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**Presenter: Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld** **July 06, 2006**

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**Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld Interviews with Mr. Bob Woodward -- July 6 and 7, 2006**

SEC. RUMSFELD: You know, I asked Jean Renuart, my incoming senior military assistant, and he was with Franks this whole time. And Bill Luti was the guy here --

MR. WOODWARD: With Feith and Wolfowitz, right.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah. And my memory is not perfect, and I don't want to say something that's inaccurate. And I have asked them to feel free to intervene. And my interest is in getting it right and having you get it right.

MR. WOODWARD: Mine, too. Mine, too.

SEC. RUMSFELD: ... and having you get it right. So I said, gee, why don't you two -- they are at different ends of the rubber band.

MR. WOODWARD: And I may be able to follow up with them on a couple of things.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure. Absolutely.

MR. WOODWARD: If I can be cleared to do that, that would be great. Because I want to begin with a couple of months ago in a public briefing down there, you said Woodward's book is not the Bible.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I think I --

MR. WOODWARD: You did, you did.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I said you guys are not writing history. (Laughs.) And I said basically, by God --

MR. WOODWARD: Woodward's book is not the Bible.

SEC. RUMSFELD: That's right.

MR. WOODWARD: And I wanted to start off by saying --

SEC. RUMSFELD: You want it to be.

MR. WOODWARD: No, no. I want to say no one knows that better than me.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Okay. (Laughter.)

MR. WOODWARD: Because if every conversation with you is a bit of a wrestling match, I want you to know you're starting on top. (Laughter.) Is that fair?

SEC. RUMSFELD: You also know that I'm not the kind of guy who's going to say bad things about my colleagues. I just don't do it.

MR. WOODWARD: This is such a serious history and a most serious issue --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Exactly.

MR. WOODWARD: -- that the country is dealing with. And you know, one thing -- just one quick thing not on the list but someone told me about the other day, which I found fascinating. When the person that gave that speech on the Lincoln with the "Mission Accomplished" on the back, somebody told me that the White House speechwriters had used MacArthur's surrender speech on the Missouri as a model. And they literally had in that speech "the guns are silent," and you edited it out.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I took "mission accomplished" out. I was in Baghdad, and I was given a draft of that thing to look at. And I just died, and I said my God, it's too conclusive. And I fixed it and sent it back..



MR. WOODWARD: were you on the trip?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I was. And we got it back and they fixed the speech, but not the sign.

MR. WOODWARD: That's right. But it had "the guns are silent," and someone said you line-edited it out and said the guns are not silent.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah, that's for darn sure.

MR. WOODWARD: Is that --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah. No, there's no question but that I was well aware that things were still happening there. I was there.

MR. WOODWARD: The beginning is this question of what was the model for Iraq, because I think it was Bill Luti who was giving briefings here about kind of an occupation -- not necessarily MacArthur style, but it looked like that. And then other people were talking about a quick handover in one of these meetings. You say --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I tilted to the latter, to the quicker handover, and the president did.

MR. WOODWARD: -- that you were looking for Iraq's Karzai, is that correct?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't remember that. Clearly, you needed somebody who people could recognize as providing leadership in the country. And I always felt that foreign troops are an anomaly in a country, that eventually they're unnatural and not welcomed really. I think I used the characterization of a broken bone. If you don't set it, everything grows around the brake and you end up with that abnormality. And I used the phrase of it's like teaching a youngster how to ride a bicycle. You run behind them with your hand in the seat. And at some point you've got to take some fingers off, and then you've got to let go, and they might fall. You help pick them up and put them back on it. But otherwise, if you don't take your hand off, you're going to end up with a 40-year-old who can't ride a bike.

MR. WOODWARD: Okay. (Inaudible.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah, I mean, I said that.

MR. WOODWARD: When did you start saying that?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, early. I mean --

MR. WOODWARD: In '03?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, I'm sure, yeah. There's also the concept of declining consent and the like. And there's the -- John Abizaid and I and the president talked on many occasions about this, and we used this construct that there is a natural tension between having too many and too few. Too few and the political and economic environment can't go forward. Too many and you have two risks: one, you feed the insurgency and create opposition, engender opposition; and second, you create a dependency. Our folks are so good at what they do, and if there's a ditch to be dug they're going to dig the ditch. And we can't allow that to happen. We've simply got to manage that, and it's an art not a science. And therefore, I tend to want to go, and so does the president, with the person on the ground -- in this case, General Casey -- and he's got to be the artist. You can't do it from 7,000 miles away.

MR. WOODWARD: In '03, though, if I go through the record, talk to people like Garner and go through records, talk to people in the White House, it seemed --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Garner had that model, too.

MR. WOODWARD: Pardon?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Jay Garner --

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, yes --

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- had that model, too.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, exactly. Exactly. He was let's set up an interim governing council, let's, you know -- I mean, he briefed the president on we're going to use 200,000 to 300,000 Iraqi troops for border patrol and security and so forth.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Is that right? Well, I don't know that.

MR. WOODWARD: And --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Do you want me every time you say something that I don't know to tell you?

MR. WOODWARD: Absolutely.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Okay. I don't know that.

MR. WOODWARD: My question really is -- what did you envision in the spring of '03 happening? Because, of course, Bremer comes in with a very different model.

SEC. RUMSFELD: He did? I was more in the Jay Garner mode. And Jerry Bremer, of course, is a presidential envoy and, as such, he reported to the president and to Condi at the NSC staff.



MR. WOODWARD: You picked him.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes. We all agreed on him that he was the guy. I think I've forgotten where his name came from. I'm not sure -- but it might have been George Schultz who recommended him. In any event, he had a good background, was a capable guy, understood a lot of the pieces at the Department of State. And of course, he put together a team that was basically Department of State. He built the back office here and did the support for us. I talked to him only rarely, and he had an approach that was different that Jay Garner's, no question.

MR. WOODWARD: Did you -- as I look at it, there's that conflict that kind of never gets resolved maybe until 2004. So it's kind of going along, Garner has unhappiness during this period.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Good man -- Jay Garner is a terrific guy.

MR. WOODWARD: I've gone through at great length with him this whole thing from his notes and so forth, and he was going to be home for his Fourth of July cookout in '03 with basically this problem solved. And he felt kind of --

SEC. RUMSFELD: He had an experience, lived it during -

MR. WOODWARD: Supplanted by Bremer?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah. He had an experience with the Kurds in '90, I guess, and he was on a track towards that.

MR. WOODWARD: Now, NSPD 24, which set up Garner's office, made you the lead agency.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Right.

MR. WOODWARD: Why did you want the lead on this?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I don't know that I did want it. [Portion deleted by ground-rule] But we had the troops, and we needed a unity of command. We needed to have everything coming through one place, particularly when we were the ones -- we are the ones with the principal force levels and costs and responsibility. So we looked at the whole thing, and we had had difficulty in Afghanistan with, for example, the police situation. The State Department has the money from the Congress for that, the Germans had responsibility for it, and yet they're a big part of the security forces. So what do you do? If we've got the security responsibility, how will we manage that? And the answer was it didn't get done well early on and as fast as it might have. And therefore, we decided -- we'd start working in the interagency to figure out how we could solve that. We had the same problems with the police in Afghanistan, which is why this year, 2006, is the year of the police instead of 2003.

MR. WOODWARD: And maybe should have been, is that true?

SEC. RUMSFELD: You bet. And it is a very complicated thing because of the subcommittees in Congress, the committee's jurisdictions, the bureaucracies in the departments. And in any event, I guess last -- when did we start working the police in Iraq?

LT GEN RENUART: In Iraq?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah.

LT GEN RENUART: You sent Eikenberry out. You selected him in November and December. I think he went out in June.

SEC. RUMSFELD: No, that was an assessment. I did three assessments. I'm talking about when did DOD get the responsibility for the police.

LT GEN RENUART: In October.

SEC. RUMSFELD: In October of last year --

LT GEN RENUART: Yes, essentially that's right.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Just recently.

MR. WOODWARD: You sent Gary Luck out there in the beginning?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I sent -- first I sent Eikenberry.

MR. WOODWARD: Right.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Then I sent Luck. Now I sent somebody else, and now this Austin is in there.

MR. WOODWARD: Okay.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I've had an assessment team go in about every six months or so to take a fresh eye on things. What's it look like?

MR. WHITMAN : Slocombe.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Who?

MR. WHITMAN : Slocombe.



SEC. RUMSFELD: Slocombe was the security person out there with Bremer, yeah.

MR. WOODWARD: For Garner --

SEC. RUMSFELD: No.

MR. WOODWARD: For Bremer.

SEC. RUMSFELD: For Bremer.

MR. WOODWARD: You're absolutely right, Bremer.

SEC. RUMSFELD: But he was not on an assessment team. No, we sent three assessment teams to look at how you do this, and how are we doing, are the numbers still right, has the situation changed? What can we learn from what we've done? How can we make it better? And we've done that not just in security forces, but I had sent out budgets and other subjects I've sent out assessment teams.

MR. WOODWARD: So it would be right, as I've interviewed these people for Garner and Bremer, in particular, to feel some confusion about what the model is. Is that --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I think they each had their own model and they differed.

MR. WOODWARD: I see, but did you -- because you were in charge, you -- particularly Garner was reporting to you in this? And Bremer actually reported to you initially?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Bremer actually was --

MR. WOODWARD: Reported to you initially --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Technically, but not really. He didn't call home much. In other words, he was out there in a tough environment, making a lot of decisions, calling audibles, and it's a difficult job.

MR. WOODWARD: And he felt he was the President's man.

SEC. RUMSFELD: You bet, and he was. It wasn't a matter of feeling it; he was. And he had a staff that he put together that was basically from the State Department, and they worked well together, and they did a hell of a good job. It's a difficult job, and they accomplished a heck of a lot in a relatively short period of time.

MR. WOODWARD: One of the things -- and this is John Abizaid who said this to Garner early, before the war, a few months before the war -- January '03 -- we've got to provide an opportunity for the Iraqi army to emerge with some honor.

MR. WOODWARD: Did you agree with that?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure.

MR. WOODWARD: Was that a message that was sent?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I mean, I talked to Abizaid all the time, and he felt that way about the military; he felt that way about the Sunnis that they were losing control of the country, and constantly was looking to see that decisions being made in the CPA reflected what he believed to be, and I agreed with, a recognition of the fact that the goal was to have everyone feeling that the country is fair and representative of them. And because of the significant loss on the part of the Sunnis in terms of their role in that country, he was constantly looking to me to try to see that the political side of the house in Iraq reflected that.

You were --

LT GEN RENUART: Yes sir, I think in fact this comment was pretty consistent with General Abizaid's view - as his deputy -- and his recommendations to General Franks as well as his coming on, that you had to provide for the Iraqi regular army because they were the folks least dependent upon Saddam or more likely to be representative, that they would be a force that you would be capable of using and reintegrating very quickly back into the Iraqi security.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Also the thing with the army was (off mike) hundreds of thousands or tens of thousands of Shi'ite conscripts, and 15,000 or 17,000 Sunni generals. I'm overstating for emphasis.

MR. WOODWARD: And colonels.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And colonels. It was a different army. And the other problem was that it disbanded itself in large measure.

MR. WOODWARD: But yes and no. I mean, as you know, the current Iraqi army has all these officers back. All the NCOs and officers in the Iraqi army served in Saddam's army.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Certainly a lot did.

MR. WOODWARD: As best I can tell, virtually all. And so the question becomes -- again, looking at the chronology of this -- is that the goal is give them honor. And then there's this disbanding of the army there. Actually, at Garner's feet begging to be brought back. They were sending Garner lists and so forth. I've got the lists and they felt kicked in the face. And the question was how did that happen?



SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah. I don't know. Do you know?

LT GEN RENUART: This is when Bremer -- the first two CPA orders that he wanted to issue, CPA order one and two -- de-Ba'athification and dissolution of the entities -- were -- I think he said this in his book. He wanted to make a statement that there was an authority in Iraq, he was the authority, and these were the two ways he was going to establish that authority. But if you read both of those orders -- have you read them?

MR. WOODWARD: Oh, yes.

LT GEN RENUART : Very carefully -- they're not as draconian, especially on de-Ba'athification, that some people have made them out to be. And on the army, there was a, I believe -- and I have to go back and check it -- and Gene (sp), you might be able to correct me -- but I believe it was allowed to come back colonel and below without question, if I remember correctly.

MR. WOODWARD: I mean, the whole army was just disbanded completely -- I mean, I've read the order and --

LT GEN RENUART: But in building the new Iraqi army, there were provisions, I believe, in disestablishment to bring them back.

MR. WOODWARD: Later on.

LT GEN RENUART:: Right, right.

MR. WOODWARD: Later on, which is what happened.

The question -- again, when I've looked at the White House on this -- there was no interagency process on this critical decision. And Bremer says it was, essentially, Wolfowitz and Feith who gave him that order, as you know, because you've read Bremer's book.

MR. WOODWARD: Where did it come from?

LT GEN RENUART: (Laughs.) No, I haven't read Bremer's book.

MR. WOODWARD: What?

LT GEN RENUART: I haven't read Bremer's book.

MR. WOODWARD: Yeah, I have.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I'd be surprised if that were the case.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, sir, that's what he says.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I didn't say he didn't say it. I'm not surprised at that. I say I would -- that's just -- it would be a surprise to me if Wolfowitz and Feith gave him those orders. I just don't know that.

MR. WOODWARD: He carried those orders back, and there's some indication from e-mails and so forth that were drafted here in the Pentagon. Isn't that true?

MR. LUTI: Well, contrary to convention wisdom, there was an interagency process. It was discussed at length in the interagency.

MR. WOODWARD: At what level?

MR. LUTI : At the working level, at the PCC level, we call it, which is, you know, assistant secretary and deputy assistant secretary.

MR. WOODWARD: Never got to deputies or principals, best I can see.

MR. Luti: That I don't know, either, okay. But there was a lot of work going on in this area and a lot of communication going back and forth in the interagency. So it would be inaccurate to say that it wasn't discussed in the interagency.

MR. WOODWARD: Well, not at the principal or NSC level.

Mr. Secretary, did you know that this was going to happen?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I can't say I did. I simply don't recall it, and I don't recall an NSC meeting on the subject, but that doesn't mean there wasn't one. That's just my best recollection today.

MR. WOODWARD: And do you remember there was an NSC meeting -- it's very specific, but I have notes -- the 28th, '03, when Garner said specifically we're going to use between 200,000 and 300,000 of the Iraqi army.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Don't remember that one. Again, that doesn't mean it isn't correct, but I --

MR. WOODWARD: I understand. I understand.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I've not gone back and studied --

MR. WOODWARD: No reason that you should have.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I haven't gone back through the papers. I've got other things to do.



MR. WOODWARD: Garner quotes you as saying at one point the Iraqis are going to spend their money rebuilding the country, that we're not putting money in. This is at this point --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Early on.

MR. WOODWARD: -- early on. Yes, sir.

SEC. RUMSFELD: It became clear to me that -- fairly early, I think -- that the Iraqi infrastructure had been neglected for decades. I went over and looked at an electric power plant. It was being held together with chewing gum and bobby pins and bailing wire. I looked at myself and said, my lord, it took 30 years to get here; it's going to take 30 years to get out of here to get that -- not us out -- for them to get back to looking like Kuwait or Jordan or Saudi Arabia or Turkey or their neighbors. And I said oh, my goodness, that's going to be their job over a long period of time because it just takes that long. And they have -- they've got wealth. They've got water, they've got oil, they've got industrious people. They clearly are going to be the ones that are going to have to be there.

MR. WOODWARD: But there was a point where we put in lots of money -- \$21 billion. When did it become apparent to you that we're going to have to pay some of these?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know when that became apparent to me, but I know the government had an interagency process and they decided they wanted to help out. And so they went to the Congress with a proposal. I thought it was for \$18 billion.

MR. LUTI : Nineteen point four (billion dollars).

MR. WOODWARD: And then there was \$2 billion they added on.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah, but I can remember saying in the interagency process and on the Hill that the likelihood of the Congress passing annual reconstruction funds to rectify 30 years of neglect while he was building palaces is unlikely. As a broken down ex-politician, I could smell that.

MR. WOODWARD: Before Bremer was picked, there's a memo you faxed over to the president recommending that Wolfowitz be -- that they consider Paul Wolfowitz.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know that that's true. I do know that Paul came to me and said he'd like to be considered. And I can remember Paul saying orally -- not in a memo, but orally -- maybe in a memo --

MR. WOODWARD: I have a copy --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, good. Then you know better than I do -- that the president might want to consider Paul. He asked me to do that and I did it.

MR. WOODWARD: And why was it decided not him but Bremer?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know why it was decided that way. The president made the decision. He probably looked at a lot of different people.

MR. WOODWARD: They say in the White House -- I didn't talk to the president yet -- that you made the decision on Bremer.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I simply supported the -- recommended him and supported him. And he was well known to Colin Powell, he was well known to Condi, and everyone. A series of names were looked at, a number of people were looked at, and that clearly was something that everyone agreed was an appropriate recommendation.

MR. WOODWARD: Do you remember -- this is June of '03 -- I'm sorry to be so long on this -- when Garner had left, he had been replaced by Bremer. He came back here and you gave him a medal. And he says and he has notes telling you that three tragic mistakes had been made in the postwar period: de-Ba'athification so deep, disbanding the military, and Bremer's decision to let an interim government group that Garner had set up go home.

Do you recall any of that?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Vaguely. I remember having a very good discussion with him. I felt that he had not been properly recognized for what he'd done. So we had him come back and had a visit and did give him a medal and expressed my appreciation to him. I think he's a fine retired officer and a very talented guy who cares a lot about Iraq.

MR. WOODWARD: Then you and he went and met with the president after that, and it was kind of lots of old stories. And I've asked Garner about this, and I said did you not tell the president that you told Secretary Rumsfeld that three tragic mistakes had been made? And he said he did not. He felt he had reported to you. And we had a long, very interesting discussion about the obligation of somebody to make sure the guy at the top knows --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I think the president knew that there were big disagreements over de-Ba'athification and big disagreements over the military. I mean, those are not -- don't you feel that way?

MR. WOODWARD : At that point, in June?

SEC. RUMSFELD: June of '03.

MR. WOODWARD : Yes, sir. I don't think so. I thought there was nothing. It was kind of --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I mean the first thing that struck me about the military when Jerry Bremer and Walt Slocombe got



there was the issue of -- saying he was going to organize the military only for external defense. And it just seemed to me that the problem was not external defense at that moment; it was internal, and I can remember a discussion on that point.

MR. WHITMAN: Surely, some of that in June, July '03 was also taking place actually in the news media, too. If you go back and look at the articles that were written there was debate and there were varying opinions about that --

MR. WOODWARD: Right, but not much. I've looked at it thoroughly. It surfaced much later, obviously, and it's an issue now. I just wonder whether -- I find it striking -- I pressed Jay Garner on this. I said how can you tell the secretary that three tragic mistakes had been made -- not just errors, but tragic mistakes -- and then go meet with the president and not tell him? And he said well, he reported to you, he stuck to the chain of command. He assumed you would tell the president that Jay Garner thinks --

SEC. RUMSFELD: There's no question that the president was aware of those issues.

MR. LUTI: And if I may, certainly more on the governance issue, because we had a big change on the issue of sovereignty that came up, and that was Jay's third point.

MR. WOODWARD: Yeah, but that was three or four months later.

MR. LUTI : It was in September and October when the discussions began, and then in late October the decision was made.

MR. WOODWARD: Right, right.

MR. LUTI: So his third point was taken right to the top.

MR. WOODWARD: When did sovereignty pass?

MR. LUTI : June 28th -- we decided on July 1st, and it happened --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I can remember all the pressure to delay it. The president said not a chance.

MR. LUTI: That's why they brought Jerry back to talk about the --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Not a chance.

MR. WOODWARD: Not a chance of what?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Delaying sovereignty -- (off mike) -- sovereignty.

MR. WOODWARD: Very anxious to get it. Give it to the Iraqis.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Damn right.

MR. WOODWARD: This is the theme of the Iraqi "face," give it to them.

SEC. RUMSFELD: It's their country, yeah. More accurately, it would be give it back.

MR. WOODWARD: Did you ever say that to Jerry Bremer, it's their country? Because he's running around -- this is public -- we are sovereign, we are the occupiers, you are occupied. I mean, he is just -- pardon me -- sticking it in their face that we have got our wheel on your neck.

SEC. RUMSFELD: My whole approach has been, as I've said here, that it is their country. They're going to have to run it. We're going to have to take our hands off the bicycle seat, and we have to try to do it in a way that we find a great balance so that they can pull up their socks, grab their country, make a go of it, and we will not create a dependency and we will not feed the insurgency. And John Abizaid and I have been very much in agreement with it and the president was.

MR. WOODWARD: And the president, most recently, though -- hasn't he become -- at least from his public comments - - I think he's made it much clearer since the Maliki government has been set up. Is that fair?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I mean, he -- I think if you asked him, he would probably say that what I just said was correct, that the numerous discussions with Abizaid and Rumsfeld and him, on that subject-- (inaudible) -- that we found -- I can't say what he was thinking, but I certainly didn't find him disagreeing with Abizaid on it.

MR. WOODWARD: This General "Spider" Marks, who was the chief intelligence officer from McKiernan, had doubts about WMD intelligence before the war, like you.

Did you ever -- did that information ever get to you that there's a two-star general out there who has doubts about WMD?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Do you know who he is?

LT GEN RENUART: He was General Dave McKiernan's chief of intelligence.

SEC. RUMSFELD: But he was not Tommy Franks'?

LT GEN RENUART: No, he was not. He worked down at the land component level. He was a one-star at the time for the Army.



MR. WOODWARD: He was a two.

LT GEN RENUART: I guess he was a two-star. He had been recently promoted to a two-star when he went public.

SEC. RUMSFELD: No. I mean, we dealt with the combatant commanders' people. I may have met him --

MR. WOODWARD: Can you give me, for the record here, some idea of your feelings about whether WMD would be there or not?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure. I don't know how much is colored by what's happened, to be honest. I just don't. I'll tell you I was very worried about it, and I developed confidence over time, and conviction, as I think everyone did. And I particularly -- (inaudible) -- after I knew that Colin Powell was spending day after day on the subject with George Tenet and with the intel people and with his intel people and with Condi Rice over at his house drafting his U.N. speech. And I was not into the intel piece of it, but I worry about intelligence. I have to. I was worried about it in a micro sense because -- it wasn't so micro, but in a DOD sense -- because our military people were worried about it. They saw the same intelligence. And every morning, they're getting up and putting on their chemical suits -- not for the hell of it; because they were worried about having their troops killed by chemical weapons. None of us ever believed they had nuclear weapons, although we did have knowledge that in the earlier Gulf War they had -- the United States intelligence community had considerably underestimated the pace at which their nuclear program had progressed. But the only real worry we had was chemical -- it's very high on the list -- and a question about biological.

Now, the fact that these people -- 100-plus thousand -- put those chemical suits on every day as they were going north tells you that the --

MR. WOODWARD: They're believers.

SEC. RUMSFELD: You bet. You bet.

MR. WOODWARD: My wife, Elsa, whom you've met --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I've met her, yeah --

MR. WOODWARD: -- believes that if you'd been made CIA director instead of secretary of Defense in the Bush administration, you would have picked the hole and discovered that maybe WMD was not there.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I don't know. Tell her thank you very much. I'm not sure I'm as smart as that. I mean, you've got an awful lot of intelligent people working on that problem and doing their best, and they came out where they came out.

MR. WOODWARD: Do you -- there's a November 11th NSC meeting -- 2003, again. This is when the CIA comes in and says there's an insurgency out there. And you were quoted in the notes telling the CIA briefer, "I may disagree with you," and the president did not think it had reached the point where there was an insurgency. And the CIA was very actively pushing there's an insurgency out there.

Do you remember your thinking in that period?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't. I can't put it in time and place. I do remember the phrase "insurgency," the phrase "guerrilla war" and the al Qaeda terrorist activity. And I don't know which month all this was. But I watched that thing evolve and change, and I watched the military people -- I finally got a military dictionary and started looking up what those words mean and what they conjure up. And I raised a question in a public briefing on the subject.

MR. WOODWARD: I remember that.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And I said gee, you know, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, I guess, and people have different ways of characterizing it, and I didn't have conviction.

MR. WOODWARD: When did you get it, sir, that there was an insurgency, because clearly there is?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I didn't have conviction that I was the one who ought to use -- set the phrase as to what we would call it at any given time; let me put it that way. It has been, for a long time, characterized by a mixture of things, multiple problems.

MR. WOODWARD: I understand.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And it has evolved over time. It's not been static, it's been dynamic.

MR. WOODWARD: And so did -- I mean, there was just a hesitation on your part that --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I did not think it would be useful if I called it one thing and Abizaid called it something else, for example.

MR. WOODWARD: And this issue of who was the enemy in Iraq -- I understand there's still briefings that the intel people give on that.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure -- a lot of people.

MR. WOODWARD: And somebody told me that in fact the mystery has deepened.

SEC. RUMSFELD: It has. It's gotten more complex. When General Casey was back here last time, if I'm not mistaken, he briefed the NSC and the president -- certainly me -- and characterized that issue as having become more complex.



MR. WOODWARD: So we know less?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No, no, we know more. They're getting so much more intelligence now. And they're looking -- they're seeing schisms and gaps and seams between elements, and they're finding people who are doing things for money as opposed to love or conviction. But it is just a fact that the world is round, it's not flat. It's evolved and changing.

MR. WOODWARD: And the number of attacks are going up actually.

SEC. RUMSFELD: That's probably true. It is also probably true that our data's better, and we're categorizing more things as attacks. A random round can be an attack and -- all the way up to killing 50 people some place. So you've got a whole fruit bowl of different things -- a banana and an apple and an orange.

MR. WOODWARD: But somebody said up to 900 attacks within one week last month.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I can't validate that. I'd have to go back and look.

MR. WOODWARD: I mean, that's unexploded IEDs, that's counted as an attack; detonated IEDs, close engagements, standoff attacks and attacks on Iraqi authorities.

SEC. RUMSFELD: What do you suppose how many things of those character occur in countries that aren't at war in a given week?

MR. WOODWARD: I've heard you --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Detroit, Chicago, anywhere. I mean, you look at the number of homicides and rapes and armed robberies and attacks and shootings, and goodness knows -- (inaudible) --

[Passage deleted mutual consent and ground-rule]

MR. WOODWARD: You stayed on as secretary of Defense in the second term, obviously, and there were lots of people close to the president who were recommending that he needed a whole new national security team. And I want to be specific with you. Rice, Hadley, Card and Powell all told him you need an entire new national security team. He moved some people around and you stayed.

What is your understanding of how that happened? And help me with --

SEC. RUMSFELD: No --

MR. WOODWARD: What happened?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I did not get engaged with those people in recommending to the president that he ought to hire somebody else. I did, obviously, let him know that I was available to do something else in my life.

MR. WOODWARD: You did?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure. And I think if we remember the term ended. It's a fresh start - we all look around. I remember telling him and I think Andy Card there's no one around here -- certainly there are no indispensable people in this business. He ought to do what sets him on the right path. But what specifically they did I don't know.

MR. WOODWARD: When did the president ask you to stay?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know that he did. I don't recall that he asked me to stay.

MR. WOODWARD: But you indicated you would go or stay depending on his wish.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I let that be well known.

MR. WOODWARD: And a number of people have said the president talked to Cheney about it, and Cheney said you can't change the secretary of Defense in the middle of the war.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know that. And I also don't know if that's true.

MR. WOODWARD: It's happened.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure.

MR. WOODWARD: But I think in the 24-hour-seven world that you live, you do that. There's no way you can say it's not some sort of judgment.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Interesting. I don't know. I mean, I --

MR. WOODWARD: Did you want to stay?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I'm here. I really wanted and do want what's best for the country and what the president feels is appropriate. He's got a tough job, and he's got to do it his way.

MR. WOODWARD: But there was never a moment, a meeting where he said I want you to stay?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't recall that there was. I'm quite confident there was never a moment when he said I want you to leave. (Laughter.)



MR. WOODWARD: Fair enough.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I'd remember that. But I don't remember the other.

MR. WOODWARD: But there was a moment when you said I'll stay or leave if you want.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah, I mean I can remember saying that to Andy Card. I can remember saying that to the vice president. I can remember saying something like that to the president, but I don't remember precisely what. I just don't want to get in the habit of resigning every 15 minutes and having them feel they have to beg you to stay. I submitted my resignation in writing twice since I've been here.

MR. WOODWARD: In writing you actually submitted a letter.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes.

MR. WOODWARD: What did the president say to you when you --

SEC. RUMSFELD: He handed the first one back and said no. And the second one, he handed back, and I handed it back to him, and I said you ought to keep this.

MR. WOODWARD: And?

SEC. RUMSFELD: And he said no, he did not want me to go. He said it publicly. So, I mean, I don't know why --

MR. WOODWARD: How much time was it between the two letters?

SEC. RUMSFELD: - there's a fixation on this. I don't know.

MR. WOODWARD: Was it weeks or something like that? Was there a reason, or just "I hereby resign"?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No. One was a relatively short letter and the other was a relatively longer letter.

MR. WOODWARD: A longer letter saying?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, I don't know.

MR. WOODWARD: It would help for the history of this --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Your book is not the history of this. (Laughter.) I've told you that.

MR. RUMSFELD: You admit it! (Laughter.)

MR. RUMSFELD: It's not the Bible.

MR. WOODWARD: It's not the Bible; I agree. But it's history -- or between journalism and history. Listen, I totally agree. No one is -- I wake up in the middle of the night thinking I don't know anything about this, like Rumsfeld's letter to the president -- it was long.

SEC. RUMSFELD: What else?

MR. WOODWARD: Okay. We've done the bicycle seat thing, which I think is a very important theme in all of this. And it's -- because, as you know, somebody like Steve Hadley kind of has the view -- I'm sure you've heard this -- that Iraq is an abused child, that we need to help it along, we need to keep our hand on the bicycle seat.

Hadley said after the first term to colleagues that the foreign policy of the administration deserved a B-minus for the way it was formulated and a D-minus for implementation. Do you agree?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, gosh, I'm not going to be judgmental.

MR. WOODWARD: Do you grade it at all?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I'm not going to grade it.

MR. WOODWARD: Why?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, I don't know that I would -- I'm more interested in precision and accuracy and fairness than to allow me to try to, off the top of my head, characterize policy in that broad, macro sense. I just don't know that that's useful or if I'm the right person to be doing it or if this is the right time to be doing it.

MR. WOODWARD: About 18 months ago, Secretary Rice sent a team to Iraq. And they --

SEC. RUMSFELD: If I were going to do it, I might flip those without using the numbers, the letters. But I think there's been execution in a lot of things that has been very good.

MR. WOODWARD: The formulation is maybe the weakness?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No, I just -- I just don't -- I'd rather not do it. I don't think I'm in a position to do it. I haven't thought it through carefully

MR. WOODWARD: It's interesting. You've told Hadley -- or he's reported to others that the interagency process is



broken, a number of times --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I think it is that in the 21st century, in the Information Age, we're still functioning with an interagency process and a governmental structure that is in the Industrial Age in the last century. And it would be like if the DOD tried to function today without Goldwater-Nichols, where each service goes off to fight -- the Navy war and the Army war and the Air Force war, and that's -- that doesn't work in this environment. And it is not -- my comment about the interagency being broken is not in any way meant at characterizing the people who are in it or even the structure that they control. It's a reflection of the fact that the government structure is a leftover from an earlier era. And it is something that I think all of us feel on occasion.

MR. WOODWARD: Have you told the president this?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure.

MR. WOODWARD: What does he say?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't say what he says.

MR. WOODWARD: But that would be something worth fixing, wouldn't it?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Indeed.

MR. WOODWARD: And it almost kind of should go at the top of the list of let's fix.

SEC. RUMSFELD: You might want to give him the memo I did -- the speech I gave at the Truman Library where I talked about the fact that Truman was at the juncture of the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War. And he fashioned a number of institutions that were appropriate for the period coming forward, and successive presidents have used those institutions. This president is at the end of the Cold War and at the juncture of the global war on terror and the types of problems he's facing and the Information Age. And he's trying to fight a war in a set of new realities as to how people communicate with each other and function electronically. And it's a vastly different task, much more complex today. The time pressures are very much greater.

MR. WOODWARD: Eighteen months ago -- February '05 -- Rice sent out a team to evaluate the situation in Iraq, and they came back and said Iraq at that time was a failed state.

Do you think in February '05, was that a --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know that I ever saw that, did you --

MR. WOODWARD: No. It was internal State report. Does that reflect what you would have seen 18 months ago? Is this a failed state?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, clearly, if you don't invest in your infrastructure for decades, and if you run a repressive regime that discourages and penalizes entrepreneurial activity and innovation and creativity and assuming responsibility, you end up with a group of people who will either do exactly what they're told -- and that just doesn't make any sense -- or they cheat and lie and don't do what they're told but pretend they do.

MR. WOODWARD: Corruption is a big issue, isn't it? In fact, there was an NSC meeting where you and your J5 -- speaking out on the importance of corruption in Iraq. Is that correct?

STAFF: Well, I don't recall the specifics to the corruption. It continued to be a problem for us in --

SEC. RUMSFELD: It's a problem not just there, but in lots of parts of the world. We're worried about it in Latin America because it gives democracy a bad name --

MR. WOODWARD: (Laughs.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: It does. And people expect that a democratic system -- (inaudible) -- like America, and it ends up with people being corrupt, and then they go to -- (inaudible).

(Cross talk.)

MR. WOODWARD: In August '05, Kissinger wrote and has talked to the president about this at length. You know he meets with the president regularly?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I helped set it up.

MR. WOODWARD: You did. And you and Kissinger are supposed to be at odds.

SEC. RUMSFELD: no -- that's baloney

MR. WOODWARD: And he says -- Kissinger says victory over the insurgency is the only meaningful exit strategy in this war.

Do you agree?

SEC. RUMSFELD: He's right. Sure. No, no, I'd qualify it. First of all, I don't agree that he said that.

MR. WOODWARD: Oh, he did. He's written it publicly and he's --

SEC. RUMSFELD: He may have, I think ultimately, the victory over the insurgency will be made by the Iraqis because it



will take time. As I mentioned in the memo I showed you, it could take eight to 10 years. Insurgencies have a tendency to do that. Victory -- is that the word he used?

MR. WOODWARD: Yes. Victory by the insurgency is the only meaningful exit strategy. It's a great line.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah, but I would say that our exit strategy is to have the Iraqi government and security forces capable of managing a lower level insurgency and ultimately achieving victory over it and repressing it over time. But it would be a period after we may very well not have large numbers of people there.

MR. WOODWARD: The key word in that sentence, though, is victory. You have to have victory.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah, absolutely.

MR. WOODWARD: You can't have --

SEC. RUMSFELD: You can't live with it for 50 years and let it simmer there.

MR. WOODWARD: And General Casey's campaign plan calls for neutralizing the insurgency, which has technical meanings. And I understand he's said, look, we haven't neutralized it yet; we've contained it.

Is that correct?

SEC. RUMSFELD: If you say it is. I don't know --

MR. WOODWARD: (Inaudible.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: You said he said it.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, sir.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Is it correct that he said it?

MR. WOODWARD: I sure believe so.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, then he said it.

MR. WOODWARD: Now you're on top, wrestling. I mean, the question was do you agree it has not been neutralized, only contained?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah, yeah.

MR. WOODWARD: Okay.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Thus far.

MR. WOODWARD: Okay. Last fall, Secretary Rice went over this saying the overall Iraq strategy is clear, hold and build. You had some objections to that.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah, I was a little worried that -- and we talked about it. I mean, clearly, you need a bumper sticker, and that's what they were looking for. And they felt that a bumper sticker was needed. I didn't need one. We've got our job to do; we were doing it. And they had to fashion something like that. And they're right. If you're going to communicate with multiple audiences, including ours -- our Congress, our public, the Iraqi people -- they may want to know, well, what are you doing? Do you have a strategy? Do you have a plan? The answer is, we do have a plan.

But the question was clear, is one thing. And my problem was that I wanted -- if that is our strategy for the United States, then I worried about it, because in fact, I wanted -- we've got -- what? -- 263,000 Iraqi security forces. I wanted them clearing and them holding. And I didn't want the idea to be that it was just us. And so that was my concern, because that is grabbing a hold of the bicycle seat and hanging on for dear life.

MR. WOODWARD: Forever.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Forever. Clear, hold and build -- worried me -- for the reason I mentioned earlier -- on reconstruction, because that's going to take 30 years and it's going to take a pile of money and it is not going to be the taxpayers' money -- our taxpayers' money.

MR. WOODWARD: Someone said you objected to it so much, a half hour before the president was adopting that in the speech you called Andy Card and said take it out.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Probably true, yeah. I was concerned that it had a connotation that sounded good at the moment, but that it could, over time, come back and -- because of the nuances in it -- not be seen right. So then we tried to define it. We left the words and we tried to define it in a way that was accurate.

MR. WOODWARD: And what was that definition that's accurate, do you know?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, the way I said it. In other words, it's not just us clearing, it's the coalition. And the holding -- it's clearly increasingly them and not us. And the building is we want to help create environments that they can reconstruct their own country, and that type of thing. And those refinements are in there now.

MR. WOODWARD: In May, two months ago, one assessment said the Sunni Arab insurgency is gaining strength and increasing capacity, despite political progress and Iraqi security force development.



Does that sound right to you? That was one written assessment --

SEC. RUMSFELD: When?

MR. WOODWARD: Two months ago, six weeks ago.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Gosh, I don't know. I don't want to comment on it. I'd have to go -- I read so many of those intelligence reports and they are all over the lot. In a given day, you can see one from one agency, and one from another agency, and then I'll ask Casey or Abizaid what they think about it or Pete Pace, "is that your view?" and trying to triangulate and see what people think, but it changes from month to month. I'm not going to get tied to saying I agree or don't agree with something like that.

MR. WOODWARD: Just so we can have some -- you remember this snowflake from '01? I have to give a copy of this to Gene too. Maybe the problems in the Navy might be systemic, -- it's one thing to make mistakes when you are pushing the envelope; it is another thing if you make mistakes walking to work.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, I can't remember.

You don't remember that?

MR. WOODWARD: Do you remember the anchor chain memos?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, I wrote that myself. You bet.

MR. WOODWARD: Yeah. I've got four drafts of it.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Do you really?

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, sir. I wanted to give you a copy --

SEC. RUMSFELD: It got better.

MR. WOODWARD: What?

SEC. RUMSFELD: It got better.

MR. WHITMAN: It did. (Laughter.)

MR. WOODWARD: I mean, it really -- tell me, were you -- it almost looks like you struggled, if I may be frank with you, trying to define the number of problems and the magnitude of the task.

SEC. RUMSFELD: This is a difficult job here. This is not easy -- this department. And I can remember, having been here a month or two and standing up at my desk and at night reflecting over this whole thing and saying, okay, I was asked to do this job, I've accepted. And what is it? How do you define the job? And what are the problems you are facing, and what are the obstacles to getting it done? And what's doable and what isn't doable? And the more I reflected on it, I ended up coming up with this kind of an analysis that --

MR. WOODWARD: In the end saying we won't be able to do it for this president, we'll have to do it for the next president.

SEC. RUMSFELD: You know, in any administration that's almost true of everything. The people that they -- each president either benefits or is disadvantaged by the decisions of his predecessor. And each president and each Congress has at their fingertips only those things that were invested in five, 10, 15, 20 years before. And if you think about it -- I approved the M-1 tank that was used in the Gulf War and was used in Iraq, back in 1975. The F-16, which we're using, which is what bombed Zarqawi, I was at the fly-over for the F-16 in Fort Worth back in 1974 or 1975. That's the nature of this. These decisions you make play out over a long period of time, either to the benefit of the country or, conversely, to the detriment of the country if you fail to do something.

MR. WOODWARD: Do you know, as I look at the history of these past three years, postwar, one of the things a number of military people, active military people have said to me is that, particularly with Garner and Bremer -- until Casey and Negroonte got there, it was kind of a pick up team, and that for some reason, the government assigned a pickup team the most important thing that they were doing. Is that fair?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, I don't think so, no. I mean --

MR. WOODWARD: Garner had to beg George Casey for people. He was then director of the Joint Staff and Casey said to him, you sound like this is going to be 24/7. And Garner said you're damn right. But I don't think it's.

SEC. RUMSFELD: We're still trying to find people to go over and advise the ministries. Not at the Ministry of Defense or Ministry of Interior. You've got about 485 people that we haven't filled and all the other ministries in Iraq. How do you find people that other Departments aren't deploying? I mean, our government's not arranged to do that.

MR. WOODWARD: To me, looking at it, looks like a pickup team was thrown together in a way that did not get the attention that we now know it should have had.

SEC. RUMSFELD: That doesn't sound correct to me.

MR. WOODWARD: Doesn't it?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No. I mean, if you think about it, we had 150,000 troops over there. We had terrific military leadership. We had a back office here, which was functioning full-time. We had enormous numbers of people of real



talent who volunteered to go over there, spent six months -- Larry DiRita went over, Suzanne -- my top secretary here went over there. These people flocked over there to do it, and they did a darn good job.

Is it a tough job? You bet. Is it a heck of a lot harder than people sitting in Washington think it is? You bet. But they did it, and they did well at it, and they worked their heads off, and it was 24/7. But the fact that you did not have in being a government or a set of government advisers for an entire country and that you could then implant and that you paid to stay and wait year after year after year after year --

MR. WOODWARD: Until this moment comes --

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- in case you don't need them is nonsensical. Of course, you can be pejorative and say it's a pickup team, but it wasn't a pickup team at all. It was a bunch of -- Jerry Bremer is not a pickup team. Jay Garner isn't. These are talented people. And the team they put together are very talented people. I mean, look where they are now. Meghan O'Sullivan, she was over there; she's working at the White House, and a whole bunch of people who were involved there. I think that would be a mischaracterization.

MR. WOODWARD: The number of --

SEC. RUMSFELD: You would be embarrassed in history if you did something like that but wouldn't want to do that. As your old friends say, that would be wrong. (Laughter.)

MR. WOODWARD: Talk to some military people and they say, you know, did the war get subcontracted to the military? Where is the rest of the government? I get lots of people saying that.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I hear it all the time. Yeah. And it's one of those things that -- I mean, look at the sign up there: "We're at war; are you doing all you can?" See the thing on the wall --

MR. WOODWARD: Right. "We're at war; are you doing all you can?" Uncle Sam pointing at you.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yeah, yeah. And, I mean, this department is at war. And on the other hand, that's why it's here. The other departments are not here for that. They've been asked to do something that they were not organized, trained and equipped to do, and it takes time, and it's hard, and there's resistance in the Congress. And there are -- people are attracted to different organizations depending on what their bent is. And the people that are attracted here are people who are ready to be deployed and ready to go into danger zones. And the people who are attracted in other departments may or may not be. And if they're asked to, it wasn't something they signed up for, and it may not be career enhancing. In this department --

MR. WOODWARD: Can you share the concern that military people have?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, sure. I do. My lord, can I share it? I'm here!

MR. WOODWARD: Can you mobilize the rest -- help mobilize the rest of the government?

SEC. RUMSFELD: We've tried and tried and tried.

MR. WOODWARD: And?

SEC. RUMSFELD: And we've had some success and some areas where we've not succeeded.

MR. WOODWARD: It's not equal burden sharing, is it?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, no. And it -- I mean, if you think about it, it took us I don't know how long.

Gene or Bill?

We needed money for the Afghan security forces, and we couldn't get a nickel anywhere. And the funds for foreign countries --

MR. WOODWARD: When was this, sir?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Right after the -- 2001.

LT GEN RENUART: Fifty thousand dollar French bill.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And we finally went and tin-cupped the French.

LT GEN RENUART: Yes, sir, borrowed money from the French. They gave us money.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And we couldn't get the Congress to do anything. We couldn't get the government here to do anything legally, and we knew we needed to train Afghan soldiers. Now, why couldn't we? Well, because the Department of State has the training plan, and they've programmed out two or three years in advance. And they're divided up by the subcommittees in Congress. They decide who gets that money. Well, no one really thought of Afghanistan back then. And trying to get the government to spin on a dime and adjust, it just doesn't do it.

MR. RENUART: It took us five years and we now have what's called 1206 authority -- just passed by the Congress a few months ago. It doesn't appropriate money; it gives the secretary authority to spend \$200 million on training and equipping indigenous forces out of his own pocket. So we're one step at a time.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And it is the most cost-effective thing we can do. We can put five or 10 Afghan or Iraqi soldiers out there for every one of ours.



MR. WOODWARD: You know, you've got lots of people in the military who are quite unhappy that the rest of the government hasn't showed up with the same level --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Don't say you have, we have --

MR. WOODWARD: We have. Okay, fair point, fair point.

SEC. RUMSFELD: You're a citizen. I've got a lot of rocks in my knapsack, and I don't mind you dumping some more in there. But I like to think we're all part of this country.

MR. WHITMAN -- the last one.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, this is -- no, I -- here's what -- I numbered the questions, and I had 53 questions, and I have 24 more, and I'd like to come back.

SEC. RUMSFELD: So you've done about half.

MR. WOODWARD: Just about half.

SEC. RUMSFELD: You can come back.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you. That's -- and I'm a real short fuse on this. I was exactly at that point, I will tell you, with your friend, Alan Greenspan, and President Bush in interviews. And I got through half the questions and they both said exactly what you said -- you can come back. And they both said the next day, "I don't know that that's possible." It would be really helpful -- tomorrow or --

SEC. RUMSFELD: We could probably do it in the afternoon -- early afternoon I could probably stay here. I was trying to get out of here at some point, but I've got an extra hour isn't going to make a difference.

MR. WOODWARD: That would be great. And let me know.

Interview continued on July 7, 2006

LT GEN RENUART: You know, Mr. Secretary, from the other side of the world those 29 things drove us crazy, because we spent thousands of brain bytes trying to make sure that as we went through that we answered all those "what if" questions. And some of those are a little later in the process, but certainly the vast majority of them got a considerable amount of effort put to them as we talked about early on.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, yes.

LT GEN RENUART: What do you do about WMD? What do you do about the fall of Baghdad? What do you do about a fortress Baghdad? What do you do about these various contingencies that could come up?

And so some of the comments that are made by people who say nobody paid attention to them just, from my view, didn't -- that wasn't true.

MR. WOODWARD: Did the list actually come down to you, do you know, through General Franks?

LT GEN RENUART: I think General Franks actually got a copy of that list. I didn't see it. I got -- you know, Franks, he turned 29 questions into 53. I got a whole variety -- I say 53, but it was a substantially bigger number than 29, because as he read that, he began to think of, well, what about this thing? And so we go off scurrying trying to come up with ways to make sure we acknowledge those in the planning process.

And then the bulk of those topics came back into the NSC, where General Franks briefed specific issues on eight or 10 or 12 of them.

MR. WOODWARD: Right.

SEC. RUMSFELD: When you think of the amount of time we spent on fortress Baghdad.

MR. LUTI: He briefed that six different times.

MR. WOODWARD: I have that in the non-Bible --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know how many meetings were called on that subject, but it was unbelievable.

MR. LUTI: Secretary Rice probably --

MR. WOODWARD: Really went into orbit about that, didn't she? -- to the extent

MR. LUTI : Well, she asked that question at least once or twice where we thought we had briefed it, and -- but -- so it was something ...

MR. WOODWARD: Kept coming back.

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Off mike) -- no plan. You all didn't have a plan; you hadn't thought through the plan --

MR. WOODWARD: Can -- are you willing -- could your new military assistant go through all 29 of those with me, so --



LT GEN RENUART: (Off mike.)

(Cross talk, laughter.)

LT GEN RENUART: So there is risk here.

(Laughter, cross talk.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: Did you see what was on the door when you came in?

MR. WOODWARD: No.

SEC. RUMSFELD: A reporter like you not that observant?

MR. WOODWARD: No, no, I would -- people get upset if you look at what's on their desk.

SEC. RUMSFELD: On the door, on the door.

MR. WOODWARD: Yeah, but it's private. (Laughter.)

So you won the squash game against --

LT GEN RENUART: It's perspective.

MR. WOODWARD: Oh, really?

SEC. RUMSFELD: (Off mike) -- debate if you can be a good enough squash partner to get the job. (Laughter.)

(Cross talk.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: What else? What else did you not talk about?

MR. WHITMAN : Well, the only thing I wanted to do was to take this little bit of a canard that's out there about WMD and how it's been played in retrospect about WMD and the comments the secretary made about, "we know where it is" and this thing has been dissected out there in ways that, I think, are very unfair and very inaccurate

MR. WOODWARD: I went through this with Larry DiRita, and I agree -- I mean -- (cross talk).

MR. WHITMAN: He always referred to suspect sites.

SEC. RUMSFELD: The intelligence community's sites that that they showed us is what I was referring to.

MR. WOODWARD: I understand. I went through that with Larry, and I mean, I don't even raise that.

I'm -- if I could get all 29 of these -- this is from "Plan of Attack," my last book, which I now call the non-Bible. It has a new subtitle.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I've not read it.

MR. WOODWARD: I understand. But it talks about your memo and the 29 things.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, does it do it?

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, sir. And I only had some of them. See, this is why it's not biblical. It has some of them, and it has some quotes from them --

SEC. RUMSFELD: It starts out with me writing in my own handwriting, and doing it in a NSC meeting in front of everybody, saying, here are some things that we're worried about and we're thinking about, and you all want to think about these. And I must have listed, oh I don't know -- 10 or 15 or so -- and then I came back and dictated it and then refined it --

MR. WOODWARD: It grew to 29 at least. And you made sure it was part of your deliberations with the president.

SEC. RUMSFELD: You bet.

MR. WOODWARD: Did he say, when you went over this with him, now, do you have a plan to make sure each one of these 29 things doesn't happen?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Obviously. He obviously asked questions about all of them, and he deserved to know that we were worried about these things and that we were thinking about them, and that they are things that occupied us seriously in this department and we needed to brief the people responsible.

MR. WOODWARD: Did you feel you had a plan for each one, or some idea of how to cope with --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure.

MR. WOODWARD: -- because it's a great list, a great list -- including the possibility of Sunnis, Shi'ite, Kurds --

SEC. RUMSFELD: We thought of those things and talked about them and discussed them and had people considering them. And we had the -- your policy group [looking at Bill Luti] had to address a lot of it, the military had to address a lot of it. Some of the things that were more interesting to others than others, and some sparked like Fortress Baghdad was



a nightmare for people in the White House – Fortress Baghdad -- it was one a lot of people were very interested in.

MR. WOODWARD: And I think the Marines --

SEC. RUMSFELD: You can imagine how terrible it would have been.

MR. WOODWARD: The Marines were really worried about some sort of urban hunkering down, I think.

SEC. RUMSFELD: You bet. And the possibility of bridges getting blown --

MR. LUTI: Oil fields --

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- oil fields getting set off, and the terrible environmental nightmare you saw in Kuwait.

MR. WOODWARD: Last night I went back and looked at everything and I -- what I really appreciate you doing this again --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Did you tell your dear wife that I appreciated her high compliment?

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, I certainly did. No, you -- (laughter) -- well, and she said, if I may quote her back, she said, and "well, did you say because I know he's a hard hitter.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Did she really? (Laughs.)

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, she did. (Laughs.) And I said, I don't know --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I know he's a hard hitter.

MR. WOODWARD: (Laughs.)

This book, the new one, also non-biblical, is a narrative of scenes like the other books -- and I understand you don't have time to read them. And so it's kind of like a movie: this scene, this scene. A portrait emerges of the president as a wartime leader, which I'm trying to address as best I possibly can. And the real first question for you: Can you recall any important scene, interchanges, moments of decision, that show him doing it and leading like that? Because I went back and read your Truman Library speech earlier this year, and you told a great story about Truman when he met with Molotov.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Un hm

MR. WOODWARD: And he gave Molotov hell, and Molotov said, "I've never been talked to like that in my life," and Truman recalled.

SEC. RUMSFELD: "Don't behave that way and you won't be"

MR. WOODWARD: Exactly, carry out -- (laughter) -- carry out your agreements and you won't be talked -- (inaudible). You know that's -- and I got some, and I --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I can remember going over -- what I tried to do with him is to put myself in his shoes, and say, what would I want to know, and what was -- how can I, when I take his time on something, come out of here with him having -- and address the specific issue that provides him an umbrella answer for other like kind of issues. So I can remember being in there with Tommy Franks and targeting questions as to the issues of the natures of the targets, how we -- so that when we left he saw that we were looking at is it better to do it in day or night? Would the buildings be more or less occupied by civilians at what time of day? What might be the collateral damage in neighboring areas? Are there ways to slant weapons?

MR. WOODWARD: Come in from this angle --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Exactly. What angle --

MR. WOODWARD: -- because there's a school over that way.

SEC. RUMSFELD: So that he would come away not picking targets, but coming away with a template that he was comfortable with -- Franks and his team and I and this team -- were -- had an approach that was rational and as humane as possible, but as effective as possible in terms of saving American lives. And so I can picture meetings where that type of thing was done -- of that type -- that specific, but also a series of --

MR. WOODWARD: Can you recall any in the postwar period, what I call after the -- after May 1st, after major combat, where -- and you know, what I would say is --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Take this big issue on training and equipping and where we sent in, I guess, now three or four assessment teams every six months to try to take a look at how we were doing, do we have the enablers and all of that.

[Portion deleted by ground-rule and mutual consent]

MR. LUTI: From the very beginning with our experience in Afghanistan we went right off --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Right, I started right off in Afghanistan trying to train and equip and I wanted to do the same thing in Iraq. The bottom line was this: We have -- had a tendency in the Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense, to think that the only people who can train anyone were the Special Operations. I ended up -- every time I turned



around they were sending them off to Georgia, the Republic of Georgia, to train them. They were training Karzai's personal security forces. They were training everyone around. And I said, look, we only have so many of these people. We need more. We're working like [heck] to get more.

[Portion deleted by ground-rule and mutual consent]

We should work like the dickens to get more. But, by golly, there's hundreds of Marines and Army people who can train people. They're good at it. They know how to do it. They do their own. And let's start using them. And we started replacing all of them with other people. Then I said, let's get contractors to do some of this.

MR. WOODWARD: Why did Paul Wolfowitz have the feeling there was some hesitancy on your part?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No idea --

MR. WOODWARD: Did that ever come up?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I can't imagine. No. No.

MR. WOODWARD: -- that there would be -- and even -- I think he told someone that he felt he almost had to hold your hand to sign the order for either the Eikenberry or setting up the training.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, that's silly. Do you remember any of that?

LT GEN RENUART: No. The only discussion really was -- as we do so well, -- we couldn't train anybody to be like an American -- to the level that we train Americans.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Which I've been against.

STAFF: And that was, I can remember, discussion of let's train them to the best Iraqi soldier they can be or Afghan soldier they can be

SEC. RUMSFELD: You bet.

STAFF: as opposed to making them a U.S. Special Forces --

SEC. RUMSFELD: The other thing I said was, [heck] -- I remember during the Vietnam War, I turned around and we were training people to be doctors instead of medics, and what the Vietnamese people needed were medics. They didn't need U.S.-style hospital care over there at that stage. And the same thing on T-28 pilots. I remember we were training Vietnamese to be T-28 pilots, and I've been a T-28 flight instructor. Then I was an instructor of flight instructors. And I said, why don't we train the instructors to teach them how to do it -- train Vietnamese to be T-28 flight instructors, so that we can create an institutional capability that's on a level that's similar to --

MR. WOODWARD: So what level of training were you seeking -- in other words, you're not going to make them Americans.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Ask Casey. It's good enough.

MR. WOODWARD: Pardon?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Casey's answer is good enough.

MR. WOODWARD: Good enough meaning?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Whatever is appropriate. Good enough. But it is not that they're going to end up winning the soldier of the year award at Fort Bragg. I mean, it just is not in the cards. You've got too little time, too many people to deal with, too fast a turnover, and you simply got to do what you can do.

MR. WOODWARD: Describe generally, or if you think of any, I drive back at this point, the president as a wartime leader, because that's the issue here.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, he is. And he's a good one. He's a very good one. You watch him, and I don't know quite how he does it; he moves from -- I mean, here in this department we move across the full spectrum of maybe 180 degrees. He moves 360 degrees. He'll go from stem cell research to immigration, you know, 15 other things in a given day. And the stuff we bring to him on a regular basis is complicated, it's tough -- and he has a very effective technique where he -- first of all, he's a very rapid reader, and he absorbs quickly. But he also asks questions, and he just keeps pinging question after question after question. And then he boxes the compass. He ends up looking at the thing multi-dimensionally instead of one-dimensionally. And I assume -- I know -- I don't assume anymore; I know -- what he's also doing in the process is he's getting to know the people and taking their measure and seeing how they handle those questions and how they answer them, how much they know and who they rely on for answers to things. And he ends up coming away with a confidence level, and he develops an ability to know how much -- how long a leash he wants different people to be on.

MR. WOODWARD: How long is your leash?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, goodness gracious, don't ask me.

MR. WOODWARD: I am.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I have no idea.



MR. WOODWARD: Do you feel a tug sometimes? Because you know, people who work for you feel the tug. It may be a long way away, but you make sure that, you know, you're --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I am constantly trying to think what ought he to know. How can I help make his job easier? Looking at it from his perspective, how can we present it without a lot of acronyms and in a way that he can approach it presidentially?

MR. WOODWARD: You could write a book on you and Cheney. How is Cheney's role in this? How does he help you? Give me some sense of him, because you know, there's this urban myth out there that he's the all powerful vice president and he controls the president. (Laughter.)

SEC. RUMSFELD: That's nonsense. He -- really they have a very good relationship; you can feel it in the room. But the president is the president, and let there be no doubt about it.

MR. WOODWARD: Can you think of an example? I have some examples to share of that.

SEC. RUMSFELD: The vice president doesn't even -- isn't even slightly confused on the issue. He is very -- his handling of issues when the president is in the room is, in my view, just perfect in the sense that he does not take strong positions when the president is in the room that could conceivably position him contrary to the president in the room. I've not with him when he's alone with the president, but I have every confidence that he does there what he does with everybody else alone, and that's tell him exactly what he believes, because he knows that one of the prices of proximity to the president is the willingness. The burden that goes with that is the burden of having to tell him the truth, what you really believe, for good or bad, positive and negative. And I'm sure he knows that that's one of the responsibilities of the person who's in that close proximity to the president. And he does it. I'm not there, so I can't say he does it, but I do know that he is -- if I -- put yourself in the president's shoes, I think his handling of that relationship in the presence of others is just about as good as it could be. He asks good questions, but he doesn't put the president in a corner or take away his options.

MR. WOODWARD: Is Cheney your best friend --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, goodness.

MR. WOODWARD: -- in Washington?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, I don't know. I don't rank friends in that sense. He clearly is a person that I know well, and have for an awful long time. I have a lot of respect for him. I think he's doing a terrific job as vice president of the United States. But the implication that we work closely together particularly is -- I mean, I don't know, we just don't. I mean --

MR. WOODWARD: He doesn't call a lot --

SEC. RUMSFELD: No, we're not on the phone all the time. Neither one of us are visitors particularly. We both have full lives. We're doing our things. He's a friend and he's a darn good vice president.

MR. WOODWARD: There was an interesting time last summer at the White House when the speechwriters and Bartlett and Card decided that the language of resolve that the president always talks about -- we're going to stick this out; we're not going to -- (inaudible) -- was no longer working, that it wasn't enough, that you had to go a little bit further and say, yes, we might have made some mistakes -- as a way of demonstrating that, you know, we're charting a new course. This kind of led to the clear, hold and build that we talked about yesterday. Did you get involved in that question of -- you know, the language of resolve is a very interesting -- it's important from the bully pulpit. But there was a very clear-eyed assessment there with --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I wasn't involved in it.

[Portion deleted by ground-rule and mutual consent]

MR. WOODWARD: Back on. And the reason I ask this -- I interviewed the president for eight hours --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Wow!

MR. WOODWARD: -- (inaudible) -- books, and get a sense -- and there's a tendency he has, which -- and he said to me -- he said, I'm a gut player. I -- you know, the president has to lead, calcium in the backbone. You don't -- and so this -- there's an element of denial in his personality, where he's just saying -- no. And he was on Larry King last night saying things he told me three years ago -- (laughs) -- I mean, exactly the same talking point: Saddam Hussein was a threat; it was the right thing to do to remove him -- you know, verbatim language. Is there an element of denial in this? Is that -- (inaudible) --

SEC. RUMSFELD: No. I think it's, first of all, conviction. And second, it is a historical context -- he reads history. And he knows that those who have persevered are the ones who have made this country what it is. And that there have been -- in every conflict there have been dark, dark days and that he also -- when I say conviction, he also knows that we can't lose a battle over there. The only place he can lose it is here. And he understands that intuitively. He understands it intellectually. And he also looks beyond the difficulties that people face. And I'm sure -- I mean, I know it's true with me that when I read about the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War I, World War II -- I'm reading on North Africa now and my goodness. You can't read those histories and not see all the difficulties and the problems. And the numbers of people who are saying toss in towel -- you can't do it, we're not going to get there, the Cold War, lord -- the Mansfield amendment, pull the troops back now

[Portion deleted by ground-rule and mutual consent]

MR. WOODWARD: It's a wrestling match now. You're back on top. Go ahead.

SEC. RUMSFELD: He knows that. And he knows that perseverance and --



MR. WOODWARD: I talked to people over there, and let me ask about an important relationship involving him and also you, because you and Joyce go to the military hospitals. And some people over there shared -- and the president has said publicly that most of the soldiers who are injured, their families say, "keep going, don't give up," calcium in the backbone. Then three incidents I know of where people have challenged him, family members who have said, "Only you can stop this." Another one said, pointing to her maimed son, and said, "Was it worth it, Mr. President?" And he has expressed to people anguish --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure. You can't help it. You cannot help but come out of there -- I'll put it in priority order -- inspired and strengthened -- and you are because the wounded there -- disabled veterans -- an enormous percentage are anxious to get back to their units -- proud of what they've done, confident that they'll be able to survive injuries in one way or another. In a case with their leg off, go back to jump school, qualify for status and get back to Iraq. You come out inspired and strengthened, to be sure. You also cannot help but look at those wonderful human beings and see the damage that has been done to their bodies and not understand the difficulty of tying a tie or putting a shirt on. You know, the simple things.

MR. WOODWARD: So do you feel anguish at those moments --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, sure. My goodness. No one could do that and not feel that, in my view. It is a -- it is something that I look forward to doing, do frequently. Joyce always goes -- almost always. And I always come out and -- you come out and you get in the car and you talk about the experience of the people you've met, the soldiers and sailors and Marines, the families, and how inspiring they are and how different they are in their personalities, and yet how almost predictable they are in their pride of their service. And we are so lucky to have people like that.

MR. WOODWARD: Have any family members in any of those times accosted you --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure.

MR. WOODWARD: -- and said --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure.

MR. WOODWARD: What have they said?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't think I want to discuss the family conversations. They have indicated their disagreement with the conflict in Afghanistan, the conflict in Iraq. Personal disagreement -- and I don't recall -- it has almost always been a family member, as opposed to injured soldiers, wounded.

MR. WOODWARD: What do you respond to them, just to help maybe? The president says, I can understand how you feel right now.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Sure. I mean my goodness. They're going through a period in their life where something that they had loved and cared for and nurtured is damaged, and in a way that they never anticipated. And you can certainly understand the fact that any person in that circumstance is going to go through some swings of emotion, and it depends on where you get them and where they are when you're there.

MR. WOODWARD: Does that give you any swing of emotion yourself where you kind of go --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Certainly, certainly. There are things that raise that question in my mind -- but not that so much.

[Portion deleted by ground-rule and mutual consent]

SEC. Rumsfeld: The -- it is part of this job. I understand that historically. I understand it from my prior service here. I understand it today. So I do not go away and think, gee, this is something that I ought to -- (off mike).

MR. WOODWARD: Yesterday when I was leaving, we talked about Admiral Vernon Clark and how he didn't become CNO -- or become chairman. And I understand that this goes way back to Shelton, who was chairman when you came in -- recommended that Clark be his successor.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know that.

MR. WOODWARD: Yeah, Shelton has said that multiple times that he recommended to you that --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know that. MR. WOODWARD: You don't believe he would --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I didn't say I believed it or didn't believe it. I said I don't know that. I am very precise. If you say something that I don't remember, I am not going to say it's wrong, and I'm not going to say it's right. I'm going to say I don't know that, and I don't.

MR. WOODWARD: You don't recall?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't recall that. I could go back maybe and look at the list, but my recollection is we talked to probably 10, 15 people about four or five individuals and triangulate it, and that the -- Vernon Clark was ranked high and Pete Pace was ranked high and Dick Myers was ranked high. Dick Myers at that time.

MR. WOODWARD: And you said Clark in the end didn't want it.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I didn't say that. I said -- I think I said he didn't seem to want it. He was very engaged in the Navy doing a terrific job, and I didn't have the feeling that he was leaning forward anxious to do that. And I had always kind of -- and I clearly held him very, very, very well up there. He knows that, and I knew that, and the president knew that, and all of us were very respectful of his talent. But I kind of like someone who wants to do something, who's a tough guy



and who can take a lot of stuff. And it strikes me that someone needs to be leaning forward and wanting to do it. I think maybe Vern didn't. I did get him to stay extra long --

MR. WOODWARD: In the Navy.

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- as CNO.

MR. WOODWARD: Do you recall a conversation with him about that? Because there's actually a record of this which I have seen where he talked to you about -- he was going to see President Bush for an interview, and he said, I want to talk to you, Secretary Rumsfeld, and see if we're on the same page.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Mmm-hmm.

MR. WOODWARD: What you believe and what you expect of your chairman -- do you recall such a conversation?

SEC. RUMSFELD: That would be fairly typical for me, yes.

MR. WOODWARD: And you -- I mean, it was real kind of interesting, intellectual confrontation about what do you believe; if I'm going to be your chairman, I've got to know what you believe, because there's lot of studies going on at this time. And he laid down something about under Goldwater-Nichols he has a responsibility to give independent military advice to the president --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, sure, that comes up always, and I obviously agree with that, that's what the law is. Absolutely. Not just to the president, but to the National Security Council.

MR. WOODWARD: Do you remember a real kind of clash with --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Oh, not at all.

MR. WOODWARD: You don't?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No.

MR. WOODWARD: You also mentioned during the briefing that there was -- and this is important in this discussion of numbers of troops -- that there was a plan to ramp up. You were drawing a line and you had decided not to --

SEC. RUMSFELD: My recollection is this: that we did not know how many troops it would take. And he said you ought to have as many as you're going to need. And one way to do that is to put them in train, get it started, get that mobilization process going, because the president is engaging in diplomacy, and we don't want to go to war. The goal is to not have to. It is going to be the very last choice, and we're going to find a way to give Saddam two or three extra chances at the end, even one to leave the country before it started, which we did. And -- but we wanted to have him to have the ability to have as many as we needed. And I don't know what the top number is --

MR. WOODWARD: Yeah, what was the top number, 400,000 or something?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Four-hundred thousand to 500,000.

LT GEN RENUART: It's about 400,000 total troops. Ground combat forces build to about 275,000 or so, and that includes divisions, cavalry regiments and Marines.

MR. WOODWARD: And that would have been -- when would that point have been reached?

LT GEN RENUART: Well, you remember the -- you know, we were sort of in the 11, 15 -- I forget the numbers now, but the plan as it evolved had about a 90-day period of build of combat operations, because we weren't sure how long it would take to get to Baghdad and beyond. And so that substantial build occurred over about a 90-day period.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Once we started --

LT GEN RENUART: It started much earlier than that --

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- Earlier than that, in terms of the timing and the preparation and all of that. And then we said, okay, should there be some on-ramps or off-ramps if you need to add somehow. And they did. They came back with some --

LT GEN RENUART: Off-ramps.

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- off-ramps, we called them. And that you review along the way and then make a recommendation, which you did, and which we accepted.

LT GEN RENUART: Yes, sir.

MR. WOODWARD: And what was the basis of the recommendation to then not add more troops? As you know, this is one of the big controversies.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Canards. Yeah

MR. WOODWARD: -- great controversies in all of this --

SEC. RUMSFELD: It was based on what the combatant commander needed, and he made a judgment that he had what he needed or would have, as this played out, and that he would not need the additional ones that were in the queue to come in were they needed. And he made that recommendation, and I made the recommendation to the president, and we agreed with it.



MR. WOODWARD: So it would have been Franks and Abizaid when they took over making recommendations?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Abizaid was the deputy during that period.

LT GEN RENUART: Kind of the division that was -- I guess the plateau was, as we brought the 1st Armored Division in, the one that we took to the off-ramp was 1st Cav. And that's kind of where we said, nope -- General Franks made the decision -- no, I didn't bring 1st Cav. in.

MR. WOODWARD: Why do you think it's a canard, this business of number of troops, just to get it on the record? Because it's out there as --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Well, you know, people serve in the military or write about it as journalists and old timers. And they have needs that they develop over their careers, and they look at what's going on, and they are asked what they think and then they say what they think. And they have opinions, just like anybody else --

MR. WOODWARD: But you now, your opinion on this issue.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I mean, let me just go on. So then they say something, and then that becomes their position. And they may base it on a lot of knowledge or not too much knowledge. But the fact is that each of these things are debatable. Someone can legitimately have different views. And so they do. They do have different views. And it should come as no great surprise. There's been different views in every war about all kinds of things as you go through this. And the people who have the responsibility for making the decisions have to make the decisions, and the people who don't have responsibility for making the decisions can extend their opinions, and they do. And there are people who say you have too many, there are people who say you have too few, there are people who say you're going too fast, you're going too slow, whatever it is. And that's life. And I accept that. But the interesting thing to me is that so many of them say, "oh, it's Rumsfeld," as though I'm sitting around with a black box figuring all this out. And anyone who knows me or watched me do anything knows that I don't do it that way. I come here into this job --

MR. WOODWARD: The recommendation of the combatant commander.

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- knowing that there's no one smart enough to do this job. All you can do is to come into it and then figure out who smart people are, ask them a lot of questions, get advice from multiple sources, and then sift it, and then make recommendations and make a judgment who you're going to put your confidence in. I can't from sitting eight thousand miles away, say, "oh, you should have had more or less." Other people do it, and they do it from their armchairs, loud and strong. I can't. I can't do that. I just know I don't know.

MR. WOODWARD: Fair enough. Fair point. So you never bought the argument from where you're sitting that there weren't enough troops at any point in this?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I -- it's entirely possible there were too many at some point and too few at some point, because no one is perfect. And the people -- all of us that were trying our best to make these judgments were doing it in a context of concern about having enough to get the job done and enable a process, political and economic process -- to go forward -- and not so many that it persuaded people that we were there to steal their oil and occupy their country and disrupt and cause disturbances in their neighboring countries that cause the overthrow of some of those other regimes. And so we made the best judgment we could. And in retrospect, I have not seen or heard anything from the other opiners that would suggest to me that they have any reason to believe they were right and we were wrong, nor can I prove we were right and they were wrong.

MR. WOODWARD: So in a sense it's an unknown unknown?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I'm afraid it is, because unless you try things other ways, you can't then compare them and have different approaches. But the only thing I can say is they seem to have a lot more certainty than my assessment of the facts would permit me to have.

MR. WOODWARD: Fair point. And the opiners, if I can put them in a box, seem to say that you either intentionally or unintentionally rejected what's called the Powell Doctrine of overwhelming force.

SEC. RUMSFELD: It's the Weinberger Doctrine, I think.

MR. WOODWARD: It used to be. Now it's called the Powell Doctrine.

SEC. RUMSFELD: And that's incorrect. We didn't reject it or accept it. We looked at all the factors and the dynamics in this different situation, and I made -- people made recommendations to me which I agreed with. And I'm comfortable with them --

MR. WOODWARD: I understand.

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- today.

MR. WOODWARD: I understand. I mean, that really puts on exactly how to look at this in a much more complete way than I've seen anywhere. I think it's --

SEC. RUMSFELD: It will probably end up on the cutting room floor.

MR. WOODWARD: No, it won't. (Laughter.) I can see there's honesty in that because, you know, as I'm writing the new Bible on this -- (laughter) -- I have what's called the "Gospel According to Don." (Laughter.)

MR WHITMAN: We've got about 10 minutes.

[Portion deleted by ground-rule and mutual consent]



MR. WOODWARD: And quick things I want to make sure that before 9/11 the CIA was working on all their bin Laden action plans, and you weighed in to question some of the intelligence, asking questions in your hard-ass way that this might be deception. They may be trying to measure our reaction and defenses; then the agency and others did a study on this that showed very clearly, no, it's real. But you recall asking questions about that?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I ask questions every day. I'm not smart enough to know the answers, so I run around asking questions.

MR. WOODWARD: Steve Herbits -- your friend --

SEC. RUMSFELD: Yes.

MR. WOODWARD: -- what about him? Was he useful to you?

SEC. RUMSFELD: He was. He was helpful on the personnel side. He was my special assistant the first time, and Admiral Holcomb was my military assistant. And I got them both to come back. Admiral Holcomb was doing the military promotion thing, and Steve helped with the civilian recruiting. They're both very smart and very fine people.

MR. WOODWARD: He supposedly came in -- now this is December of '02, so four months before the war, and said to you -- this is a note: You are in the unique position to being the sole person who could lose the president's reelection. And he went on to say that the postwar operation, that Feith and company are running is screwed up, and then you started looking very hard at who? This kind of put you on the train to find Jay Garner -- to find somebody to run that office. Do you recall that?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No. Doesn't mean it didn't happen, but --

MR. WOODWARD: Understood, understood. That was -- you really looked at a hundred candidates for Garner's position -- or for Bremer's, I'm sorry.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Both. We got all kinds of names from everybody, people talked about them in the State Department and the White House and here. We all did --

MR. WOODWARD: Last question then. If you -- this is very important -- were to lay out an optimistic scenario of what might happen in Iraq, what's the case for it's working, with some sense of time and consequence? In other words, best-case scenario or realistic best-case scenario. Do you see what I mean?

SEC. RUMSFELD: Optimistic best-case -- I mean, this business is ugly, it's tough. You know, there isn't any "best." It's a --when did I say it-- long, hard slog. I think I wrote years ago and it is. It's -- we're facing a set of challenges that are different than our country understands -- our public. And we're a democracy and we need to be rooted in the public. They're different from our Congress understands. They're different than our government -- much of our government probably understands. And is organized or trained, or equipped to cope with and deal with. They are complex. We're dealing with enemies that can -- turn inside our decision circles. They are -- they don't have parliaments and bureaucracies and real estate to defend and interact with or to deal with or cope with, and they can do what they want. They aren't held accountable for lying or for killing innocent men, women and children. There's something about the body politic in the United States that they can accept the enemy killing innocent men, women and children and cutting off people's heads but have zero tolerance for some soldier who does something he shouldn't do. And it is an environment that is vastly more complex because of the fact that we have all of these new realities in terms of e-mails and video cameras and wire transfer.

MR. WOODWARD: Are you optimistic in the fighting?

SEC. RUMSFELD: We're fighting the first war of history in this new century and with all these new realities with Industrial Age organizations and in an environment that has not adapted and adjusted, a public environment that has not adapted and adjusted.

[Portion deleted by ground-rule and mutual consent]

MR. WOODWARD: Because Bob McNamara said publicly -- and very interesting and hard point, and I want to ask it directly of you. He said, "Any military commander who's honest with you will say he's made mistakes that have cost lives."

SEC. RUMSFELD: Mmm-hmm.

MR. WOODWARD: Is that correct?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I don't know. I suppose that if a military commander --

MR. WOODWARD: Which you are.

SEC. RUMSFELD: No, I'm not.

MR. WOODWARD: Commander in chief, secretary of Defense, combatant commander.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I can see a military commander in a uniform who is engaged in a conflict having to make decisions that result in people living or dying and that that would be a truth. And certainly if you go up the chain to the civilian side, to the president and me, you could, by indirection, two or three steps removed, make that case. But the fascination with that question comes up at almost every press conference. "Oh, tell us every mistake you've ever made, please. We want to have a litany of all your mistakes." And I hear it over and over. And they ask the president. And finally everyone says well, of course there have been mistakes made. And then they'll tell us about these mistakes. You know? I think it's kind of a -- my attitude is this: Our job is to get up every morning and figure out how we can help protect the country



and the American people, and to have people that are dedicated to this country, that are patriotic, that care about defending the American people, and help to organize and encourage and lead and bolster their efforts to do that. And sitting around contemplating the kinds of questions that you in the media are so fascinated with is not my idea of how to spend my time on the taxpayer's dollar.

MR. WOODWARD: Can I just say something very -- we know each other well enough -- that you don't understand the power of admitting error --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I do.

MR. WOODWARD: It is the most powerful thing you can do is to -- (inaudible) -- as the leader --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I've done that. I've done that.

MR. WOODWARD: You have.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I've done that.

MR. WOODWARD: I understand that. I understand.

SEC. RUMSFELD: But do I need to do it every day?

MR. WOODWARD: No.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Do I need to spend an hour on it with every journalist who comes in and says, "Oh, tell me all the terrible things you've done"

[Portion deleted by ground-rule and mutual consent]

SEC. RUMSFELD: I have demonstrated my understanding of that principle.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes, I understand.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Then why did you say you don't understand?

MR. WOODWARD: Well, I think --

SEC. RUMSFELD: He's not as bad as he sounds -- (inaudible). (Laughter, cross talk.)

MR. WOODWARD: Will you get him to write me a snowflake about -- (laughter) -- have you ever written a journalist a snowflake?

SEC. RUMSFELD: No.

MR. WOODWARD: Oh, could I be the first to get a snowflake?

No, seriously --

SEC. RUMSFELD: They are reserved for --

MR. WOODWARD: You're going to think of things about Bush or Cheney that should be in my book that if you just -- you know, they come to our head, make him a snowflake for the Bible, for the "Gospel According to Rumsfeld."

[Portion deleted by ground-rule and mutual consent]

SEC. RUMSFELD: The Cold War was won not by some buildup to a crescendo of a military battle. It was won economic, political and military. And the war on terror, the struggle against violent extremists, is going to be won the same way-- over an sustained period of time. And anyone who thinks it is purely a military battle is wrong. It is going to take the same kind of patience and persistence, and ultimately it will take what helped us prevail in the Cold War, and that is the fact that through successive administrations of both political parties, people recognized the threat and they were willing to invest and persevere, and they were willing to work with other countries in Western Europe, in this case, and make tough decisions.

MR. WOODWARD: And Wolfowitz got -- right after 9/11 set up this thing called -- Bletchley II. Do you remember that? Chris DeMuth at the AEI --

SEC. RUMSFELD: I asked him to. I said look, we ought to get some group going to think about --

MR. WOODWARD: And they wrote a paper, seven pages, called, "The Delta of Terrorism," meaning the origin of terrorism, and it essentially said we are in a two-generation war with radical Islam, and we have to do something, and we better start with Iraq.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I remember that.

MR. WOODWARD: Yeah. It had a lot -- quite an impact on the president and Cheney and Rice, because it was short, and it said a two-generation war; that other countries are the real problems, but you can't deal with them; you better start with Iraq.

SEC. RUMSFELD: Interesting...I don't remember that. I remember asking that they gather a group and that we think that through discussed it with Paul. Where you there Bill?



MR. LUTI: No?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I had in mind something different than they ended up with, and I participated in the initiation of it.

MR. WOODWARD: which was more or less -- (inaudible) --

SEC RUMSFELD: More like Bletchley.

MR. WOODWARD: Think tank or

SEC. RUMSFELD: -- yeah, that you'd end up with a continuing body that would bring together some very fine minds, on a highly confidential basis, and provide you the intellectual content for something that was obviously new and different and challenging. And that did not happen.

MR. WOODWARD: And just one quick thing so I'm -- I'm going to be able to cover everything here. In '03, this business about the Army and where the Army took McKiernan out and put Sanchez in with his very light headquarters, a number of people have said you were not happy with that because it wasn't visible to you -- what was happening. Is that correct?

SEC. RUMSFELD: That's true.

MR. WOODWARD: What happened there?

SEC. RUMSFELD: I have no idea. I shouldn't say I have no idea. I've asked people to think about it so that we don't repeat the mistake. And regrettably, the lessons learned, what occurred, ended at the end of major combat and did not start up again until about six months later. And it was during that period where things happened that I did not have visibility into. I do not know the extent to which other in the building did, but no one on the civilian side that I know did. And I'm -- it's not clear to me that Pete Pace or Dick Myers did.

MR. WOODWARD: Because I know at the time how you were talking with Franks about putting in a four-star as the commander in Iraq in May of '03, you were discussing it.

SEC. RUMSFELD: I felt badly a year or so later when I started looking at all that stuff that had happened so rapidly without my awareness. So that is about my learning. I also felt badly for General Sanchez. I think he ended up in a position that was difficult.

I've got something that's time sensitive.

Interview Ends

[Unrelated banter deleted by mutual agreement]



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