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# News Transcript

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

**Tuesday, August 2, 2005**

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## Secretary Rumsfeld Remarks at Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison: I'm going to stop right now and let Secretary Rumsfeld come in. I will just say how much I appreciate this great effort that he's making. Even though the weather went against him, he really is going the extra mile to give you a message.

I cannot say enough about the hard work that he is doing. That man is at the Pentagon at 6:00 in the morning. He is in the Pentagon at midnight. And when the Pentagon was hit on 9/11/2001, the Secretary, with all the smoke coming into the building, with nobody knowing if it was finished, it was the Secretary who was out there taking water to people, bringing people in so that they could try to recover from their wounds. He was out there as if he were an emergency worker, and he stayed there the whole time.

I cannot tell you how much I respect this Secretary, and I'm going to now give you Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Well, Kay -- Can you hear me well there?

Senator Hutchison: Perfect.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Thank you so much for those kind words, and thank you also for the leadership you provide day in and day out in Washington, D.C. And also for your terrific support of America's men and women in uniform. They're doing such a superb job.

You know, I must say that I've tried very hard this morning to join your gathering there, and listening is -- certainly to, I'm sure, a scratchy set of words out of a PA system -- is not your first choice. I kind of tried to put myself in your shoes and remembered back to my childhood when I'd listen to President Roosevelt give a speech on radio and we'd all gather around the old radio. [Laughter]. I'm sure there's no one there in the audience old enough to remember that. [Laughter].

I also remember Mayor LaGuardia reading the funnies on Sunday mornings to the kids who didn't get the newspapers.

But I do apologize, and I hope that this works out well enough. I'm disappointed I won't be able to respond to some questions, but possibly Kay, you can take the hard ones anyway. [Laughter].

Senator Hutchison: Sure.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Let me say also, I know that a lot of the folks in the audience there represent companies that support employees who are off serving in the Guard and Reserve. What you folks do for them says a great deal about the heart of America, and I want you to know how much we appreciate the support you give the troops. They appreciate it, and I appreciate it a great deal.

We have, I might just put in a plug for the web site. It's AmericaSupportsYou.mil, and on that web site it shows all the things that people can do to support the troops. It's got a whole long list of things that people are doing. Companies, families, individuals, schools, and it means a great deal to the troops to have that support and I hope some of you will turn to that web site, AmericaSupportsYou.mil, and you'll see what's being done and it may even give you some ideas of additional things you folks can do.

I was in Iraq and Central Asia last week where I met with many of our troops -- these amazing men and women in uniform. And despite the difficulties and the heat, they're really making solid progress in helping to set conditions for the Iraqis to successfully defend their young democracy.

Once Iraq is safely in the hands of the Iraqi people and a government that they elected under a new constitution, our troops will be able to come home with the honor that they have earned.

You know, a constitution is currently being drafted. They have a good chance of completing it by August 15th. Then there will be a referendum on October 15th, and then an election in December under that new constitution, all things working out.

It's been nearly four years since terrorists launched their attacks on our country and murdered thousands of innocent people. And it's just a fact that the enemies of civilized society today remain deadly. While most of our people remain determined to defend our country and our way of life, a few seem attracted to the idea that well, we might be able to retreat behind the convenient fictions that could obscure the lethality and the intention of the enemy. I want to mention some of those fictions today and talk about the way ahead in the global war on terror, this struggle between civilization and extremists. Then we'll let Kay answer a bunch of the questions on things that I've left open-ended. [Laughter].

First, there has been comment in the press of late about whether or not we're even engaged in a war on terror, or whether our purpose might be better explained in a different manner. Let there be no mistake, we are a nation at war, against terrorist enemies who are seeking our surrender or our retreat. It is a war. The President properly determined after September 11th that the United States no longer could deal with terrorists killing our people as we had in the past in the traditional law enforcement sense. Indeed, the only way to defeat terrorism is to go on the attack. That's exactly what our coalition has done and is doing in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere around the world.

It's also true that this war cannot be won by military means alone. President Bush has emphasized that

from the very beginning. As he pointed out, the fanaticism of our adversaries can only be defeated if we successfully employ all elements of national power -- military power to be sure, but also diplomatic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement. We need all elements of national power to win this war, but make no mistake, it is a war. It's a war on terror and on their pernicious fanaticism.

Some also ask how do we define the enemy? Well, al-Qaida is one face of the terrorists but it's not the only one. The enemy's not any one nation or any one organization. Instead, it's a shifting network of violent and fanatical adherents to extremist ideologies, a movement that uses terrorism as their weapon of choice.

Today they operate on six continents and have cells and networks in friendly as well as hostile nation states. They combine medieval views with modern tools and technology. They seek to deny women, half of their populations, the opportunity to participate in society. And they seek to impose their dark vision on the future of our world.

We've now seen well the future they envision. They've made their intentions clear. The cities they would rule would be like Fallujah, Iraq was last fall, where anyone who refused to collaborate with the terrorists that controlled that city then were beheaded, and then they were tossed down the Euphrates River.

We've heard their plan. As the cleric in Britain said to the world after last month's bombing in London, he said, "I would like to see the Islamic flag fly not only over Number 10 Downing Street, but over the whole world."

This is not a war between the United States and the Muslim faith or between the West and the Muslim faith. It's a struggle essentially within the Muslim faith, between extremists and moderates, and the extremists represent a very small minority.

The targets of these terrorists are more often than not other Muslims such as the Iraqi children they murdered last month while they were taking candy from American forces; and moderate Muslims who reject their extremist views as do the overwhelming majority of Muslims throughout the world.

Indeed, their victims include thousands of Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq, many killed simply because they've chosen to be free. The free people of Iraq and Afghanistan are defying terrorist threats and condemning their violence. They choose to reject violence against the West and against moderate Muslim nations, and they are not alone.

According to a recent poll, an increasing number of Muslims are optimistic about the success of democracy in their own countries and they're rejecting the tyranny and the falsehoods offered by the terrorists.

Other people, unfortunately, remain confused about the motivations and intentions of the terrorists and about our coalition's defense of the still-young democracies in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Some seem to still favor the discredited theory that the recent attacks in London and elsewhere, for example, are in retaliation for the war in Iraq, or for the so-called occupation of Afghanistan. That's nonsense and it's belied by the facts.

Some folks seem to have a memory span of about 30 seconds. [Laughter].

The United States and its allies did not provoke the terrorists. The terrorists attacked Americans. There was no war in Iraq or Afghanistan when America was attacked on September 11, 2001. And I would add there was no war in Iraq or Afghanistan when terrorists attacked Americans in the Beirut barracks in 1983, or in the Khobar Towers in 1996, or at the African Embassies in 1998, or when they attacked the USS Cole in the year 2000.

Some try to argue that acquiescing to terrorist demands by retreating from Afghanistan or Iraq would put an end to future terrorist attacks. That's also nonsense. Terrorists do not seek a negotiated settlement with the West or with moderate Muslims, and they're not at peace by concession. A car bomb in Saudi Arabia killed 17 and wounded 80 after American troops were leaving Saudi Arabia. Indeed, al-Qaida began plotting 9/11 during the height of the Middle East peace process in the late 1990s.

In my view resolve, not retreat, is what's needed in this war, this test of will; and courage, not concession, is called for. And freedom, not tyranny must be the path that we forge together, the future we insist on and the legacy America and our allies help other nations build.

Our coalition must win this test of wills, vowing that we will not surrender Iraq and Afghanistan to terrorists, that we don't apologize for our country's meaning and symbol in the world, and will not betray the principles of freedom that define our nation.

We recognize that these enemies would not be placated by a surrender, by an apology, or by a betrayal of our values and our free way of life.

So what then is the path ahead? Our global coalition, and it's probably the largest coalition in the history of mankind, some 80 or 85 nations, will continue to target terrorist networks and their sanctuaries and to support free governments that join in the fight, but we must also acknowledge that the challenges we face come not only from terrorist networks, but also from the radical schools that teach children to be suicide bombers and terrorists, and from the radical clerics who preach violence and demonize our free way of life.

Free nations are best able to counter the lines terrorists use to attract recruits and suicide bombers if we're in partnership with moderate Muslim leaders.

Our efforts are obviously not without difficulty and we've seen that. Although the Iraqi people remain determined to build a free society, the terrorists are desperate to try to stop them. But despite their headline-grabbing murders, the terrorists are failing. Indeed, the murders of innocent Iraqi citizens now appear to be hardening the majority of the Iraqi people's determination to defeat al-Qaida and to defeat the insurgents, and to succeed in building a free country.

More than eight million Iraqis defied the terrorists to vote last January in the Iraqi election. Some walked defiantly right to the voting places that had just been bombed by suicide bombers only hours before. And despite the carnage that they have inflicted on innocent Iraqi men, women and children, consider the terrorists' record in Iraq thus far.

They tried to occupy Fallujah and carve out a terrorist safe haven in the country, and they failed.

They launched a campaign of violence to stop the January election, and they failed.

They sought to intimidate and murder recruits lining up to join the Iraqi security forces to keep them from enlisting, and they are failing.

They sought to force the coalition to withdraw from Afghanistan and Iraq, and with the exception of Spain pulling their forces out of Iraq, they failed.

They're desperate to stop the forward march of freedom in the Middle East and beyond, and they're failing at that as well.

As the citizens of more countries seek to live as free people under free systems, the ideology that fuels hostility to free systems and encourages terrorist violence will suffer still further blows. This will be a tribute to moderate Muslim leaders and to the millions of moderate Muslims around the world who have courageously supported them. It's also a tribute to the resolve of the American people including many of you in that room and in your great state.

First Lady Laura Bush has said that what makes Texans special is that they have a spirit born of optimism, legends and heroes, and over the years you folks have given America quite a few famous heroes -- folks who have come to our nation's service at a time of war. Men like Chester Nimitz, Admiral Nimitz; and Audie Murphy.

There's one hero you may not have heard of, a 21-year-old machine gunner named Aaron Austin. He's an American and a Texan. Last year in Iraq he exposed himself to enemy fire to hurl a grenade and to help repel an attack. His Marines were in danger of being overrun and for his actions he was awarded the Silver Star. That honor was presented to the parents who mourn his loss.

His mother, who served in the Army, said he died for what he believed in and what we all believe in. His father said, he was born in Texas, he is Texas. And of course that spirit that defines Texas defines America too. Today's men and women in uniform, volunteers all, understand well that it's their turn to serve and they're doing so courageously and professionally.

A defeat for terrorists and the victories thus far for the Afghan and Iraqi people would not have been possible without the professionalism of our country's military, or without the support of their families who, as you all well know, sacrifice as well. And needless to say, without the support of the American people who are going to be over time the ones who will prevail in this test of will that's existing in our world.

May God bless them all, and may God continue to bless our great country. I thank you all for your patience, and I hope at some future time you'll give me a rain check. I'd love to come down and be there in person with you. Thank you very much.

[Applause].

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