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World Affairs Council of Philadelphia

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Philadelphia, PA, Wednesday, May 25, 2005.

Thank you Justin for that kind introduction.

Good afternoon. I am delighted to be here -- finally. I do apologize for my not making an earlier scheduled visit, but was kept away.

The World Affairs Council has played a useful role in encouraging an exchange of ideas and I congratulate you for your contributions to the national dialogue on so many of the important issues of the day.

I appreciate this opportunity to return to Philadelphia, the birthplace of the ideals of liberty for which so many generations of Americans have risked their lives.

It has been three-and-a-half years since violent extremists launched their attacks on those ideals by murdering thousands of innocent people here in our country.

The evil that led those extremists to topple the World Trade Center towers and to attack the Pentagon is difficult to comprehend. But the motivations behind their plot are not -- their goal, very simply, is to cripple the United States, to try to intimidate the civilized world, and to inspire and cultivate a new wave of fanatics.

We're here today about 200 miles from the a field outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where those brave souls rose up against their captors and, in so doing, gave their own lives rather than allow the terrorists to kill any more of their fellow Americans.

In many ways, those passengers were foot soldiers in a war that had been declared on us, on our country, and on our way of life years before.

In discussing the way ahead in the global struggle against violent extremism, it is useful to consider some of the unique challenges of this era.

This is the first war in history being conducted in the 21st Century -- an era of:

- Global satellite television networks;
- 24-hour news outlets with live coverage of terrorist attacks, disasters, and combat operations;
- A global Internet with universal access and no inhibitions;
- E-mail, cell phones, and digital cameras, wielded by everyone and anyone; and
- A seemingly casual regard for classified information, resulting in a near-continuous hemorrhage of classified documents to the detriment of our country.

We see almost daily that, “a lie can make its way halfway around the world while the truth is still getting its boots on,” as Mark Twain is reported to have said.

Operating in this challenging and dramatically new environment is an Executive Branch organized largely during the Industrial Age and arranged along the lines of Congressional Committees and Subcommittee structures. In short, the Federal Government is poorly equipped to cope with multiple issues arriving from every quarter, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We continue to be held to peacetime constraints and regulations imposed during the Cold War, in a different age, and in anticipation of notably different adversaries -- adversaries that had governments, armies, and territories to defend, unlike our adversaries today.

Today we confront an enemy unburdened by bureaucracy or regulation -- or any legal, moral or structural constraints. The enemy is not easily described. It is not a nation, not a religion, nor even one particular organization.

Rather it is a shifting network of violent and fanatical adherents to violent extremist ideologies -- a movement that uses terrorism as the weapon of choice.

- They combine medieval views with modern tools and technology;
- They operate within both hostile and friendly nation-states -- and even in our own country;
- They will accept no armistice with the civilized world;
- They will negotiate no separate peace;
- They are unlikely to ever give up; and
- Symbolized by beheadings, they seek to impose a dark, joyless vision upon the future of our world.

They strike with little or no warning where least expected -- on Spanish railways or Indonesian discos. And despite the great deal that our worldwide Coalition has accomplished over the past four years, the extremists have certain important advantages:

Terrorists can attack at any time, in any place, using any technique. But it is not possible to defend at every location, against every conceivable technique, at every moment of the day or night.

After the 9/11 attacks, the President properly concluded that the only way to win a struggle against this type of enemy is first to confront the violent extremists where they live and operate, rather than allowing

them to attack us again here at home.

And second, by fashioning and leading a global Coalition that can deny them the resources they need to operate and survive.

It is worth noting what some of those resources are:

- First they need ideological support, the key to extremist recruitment and indoctrination;
- And leadership and command structures;
- Plus a regular flow of recruits;
- And they need safe harbors where they can train, plan and operate;
- Weapons, potentially to include chemical, biological, or nuclear;
- Financial support;
- Communications networks; and, finally,
- Access to targets in free nations.

In considering their requirements, two realities become apparent. First, that this conflict cannot be won by military means alone. And second, that this struggle can't be won by any single country.

Despite the successes, new terrorist leaders continue to step forward, and new networks emerge. Madrassas around the world continue to turn out new recruits from the ranks of the misguided and the misled.

What, then, is the strategy for winning this struggle against violent extremists? I would offer some of the following considerations.

First, we must find ways to reduce the ideological appeal of violent extremism. This is a chief motivation behind President Bush's strategy of promoting political and economic freedom. When people have more control over their own lives, and have civil outlets through which to air and remedy grievances, they are far less likely to be attracted to the appeals of extremists.

The events of the past few years in Afghanistan and Iraq testify to the powerful and universal appeal of freedom. The new Iraqi government is determined to be inclusive and broad-based. Many Sunnis now regret their decision to boycott the successful January 30 elections -- and they are now seeking and finding roles in the political process. Iraq's security forces continue to grow in size, confidence and capability, and are steadily taking over more responsibility from U.S. and Coalition forces.

Afghanistan is making economic and political progress unknown in its history. And it has been good to have President Hamid Karzai in Washington, D.C. again this week -- a voice for moderation in the Muslim world and the first democratically elected leader in Afghanistan's 5,000-year history. What is happening in Afghanistan -- and in so short a time -- is truly remarkable.

The world is watching these developments closely. We see events in the Republic of Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. For the first time in memory, talk on the streets of Lebanon and the Palestinian

Authority is about democracy and human rights.

These developments are steps in offering would-be terrorist recruits and sympathizers another way of life.

For extremists, ideological support comes in many forms -- from madrassas, from radical mosques, and other sources. Anti-American messages and images of hate quickly find their way across the world via the Internet and other advanced technologies.

Yet for decades, the international community's response to this ideological battle has been inadequate. In particular, the standard U.S. government public affairs operation is still rooted in the era of daily and weekly news cycles, rather than the 24-hour global maelstrom of instant coverage on cable news, talk radio, and the Internet.

Communications operations may well require substantial innovation, greater agility and the speed that accompanies a transformed military. We will need to develop considerably more sophisticated ways of using the many new communication channels available to reach diverse audiences critical to success in this new world -- and to do so near instantaneously.

This will require developing better access to the non-mainstream media around the world -- as their influence continues to grow and as the influence and reach of more traditional channels continue to decline.

Despite the damage that can be done in an era of mass -- and sometimes reckless -- communications, free people eventually get it right. The American people seem to have an inner gyroscope that can sort through the clutter of information, misinformation and opinion and eventually reach balanced conclusions.

Policymakers will also need to consider new approaches for the government as a whole. The old, rigid divisions between war, peace, and diplomacy, conflict and reconstruction -- and the roles of the various government departments that go with them -- may no longer serve us as well, as we should require.

For example, when I was in Afghanistan recently, I visited a Provincial Reconstruction Team site near Kandahar that exemplified this point. Outside of Kabul, the U.S. military is playing a nearly exclusive role in helping train local Afghans in reconstruction efforts -- reaching out to local populations, building trust and confidence, while at the same time being ready to respond to attacks waged by Al Qaida and Taliban remnants.

The original concept behind Provincial Reconstruction Teams was to involve other federal agencies in partnership with the Afghan people. Their tasks could best be done not by the military alone, but by cooperation from a variety of departments and agencies.

In 1986, the Goldwater-Nichols legislation transformed the way the U.S. Armed Forces fought conventional wars. I am increasingly persuaded that the entire federal government may need a similarly transformative cultural, if not institutional, shift. The interagency process eventually will need to be adjusted to bring the disparate elements together.

In this complex multi-dimensional struggle, the President needs the flexibility to choose which instrument of national power, from within which agency, may be best suited for a given situation, challenge, region or country.

This presents a formidable challenge for the U.S. defense establishment -- still largely organized, trained, and equipped to fight conventional wars against other large armies, navies, and air forces. For example, while the mission of training and equipping other nations' forces had once been the mainstay of elite special units, it has become, and will likely remain, a standard requirement for our military as a whole -- across different branches and components.

This has implications for the kind of people we recruit and the skill sets they will need -- physical, cultural and intellectual.

The tasks ahead for them will continue to be demanding and will continue to evolve -- encompassing such things as the need to shift seamlessly between warfighting and diplomacy, serving as educators and humanitarians, working not only with other branches of the military, but other agencies of government, private organizations and Coalition partners.

Fortunately, the men and women in uniform have demonstrated a special talent for rising to the challenges presented to them.

Our country has always been blessed with the great good fortune of having dedicated men and women who volunteer to defend our country and risk their lives in its cause.

Think of the passengers on board the hijacked and doomed Flight 93, over Pennsylvania, who realized that they could become instruments of an attack on their own country. One young man called his mother and said goodbye. Another told his wife he loved her. And a number of the passengers decided that they would not let terrorists decide their fate; they would take the fight to them, though it could cost them their lives.

We can be proud of the men and women who have volunteered to wear our country's uniform and place themselves at risk. Their courage, skill and grit remain the best hope for safeguarding our freedom. Because of them, I remain optimistic about the future of America and the civilized world.

Thank you so much. I'd be pleased to respond to some questions.

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