to the dead-enders --

Rumsfeld: Yes?

Q: There's a report out of London that the Iranian government has turned over some al Qaeda suspects to unidentified friendly governments in the Middle East. Do you have any indication that Iran has, in fact, turned over some al Qaeda? Or are there still al Qaeda in Iran?

Rumsfeld: I'm sure there's still al Qaeda in Iran, with respect to the last part of your question. As to the first part, I don't -- no. I have not seen anything recently that suggests that.

Q: General Myers --

Rumsfeld: I've seen speculation about that, but I have not seen any hard evidence that that's actually happened.

Q: General Myers, you mentioned the institution of the Iraqi army, beginning putting soldiers in there. What if any decisions have been made about the ethnic composition of that army? Building on the experiences in Afghanistan, as you know -- I've bothered you about this before -- trying to achieve the ethnic balance and retention in the Afghanistan army is proving elusive. What methods are you guys -- you all considering for the Iraqi army in this regard?

Myers: Yeah, I'd have to check on the Afghan army. I know initially when we started out, the -- one of the goals in Afghanistan, of course, was to have an ethnic mix that sort of represented the country and that that was tough to come by early on. I don't know that that's true right now. And so I'd -- we'd have to go back and check that, and we can get you that information.

But in Iraq, that is certainly the goal, and achievable, we think. And we've got some really good folks that are grappling with that right now. But that -- that is our goal.

Q: Well, would it be just the three groups, the Kurds, the Shi'ites and the Sunnis, or would you attempt to get, you know, the smaller groups involved as well?

Myers: I think you have to have a representative -- representation from across the country. And that's sort of the standard the secretary's talked about before in terms of what kind of government do you want. Well, you want one that represents all the people of Iraq no matter how small the minority that has to be represented.

Q: General Myers, speaking of --

Rumsfeld: There -- the vetting that's taking place thus far has been focused on individuals who have not been war criminals, individuals who have not been senior in the Ba'ath Party, and more that type of a vetting. But I agree completely with Dick's answer.

Q: You would caution me, then, not to jump to any conclusions that, perhaps, if the first wave happened to be from one specific group, it's because the vetting has cleared them first, perhaps, and it's not reflective of how the eventual make-up of the army will

be?

Rumsfeld: I think that question would be -- better be addressed to Walt Slocombe, and we can do that and see if we can get an answer for you.

Q: Thank you.

Rumsfeld: He's the one that's been working that through.

Yes.

Q: Still, five and a half days later, the U.S. is continuing to hold five Syrian nationals, only three of whom were wounded. Do you have -- I'm still not clear why you haven't returned these people to their country. Do you have any reason, for example, to believe they are anything other than Syrian border guards? And you mentioned this mission was conducted by a military organization, you said, known as Task Force 20. Can you tell us what is Task Force 20, who makes it up, and what their mission is in Iraq?

Myers: No. I don't want to go into any more operational detail on Task Force 20. That's -- that's the kind of details that we're just not going to go into. But --

Q: You cannot tell us what -- after you named it, you can't tell us what that U.S. military organization --

Myers: It's a U.S. military organization. And we have several task forces --

Rumsfeld: It's a good one.

Myers: It's a good one. (Laughter.)

Rumsfeld: You want some elaboration? It's a good one.

Q: Can you please tell us why you have not returned five Syrian nationals to their country? Why have they not been returned? Do you believe they are not border guards, perhaps?

Rumsfeld: Well, let me put it this way. As I indicated, several were injured.

Q: Three out of five were injured and needed medical treatment.

Rumsfeld: That's my recollection. And the process by which that will take place is something that's being discussed in other channels. And it will happen. And I don't know that anyone needs a reason why it hasn't happened in five minutes or two days or five days. It will undoubtedly be worked through by the appropriate people in the United States government and the Syrian government.

Q: Have the Syrians asked you for them back?

Rumsfeld: I'm not going to get into what the Syrians have done and what they haven't done.

Q: General Myers, back to this raid just for a moment. How confident are you that the intelligence that resulted in targeting this convoy after the fact, has turned out to be good intelligence and that you didn't just end up targeting some curfew violators or some other sort of petty smugglers, as opposed to a legitimate target? How confident are you?

Myers: I'm confident we had very good intelligence.

Q: And, Secretary Rumsfeld, can I just ask you -- follow-up on your statement about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. You said that -- in your opening statement, that there was no doubt before the war that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction "programs," was the word you used.

Rumsfeld: Yes.

Q: I'm just wondering, when I hear you say "programs," are you signaling at all that Iraq may not have had actual weapons or weaponized forms of this, but simply the programs to produce them? Or am I reading too much into what you said?

Rumsfeld: You may be reading too much. I don't know anybody that I can think of who has contended that the Iraqis had nuclear weapons.

Q: I didn't say nuclear --

Rumsfeld: I'm saying that. I'm trying to respond to your question.

I don't know anybody in any government or any intelligence agency who suggested that the Iraqis had nuclear weapons. That's fact number one.

If you go back to my statement, we also know that the Iraqis did have chemical weapons. They confessed to having had all of these weapons over a sustained period of time. I brought something along. In the '90s, Iraq admitted having 8,500 liters of anthrax and several tons of VX. Iraq admitted producing 6,500 chemical bombs containing an estimated 1,000 tons of chemical agents, none of which have ever been accounted for. In 1998, President Clinton said Saddam Hussein possessed 5,000 gallons of botulin, 2,000 gallons of anthrax, and 177 Scud warheads, and bombs filled with biological agents.

We know he used chemical weapons against the Kurds and against the Iranians in the war. So you had a country that had these weapons and programs, a country that used those weapons, a country that by everyone who had reason to be knowledgeable believed filed a fraudulent declaration to the United Nations. And it seems to me that that speaks for itself, that they --

Q: But isn't it possible, now in retrospect, that Saddam Hussein could have destroyed the weapons -- that is, destroyed the evidence -- while maintaining the programs to produce them in the future, in an effort to ride out the sanctions, and that as a result, you may never find any actual weapons in Iraq?

Rumsfeld: I'm not going to get into the various possibilities. They're fairly self-evident as to what the possibilities might be. I have reason, every reason, to believe that the intelligence that we were operating off was correct and that we will, in fact, find weapons or evidence of weapons programs that are conclusive. But that's just a matter of time.

Q: General Myers, can I follow up on that point, though? At this point, what intelligence is there to show that U.S. troops faced an imminent chemical or biological tactical threat in Iraq? From the podium, you and the secretary, for months, warned Iraq generals and colonels not to use the stuff or face war crimes. Can we get that off the table, that U.S. troops apparently did not face the imminent chemical/biological tactical threat that you and the secretary were concerned about?

Myers: No, I don't think you can take that off the table. The intelligence that we reviewed indicated that just the opposite was the fact. And that's why our forces, as they moved north, wore their chemical protective gear, and when missiles were fired, short-range missiles were fired by the Iraqis towards our forces, why they put on their masks and took all the appropriate precautions. It was exactly because we thought that that was a very high probability. And that has -- I mean, that's what the -- that's what we were -- anticipated. That's the action we took.

Q: Why didn't --

Rumsfeld: It should also be said that as the forces moved north from Kuwait into Iraq -- I've forgotten exactly what city it was in -- they found stockpiles of Iraqi protective gear that one doesn't go out and purchase for the dickens of it.

Q: Yeah, but where are the shells and the rockets that would have been fired, you know, for the grace of God hadn't been, but where are they? Speed works both ways. You overcome them, but you should have found something by now if it was such an imminent threat.

Myers: Well, it goes back to the whole issue of -- for the last 10, 12 years in Iraq, and the practice of denial and deception. It's the same reason that the first U.N. inspection regime didn't find everything, and why there was a second regime. They're masters of this.

And the other part of that is that, you know, you act off intelligence. Intelligence doesn't necessarily mean something is true. It's just -- it's intelligence. You know, it's your best estimate of the situation. It doesn't mean it's a fact. I mean, that's not what intelligence is. It's not -- they're -- and so you make judgments.

Does that mean we're not going to find shells with residue in them and so forth? No, it doesn't mean that.

Q: (Inaudible.)

Rumsfeld: Let me just go back and take an anecdote. And I don't have the precise months in my head, and I could be wrong by 10, 20, 30 percent. But illustratively, it's correct.

The allegation was made -- well, first of all, if you go back, the allegation was made that the Iraqis had a nuclear weapon program. And you probably know the year as -- better than I. The inspectors concluded that they did not, they could not find anything, and they were about ready to say that they could not, and they were alerted that they probably ought not to do that. They didn't do that. They'd been looking for months. Nine months is my recollection. They deferred saying what they had concluded -- namely, that there was no nuclear weapon program. They deferred, and three months later a defector came in, and they found hard evidence that in fact Saddam Hussein did have nuclear weapon program, unambiguously.

Now we're talking about less than eight weeks, and you keep pressing and saying, "Well, my goodness, by now wouldn't you this, wouldn't you that?" The fact is, they were there nine months and -- plus or minus 30 percent, and did not find it, found it only after they had decided it did not exist, and only after defectors came to them and said, "Here is what it is, here is where it is, and here is how you find it." And that is when they realized that in fact they'd almost made a terrible mistake, after nine months of very hard work.

Q: But on --

Rumsfeld: I just offer that anecdotally.

Q: The shells are somewhere, don't you think --

Q: Mr. Secretary?

Rumsfeld: Yes?

Q: Both you and Paul Bremer have now said that you'd like to see, if I'm quoting you correctly, the Iraqi state-owned enterprises privatized. I'm just wondering, at what point does the Provisional Authority begin to impinge on issues -- policy issues that really should be the sovereign right of another state to make? I mean, many countries in the world today have state-owned enterprises within democracies.

Rumsfeld: Sure. A fair -- sure.

Q: How can the United States make that decision?

Rumsfeld: It can't. What we said is what we'd prefer. And that's true. If you look down from Mars on Earth, you'll find that the countries that tend to be Stalinist and government-controlled, all aspects of the economy, tend to do a lousy job for their people. Their people are at the bottom of the economic spectrum in terms of GDP per capita. You look at the ones that have freer economic systems and freer political systems, and they do better for their people.

Now, you're quite right. In the last analysis, the Iraqi people will decide what their constitution says, the Iraqi people will elect their government and they will make those judgments, ultimately.

Q: So, with the oil companies, for example, or other companies, you will not take any steps as the Provisional Authority to privatize any state-owned enterprises?

Rumsfeld: I didn't say that. I said, ultimately, the Iraqi people will decide what kind of a political system they want and what kind of an economic system. But that's the answer to your question.

Now, in the meantime, the Coalition Provisional Authority is the authority in the country. And they're going to make the judgments they think are appropriate in very intensive consultation with Iraqi people. And each month that goes by, the consultations will be more intensive and broader and deeper. And as we then move from a -- into an interim authority of some kind, and then with the authority over certain of the ministries going to Iraqis and then, ultimately, to a constitution, and then, ultimately, to some sort of a permanent Iraqi government, at that point, they can -- will have free play to do whatever they wish with their country.

So your comment -- your question's a good one, but --

Yes?

Q: Mr. Secretary, you said in the past that you will not find chemical or biological weapons unless you have the help of the Iraqi people. Are you getting that help right now? Are you getting information out of the 55 most wanted list members that you have captured?

Rumsfeld: Yes.

Q: You are?

Myers: And from Iraqi citizens, as well. I mean, there are lots -- there's lots of ways to report. So, we're getting help from lots of different folks.

Q: General Myers --

Q: As it stands now --

Rumsfeld: We'll make this the next-to-the-last question.

Q: As it stands now, the American people do not know whether their soldiers have encroached into the territory of a nation not directly involved in the Iraq war. Will there be a formal report on this? And will you tell us at some point what happened? And if so, can you tell us when we'll know?

Rumsfeld: Sure. When the dust settles, we may very well -- I don't know about a formal report. But when the dust settles, we'll know more about what's been said, and the "senior defense officials" will have drifted away with their inaccuracies, and everyone will know that which is available to be known.

Q: But you'll tell us.

Rumsfeld: Isn't it a wonderful world?

Yes. Last question.

Q: In the convoy attack, how many people were killed? You talked about the wounded, but we assume people were killed, but how many?

Rumsfeld: We're sorting through that.

Myers: Yeah, they still have to sort through that yet. That's part of the reason we're -- we've got to get all the facts, and we don't have them at this point. They're still -- still working --

Q: (Off mike) -- or AC-130?

Rumsfeld: There were multiple -- multiple weapons were used.

Q: Could you update us on the search for Captain Speicher?

Rumsfeld: Briefly. I read two reports today, and what they told me is that the senior people involved in, I guess the Iraqi survey group are focused on this issue, attentive to it, addressing it directly when human intelligence offers suggestions as to how it might be -- leads might be addressed directly, that questions are being posed as appropriate in interrogations, and that the interagency teams that are working on these subjects of prisoners of war, senior officials, high value targets, weapons of mass destruction are focused and attentive to it, and that there is nothing that has been turned up thus far that I could elaborate on that would be appropriate.

Thank you very much, folks.

Q: So are you saying that no new light has been shed on it, or you just can't discuss that?

Rumsfeld: I think I like my answer.

Q: So you're not saying whether or not there's any new light shed on --

(Cross talk, laughter.)

Rumsfeld: You know, in life, if you go down one avenue and it's a dead end, some people would say that's a failure, some would say, "No light was shed." I would say you've learned something: you've learned that's a dead end. And in this business, that's what you have to do. You have to go down a whole series of avenues. And you don't know which one's going to be something other than a dead end. So I would not answer it the way you have posed it.

Q: So they're dead ends so far? (Laughter, no response.)

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