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## *Transcript*

# The Global War on Terrorism

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November 13, 2003

Council on Foreign Relations

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Washington, D.C.

Douglas Feith [DF]: Good Evening. Thank you, Bob, I appreciate the introduction and I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to address the Council [on Foreign Relations].

My talk is on the global war on terrorism and I'd like to start with a personal story. On September 11, 2001, I was in Moscow with my colleague J.D. Crouch, discussing the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, an ancient text. As we were leaving the defense ministry in the late afternoon, the world entered a new era, for that was when the first plane hit the World Trade

Center. We asked the U.S.-European command for the means to get back to Washington despite the general shutdown of U.S. air traffic, and EUCOM provided us with a KC135 tanker, which met us in Germany. And we collected there a handful of stray Defense Department officials who were also stranded by the suspension of the commercial air traffic and these included Undersecretary Dov Zakheim, Assistant Secretary Peter Rodman and his deputy Bill Ludy and General John General Abizaid, then on the joint staff, and now as you know Tommy Frank's successor as the commander of the Central Command. All of us were frustrated to be away at such a moment and grateful to be getting back to the Pentagon fast, which was still smoldering.

In the KC135, we conferred and wrote papers about how to comprehend the September 11 attack as a matter of national security policy. President Bush's statements even then showed that he thought of the attack, in essence, as an act of war rather than a law enforcement matter.

Now, this point may seem unremarkable, but think back to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and to the attacks on Khobar Towers in 1996, on the U.S. East African embassies in '98, on the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen in 2000. When such attacks occur over the last decades, U.S. officials avoided the term "war." The primary response was to dispatch the FBI to identify individuals for prosecution. Recognizing the September 11th attack as war was a departure from the established practice. It was President Bush's seminal insight, the wisdom of which I would say is attested by the fact that it looks so obvious in retrospect. We in the KC135 chewed over such questions as what it means to be at war with - not with a conventional enemy, but with a network of terrorist organizations and their state sponsors. We talked about how to formulate our war aims, how to define victory, what should be our strategy.

And as we were mulling all of this, the airplane's crew invited us to the cockpit to look down on the southern tip of Manhattan, and we saw smoke rising from the ruins of the twin towers. Aside from sadness and anger, the smoke engendered an enduring sense of duty to prevent the next big attack. When we landed in Washington on September 12th, we were primed to join the work the president had already gotten underway to develop a strategy for the war. That work has held up well since September 2001. The president and his advisors considered the nature of the threat. If terrorists exploited the open nature of our society to attack us repeatedly, the American people might feel compelled to change that nature, to

close it, to defend ourselves. Many defensive measures come at a high price. That is, interference with our freedom of movement, intrusions on our privacy, inspections, and an undesirable, however necessary, rebalancing of civil liberties against the interests of public safety. In other words, at stake in the war on terrorism are not just the lives and limbs of potential victims, but our country's freedom. It isn't possible to prevent all terrorist attacks. There are simply too many targets in the United States -- too many tall buildings. It's possible, however, to fight terrorism in a way that preserves our freedom and culture. So the conclusion was that our war aim should be to eliminate terrorism as a threat to our way of life as a free and open society.

Because the United States can't count on preserving our way of life by means of a defensive strategy, there was and is no practical alternative to a strategy of offense. We have to reach out and hit the terrorists where they reside, plan and train, and not wait to try to defeat their plans while they are executing them on U.S. soil.

To deal with the threat from the terrorists we have to change the way we live or change the way they live. Accordingly, the president's strategy in the war on terrorism has three parts. One is disrupting and destroying terrorists and their infrastructure. This involves direct military action, but also intelligence, law enforcement and financial regulatory activity. The list of senior members of al Qaeda and affiliated groups that have been killed or captured since 9/11 is impressive, and includes such figures as Khalid Sheik Mohammed, Abu Zabaida, Hambali, Mohammad Atta. These and other successes against the terrorists demonstrate that international cooperation is alive, well and effective. We've worked jointly with the Philippines, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Spain, France, Jordan, Morocco and Egypt among others. From our interrogations of detainees, we know that the absence of large-scale attacks on the United States since 9/11 has not been for want of bad intentions and efforts on the terrorists' part. We have been disrupting their plans and operations. Our strategy of offense, which is to say forcing the terrorists to play defense, is sound.

The second part of our strategy targets the recruitment and indoctrination of terrorists. The objective is to create a global intelligence and moral environment hostile to terrorism. We refer to this part as the battle of ideas. As the president's national strategy for combating terrorism puts it, we want terrorism viewed in the same light as slavery, piracy or genocide -- behavior that no respectable government can condone or support, and all must oppose.

This requires a sustained effort to de-legitimize terrorism and to promote the success of those forces, especially within the Muslim world, that are working to build and preserve modern, moderate and democratic political and educational institutions.

And the third part of the strategy of course is securing the homeland. The Bush administration has created the Department of Homeland Security, while the Defense Department has organized a new Northern Command in which for the first time a combatant commander has the entire continental United States within his area of responsibility. By the way, it's a matter of some pride that the U.S. Northern Command managed to achieve full operational capability quite appropriately on September 11th, 2003 -- in less than a year. And we are in the process also for the first time of fielding defenses against ballistic missiles of all ranges. Our strategy envisions international cooperation. The war is global. We have forged formidable, adaptable partnerships, a rolling set, because some coalition partners are comfortable helping in some areas but not in others.

After 9/11, nearly 100 nations joined us in one or more aspects of the war on terrorism, in military operations against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, in maritime interdiction operations, in financial crackdowns against terrorist funding, and in law enforcement actions, as well as intelligence sharing and diplomatic efforts.

In Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan, there are 71 members of the coalition, including contributors to the International Security Assistance Force; 37 have contributed military assets. In Iraq, 32 countries are now contributing forces.

As President Bush noted early on, the war's greatest strategic danger remains the possibility that terrorists will obtain chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. The list of states that sponsor terrorism correlates obviously and ominously with the list of those that have programs to produce such weapons of mass destruction. The nexus of terrorist groups, state sponsors of terrorism and WMD is the security nightmare of the 21st century. It remains our focus. We are treating this threat as a compelling danger in the near term. We are not waiting for it to become imminent, because we cannot expect to receive unambiguous warning of, for example, a terrorist group's acquisition of biological weapons agents. We know the list of terrorist-sponsoring states with WMD programs -- Iran, Syria, Libya and North Korea. Iraq used to be in that category but no longer is.

Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, was a sadistic tyranny that developed and used weapons of mass destruction, launched aggressive attacks and wars against Iran, Kuwait, Israel and Saudi Arabia, and supported terrorists by providing them with safe harbor, funds, training and other help. It had defied a long list of legally binding U.N. Security Council resolutions. It undid the U.N. inspection regime of the 1990s. It eviscerated the economic sanctions regime and it shot virtually daily at the U.S. and British aircraft patrolling Iraq's northern and southern no-fly zones. In sum, containment of Saddam Hussein's Iraq was a hollow hope. The best information available from intelligence sources said that, one, Saddam Hussein had chemical and biological weapons and was pursuing nuclear weapons; and, two, if Saddam Hussein obtained fissile material from outside Iraq as opposed to producing it indigenously, he could have had a nuclear weapons within a year. Those assessments, and most of the underlying information, were not recent products of the intelligence community. They were consistent with the intelligence that predated the administration of George W. Bush, and they were consistent with the intelligence from cooperative foreign services and with the United Nations' estimates of weapons unaccounted for. It was reasonable -- indeed necessary -- for the U.S. government to rely on the best information it had available. And while we haven't yet found, and may not find, stockpiles of chemical or biological weapons in Iraq, David Kay reports that the Iraq survey group has obtained corroborative evidence of Saddam's nuclear, chemical and biological programs, covert laboratories, advanced missile programs, and Iraq's program active right up to the start of the war to conceal WMD-related developments from the U.N. inspectors.

The Iraqi dictator posed a serious threat. Given the nature of that threat, seen in light of our experience with the 9/11 surprise attack, and the crumbling one after another of the pillars of containment, it would have been risky in the extreme to have allowed him to remain in power for the indefinite future. Intelligence is never perfect, but that's not grounds for inaction in the face of the kind of information the president had about Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Saddam's demise has freed Iraqis of a tyrant, deprived terrorists of a financier and supporter, eliminated a threat to regional stability, taken Iraq off the list of rogue states with WMD programs, and created a new opportunity for free political institutions to arise in the Arab world. All of this serves our cause in the global war on terrorism.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, democratization has begun. Success will strengthen the forces of

moderation in the Muslim world. It could create a new era in the Middle East. Already since Iraq's liberation talk of reform and democracy is more common and more intense in the Arab world. It would be desirable if the Middle East reached a political turning point similar to the points in history when Asian democracy and Latin American democracy blossomed and spread rapidly.

As the president said last week at the National Endowment for Democracy, it should be clear to all that Islam, the faith of one fifth of humanity, is consistent with democratic rule.

Democratic progress is found in many predominantly Muslim countries. More than half of all Muslims in the world live in freedom under democratically-constituted governments.

Opposition to democratic rule motivates extremists in both Afghanistan and Iraq to try to tear down the newly formed institutions. They see the potential for modernization, democratization, and liberalization of the economy, and they oppose and fear what they see. Extremism of the type that fuels terrorism is a political phenomenon. It's driven by ideology, and ideologies we know can be defeated. Like Soviet communism and Nazism, radical Islamism can be discredited by failure. When the Soviet system collapsed it helped demonstrate that our nation's positive message -- individual liberty, the rule of law, tolerance and peace -- has global appeal. Soviet communism was discredited, practically and morally, by its ultimately undeniable failures to deliver goodness or happiness. Radical Islamism, an ideological stew of historical resentments, political hatreds, religious intolerance and violence, can be expected to have a similar end. Like communism, it promises a utopia that it can't deliver.

As the president noted, many Middle Eastern governments now understand that military dictatorships and theocratic rule are a straight, smooth highway to nowhere. The good and capable people of the Middle East all deserve responsible leadership. For too long many people in that region have been victims and subjects. They deserve to be active citizens.

In Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as elsewhere in the region, this process has begun. Afghanistan has a way to go before it achieves a stable, permanent government. Taliban forces are working to regroup and attack, often from bases in the rough terrain of the tribal areas just across the Pakistan border. Afghanistan's central government needs more skilled administrators. It needs better control over the country's customs revenues. An important open question remains as to the right relationship between the central government and the

local governors and military commanders. But Afghanistan has come far since its liberation from the Taliban only two years ago. President Karzai is increasingly extending the government's authority across the country. He has replaced about one third of the provincial governors. Reform of the Defense Ministry is underway and producing greater ethnic balance. The government and the constitutional commission have just produced a draft constitution that the loya jirga may approve next month. National elections in Afghanistan are scheduled for next year. International assistance to the country is increasing. A modern ring road, a boon to commerce, security and national unity, is being built around the country. The Kabul-to-Kandahar portion is to be usable by December of this year, and NATO has taken over the U.N.-mandated International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, and is expanding its peacekeeping role outside the capital.

Afghanistan's courage and unity will continue to be tested, but it appears that Afghanistan is passing these tests. It's a country on the rise, and it's a country that is no longer affording terrorists the quiet enjoyment of bases of operation.

Iraq too is a story of difficulties, but also progress and promise. Iraqis, like Afghans, know that they have been liberated from tyranny. They recognize their stake in the coalition's success, even though a thick residue of fear inhibits many from contributing to that success. Our strategic goal in Iraq is to give Iraq back to the Iraqi people well launched, on the road to freedom, security and prosperity. We can't build the new Iraq for them, but we can make sure that when we leave they are in a position to build it themselves. Our foremost objective now is to improve the security situation to make political and economic development possible. We recognize that security, freedom and prosperity are tightly interrelated. There's no solution to the security problem without progress on the economic and political fronts.

The enemies of our strategic goal are: one, former regime loyalists, Saddam's dead-enders; two, foreign fighters -- jihadists; three, terrorist groups -- al Qaeda and its allies; and, four, the scores of thousands of criminals that Saddam released from his prisons in the months before the war. We don't underestimate the task we face. We recognize the enemy has a number of strengths. For example, the country is awash in munitions. Our enemies have access to a lot of money and Saddam remains at large. It doesn't take an enormous effort to attack small numbers of soldiers every week, and the international jihad network has opted to support the fight against the coalition in Iraq, making Iraq the central battlefield now in

the global war on terrorism.

But we also know that our enemies have vulnerabilities. For example, the former regime is not popular in the country, and it had and has a very narrow base of public support. Moreover, Iraqis resent the presence of foreign jihadis who have chosen Iraq as the battlefield on which to confront the U.S. Few Iraqis support the jihadis' ideology. Another enemy of vulnerability is its relatively small geographic base. The vast majority of the attacks against coalition forces in recent months have occurred in Baghdad and in Saddam's former stronghold north and west of the capital. In large parts of the country, in the north and south, the population is well disposed to the coalition, and those areas are relatively free of such attacks, though there have been horrific bombings in Mosul, Najaf and yesterday in Nasiriyah. And I'd like to just take the occasion to express condolences to the Italians who lost 18 of their Carabinieri in the attack on Nasiriyah yesterday. Our sympathies go to Italy and to the families of those who lost their lives in that attack.

We believe the enemy strategy is to: one, break the coalition's will through daily attacks on coalition forces; two, target embodiments of success through attacks on infrastructure and police, for example; three, divide and intimidate Iraqis through assassinations of civilians, including attacks on the Governing Council; four, portray the coalition, and especially the United States, as imperialist and exploitative; five, drive out international organizations and non-governmental organizations; and, six, slow down progress toward self-rule in the hope that the coalition will run out of patience and leave.

Coalition forces are taking the initiative to search out the enemy, defeat his efforts, and cut off his bases of support. We are doing this through direct action based on specific intelligence, such as the raid conducted against Uday and Qusay, and the recent raid by the 82nd Airborne, which netted two former Iraqi generals in Fallujah, who are suspected as being key financiers and organizers of anti-coalition activities in the city.

Our forces are innovating at the tactical level. They're using battlefield surveillance radars to locate mortar positions. They are developing and deploying technical means to deal with roadside bombs. And they are continually developing special convoy security measures. Coalition forces have stepped up efforts to guard the borders, to prevent the infiltration of foreign fighters and terrorists.



Although the coalition is doing a lot, the strategic solution to the security problem in Iraq is to enable Iraqis to provide for their own security. And so the coalition is organizing and equipping Iraqis and putting them in positions of responsibility for their own security. Having more Iraqis active in their security forces will yield several benefits in helping to reach our strategic objectives: Iraqis have more familiarity with the people and terrain; Iraqis can provide better intelligence on the location of terrorists; a leading role for Iraqi security forces will also show that Iraq is on a rapid course to self-rule, and reduce friction between the coalition troops and the population. More than 100,000 Iraqis are already active in the five security forces -- the police, border police, site protection service, civil defense corps of the new Iraqi army. This number has been growing rapidly. In early September it stood at 62,000. The Iraqi security forces have proven effective in a number of actions. They are taking on an increasing share of the security burden and are suffering casualties.

As I've said, we understand how tightly interrelated the governance, economic and security problems are. Therefore, a key element of our security strategy is improving the lives of the Iraqi people and building Iraqi political institutions. Regarding essential services, oil production now exceeds two million barrels a day, and provides revenues for Iraqi salaries and other governmental expenses. Electricity production has attained prewar levels. Iraq's educational system has been reestablished. There are record 97,000 university-level school applications. Levels of health care comparable to the prewar level have been achieved. As you know, the Congress has recently appropriated a large sum of money, approximately \$20 billion, for Iraqi reconstruction, including the building up of the security forces. But the U.S. isn't bearing the whole burden. At the recent donor's conference in Madrid, other countries and international institutions pledged about \$13 billion. The major donor countries, aside from the United States, were Japan, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, Kuwait, Spain, Italy, Canada, the UAE and South Korea.

As for the building of Iraqi political institutions, the Governing Council has been operating since July, and has appointed interim ministers to run the Iraqi ministries. The Governing Council has won international recognition in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511, from the General Assembly and the Arab League. In addition to the national level Governing Council, there are more than 250 governing councils at the provincial and municipal levels. These represent important steps toward Iraqi self-rule. An Iraqi runs the central bank and an Iraqi

council of judges has been established to supervise the prosecutorial and judicial systems.

As you are aware from recent press reports, we are continuing our efforts to build up the Iraqis' capability to run their own affairs, and we are working with the Governing Council to help them develop a timeline for drafting a new constitution and holding elections under it, as called for under Resolution 1511.

Our guiding principle is that as much authority as possible should be transferred to the Iraqi institutions as soon as possible. We understand how important it is to communicate effectively with the Iraqi people. Our basic message is twofold. First, we intend to stay the course, to fulfill our responsibilities and ensure that Iraq is well launched on the path to freedom, security and prosperity. Second, we don't want to rule Iraq. Nor will we stay any longer than is necessary.

Now, we understand that there is some tension between these two messages, but we are conveying both of them, and neither is subordinated to the other. Although the major combat operations that toppled the Saddam regime were over by May 1, the war to determine the future of Iraq continues. The stakes are large.

If Iraq can be launched on the path toward freedom, stability and prosperity, the terrorists will have suffered a major defeat and the people of the Middle East will have an alternative model to follow. Our enemies understand this, and we must expect them to throw all their resources into the fight. This struggle will take time -- time to root out enemy fighters and supporters within Iraq, time to gain control of the borders, and most of all time to help the Iraqis rebuild their political and security institutions to the point that they'll be able to take over the main burden of the fight.

Visitors returning from Iraq commonly comment that what they saw there jibed not at all with the picture of the country that outsiders get from television and newspapers. This is hardly surprising. If all one knew about life in the United States was what one saw on local TV news broadcasts, one would imagine that life in America is nothing but murders, power outages, fires and the like. Because we live here we know that a lot else is going on -- business and industrial work, cultural and educational life, politics, government, social activities. There's a lot going on in Iraq too that doesn't make the evening news.

From its inception in the days following 9/11, the president and his team have implemented their strategy for the war on terrorism with steadiness, prudence and good results. The plans for our combat and post-combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq get challenged from time to time, as is inevitable and good in a democracy. These plans have by and large worked well, we review and revise them continually, as Jerry Bremer's recent visit to Washington highlights. Those plans were and are the product of much cooperation across the U.S. government and with key allies. They helped us avert many ills. For example, Iraq has not found itself with masses of internally displaced persons and international refugees, starvation, a collapse of the currency, destruction of the oil fields, the firing of Scud missiles against Israel or Saudi Arabia, or widespread inter-communal violence. There's value in pausing and reflecting on the anticipated catastrophes that we were spared through a combination of foresight, military skill, and the kind of luck that tends to favor forces that plan and work hard and wisely.

The United States and its coalition partners are on sound courses in Afghanistan and Iraq, though much remains to be done in both places. As long as we are making progress in rebuilding the infrastructure, in allowing normal life to return, and most important in helping the Afghans and Iraqis develop political institutions for the future, we are on the path to success, despite the attacks of the terrorists and former regime supporters. Staying the course won't be easy or cheap. We are reminded of this every time we hear of another attack on U.S. or coalition forces. The president asked Congress to make available the necessary resources, and Congress has done so. To crown our military victories with strategic victories, we will have to succeed in both the civil and the military aspects of our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In the global war on terrorism we're succeeding in our goal. We are defeating terrorism as a threat to our way of life. Our coalitions are on the offensive. The terrorists are on the run. And the United States has preserved our freedom. The world is safer and better for what we have accomplished. Americans have much to be proud of. Thank you.

(Applause.)

Robert Gallucci [RG]: Ladies and gentlemen, we have some time for questions. I am asked to encourage you when you do ask a question to please stand, state your name and your affiliation, and wait for a microphone. I'm also encouraged to say that you should please

keep your questions concise so that many people can ask a question. And it would be nice of course if you did indeed ask a question.

I am going to take a prerogative that I am allowed to ask the first question, and this is sort of a do as a I say, not as I do, because I'm allowed to ask two questions, but will ask only one, and it may be slightly longer than would be ideal.

But as I listened, Doug, to the presentation, I don't think at least I have any difficulty with the diagnosis of the problem, the threat facing us is international terrorism. What I have a problem with is the prescription and your linkage of international terror to the war in Iraq. I was trying to think of a metaphor, and I was thinking of a correct diagnosis of a patient who has cancer, life-threatening cancer, and you as a doctor find a broken bone, clearly a broken bone, and decide to focus on the bone. Nobody is going to argue here that -- I don't think -- that Iraq was broken. There's a serious problem -- horrendous human rights problem, ignoring the United Nations -- all the points you made.

But I think the key for a lot of us is do we feel as though your shot selection was good? Do we feel as though we are safer from international terrorism by devoting all these resources to Iraq, by not devoting these resources but alienating other governments, even friendly governments, in the course of doing this that we clearly need against a systemic problem like Iraq? And then if you look at the case as you made it for weapons of mass destruction, it's there but it's strained. It's okay for chemical weapons, it's okay for biological weapon at the toxin and bacteriological, but not the viral. And the nuclear issue I think is highly strained. There is no connection, I think as has been admitted, to 9/11 itself, and the connection you make even now to terrorism could be said of any number of countries. So the question which I am now getting to -- (laughter) -- is: Can you say more about why, if you have gotten the diagnosis correct, why the application of resources, so massive and so massive yet to come, is to this problem rather than to a more frontal attack on international terrorism?

DF: As I at least touched on in the remarks, when we looked at the 9/11 attack, and we saw that the terrorists were able to kill 3,000 people, one of the first thoughts that struck us was these are people who are willing, the terrorists, to kill as many people as they possibly can. And if they had access to biological weapons or nuclear weapons they would have been happy to kill 10 times, 100 times, 1,000 times the number of people that they killed in New York and Washington and Pennsylvania on 9/11. And so we were focused, as I said, on this

connection among the terrorist groups, their state sponsors and weapons of mass destruction. And that is I think a proper strategic focus in the global war on terrorism. It is the principal and the largest danger that we face. And in fighting terrorist organizations one of the most effective approaches is denying them bases of operation and denying them their state support. And we did that in Afghanistan, and we did that with one of the regimes in the world that was a prominent supporter of terrorist organizations and aspired to chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. And there is no question they had those programs. The debate right now is over did they actually have stockpiles as opposed to programs for chemical and biological weapons?

When it comes to chemical and biological weapons, if you have the program, you have the knowledge, you have the production capability. One can produce militarily significant quantities in very short order.

Furthermore, the Saddam Hussein regime had actually used chemical weapons. And so the danger that this regime, which advocated terrorism, supported it, rewarded it, had links with terrorist organizations and had these capabilities, that this regime might, if left alone, get to the point where it would be providing weapons of mass destruction to terrorist organization was a serious risk and went to what I said was the strategic heart of the problem. And so I think it was -- that was the reason that it fitted in. That was I think the motive for taking this action. And I think that it was justified. Now, it happens to be, as I explained in my remarks, there are a number of other aspects to the problem, including the fact that the Saddam Hussein regime was one of the worst scofflaw regimes in violating U.N. Security Council resolutions, and a tyranny and a threat to its neighbors, and all those other points I made, which are important. But specifically with regard to your question, I don't think there is any question that if one had one's eye on the ball the key strategic issue in the global war on terrorism, this connection that I discussed, that Iraq lived right at that connection.

RG: Thank you, Doug. The floor is open. First hand, right there. Please wait for the mike.

Audience: Sherman Katz at CSIS. Regarding the stand-down of the Iraqi army, I wonder if you would be kind enough to share with us what your thinking was about how that ought to be managed before the fact, and if indeed there are any distinctions what you are thinking is now about how it might have better been handled, if there is any distinction?

DF: Before the war there was an idea which Jay Garner talked about in press briefings that he did here in Washington. There was an idea that we could use the Iraqi army for reconstruction. And the thought was that the army had organized units, it had people who had various skills, it had its own assets for mobility. I mean, there were a lot of reasons why one looking toward reconstruction would say we could make good use of the army.

What we found however in the war was that the army in effect disbanded itself. And by the time Jerry Bremer was heading off to assume the leadership of the Coalition Provisional Authority, there was no army left as an organization. The people had dispersed, the barracks had been destroyed and stripped of everything in them, the tile taken off the walls. The mobility assets were all gone. The army was gone. It had, as I said, it had dissolved itself. And the decision was made in essence to simply confirm the dissolution of the army as part of the overall effort of de-Baathification, which Ambassador Bremer made as his theme when he arrived in Baghdad. And there are some drawbacks and there were some advantages in that situation. The drawback obviously was that the asset that we thought might be available for reconstruction didn't exist, so we didn't have it. The advantage though is that we now have the opportunity to create an army that is not tainted by the various aspects of rottenness that characterized the old Iraqi army under Saddam Hussein -- the corruption, the cruelty, the abuse by the senior officers of the junior people, the lack of professionalism, the politicization. I mean, there were major cultural problems and other types of problems in the Iraqi army. This is not to say that everybody in the army as an individual was tainted and people in the army are welcome to come back and join -- and have come back to join various other security forces once they are vetted and it's determined that they are not part of the previous regime's crimes. But I think that is the difference that accounts for why we had a certain thought before the war and why we proceeded differently since.

RG: Ann?

Audience: Thank you. I'm Anne Kahn from American University. If the prewar intelligence on Iraq was so uniform and so consistent in its findings, as you stated in your prepared remarks, why was it necessary to set up a special office of strategic planning within the Defense Department, and does that office still exist? And if not, why not?

DF: I'm delighted that you asked that question.

RG: I almost believe that. (Laughter.)

DF: No, I am, because this is a subject of such thoroughgoing misinformation that it's nice to have a chance to say something true about it. First of all, the Office of Special Plans that you referred to has nothing really whatsoever to do with intelligence. It is one of the regional offices in the policy organization. We have regional offices for Latin America and Africa and Asia. We had -- it is the Office of Northern Gulf Affairs. It was created in the fall of 2002 when we had to beef up our staff to handle all of the extra Iraq-related work. We needed to increase it by something like 18 people. So we created a new office, and since there was an enormous amount of attention on the Pentagon, on what we were doing and are we planning for war and the creation of a new office that would have been called the Iraq office would have probably in and of itself created headlines. We chose the kind of name that the government gives to offices throughout the government. It's kind of nondescript -- you know, "special plans," long-range plans" -- that kind of thing. And it's been grist for the conspiracy mongers ever since.

But you referred to some intelligence unit, as many press reports did, confusing it with the special plans office. The so-called intelligence unit that was much discussed -- it was two people. It was two people who did a project for about -- it as not a unit, it was not an office. It was two people. And they did a project for about three months, and then another two people did a follow-on project for about six or seven months. It's rather amazing that there have been numerous stories that said this was the Pentagon's effort to replace the CIA. And I can assure you that we do not hold the CIA in such low regard that we think we could replace them with two people. And in fact we think we -- what those people did in that so-called intelligence unit that has been written about, was simply help me read and absorb the intelligence produced by the intelligence community, the CIA and other members of the intelligence community. So all I can say is there is, as I said, so much misinformation on this subject that I would urge everybody to treat with great skepticism what you read on that subject.

RG: Bob?

Audience: Robert Gard. You mentioned in passing missile defense -- \$9.1 billion in the '04 budget, over \$60 billion over the next seven years. We can detect missile launches with deployed technology. It would appear to me that deterrence ought to work pretty well in this

regard.

I was pleased to see you agreed with the president the greatest threat is the possible of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists. Wouldn't it make sense to divert some of that missile defense money, as large as it is, to doing something about securing the nuclear weapons and materials in the Soviet Union, which could become a Home Depot for terrorists, and beefing up home security to try to prevent the terrorists from being able to smuggle in a weapon of mass destruction.

DF: You have identified a number of threats. We need to be responsible; we need to address the range of threats that face our country. We don't have the luxury of simply picking one or two that happen to interest us and investing only in those. There is a problem of, as its called, loose nukes in the former Soviet empire. There is a problem of vulnerability to ballistic missiles. There is a problem of terrorist access to chemical, biological, nuclear weapons. All of those things are problems and threats and they all have to be addressed.

Audience: Barbara Slavin of USA Today. My question is about the current political arrangements in Iraq. Are we willing to contemplate expanding the Governing Council, changing its nature, before a constitution is written? Is this what I've been given to understand? And why would any of these changes make any difference to Iraqis? Why would they regard an expanded council as more legitimate while we have tens of thousands of American soldiers there? Thank you.

DF: This is a subject that is being discussed right now by Ambassador Bremer with the Iraqis. He was here in town the beginning of this week and brought a number of ideas he had been discussing with the Governing Council and other Iraqis, and those ideas were kicked around over two days in sessions with the president and National Security Council. And Ambassador Bremer is now -- I think he already may be back in Iraq or he is on his way -- and he is going to be reviewing them with the Iraqis.

The goal of the political work that's being done in Iraq is creating political institutions that can assume real responsibility, growing responsibility. The Governing Council has accomplished certain things. It needs to accomplish a lot more, and it needs to be doing executive functions. It needs to be organizing the constitutional progress, it needs to be organizing the electoral process. And there are various ideas about how to do that and how to



move that forward.

Your question as to why should that matter for Iraqis -- I think the answer is that it does matter for Iraqis. The Iraqis want to run their own country, and we want them to run it, and we want them to run it as soon as possible. Now we are not going to just drop our responsibilities and walk away and just leave a mess. On the other hand, we want to make it clear that we are not looking to stay there any longer than we need to. And our enemies in Iraq use as one of their information operations themes against the coalition -- the argument that we intend to stay, intend to colonize, intend to run Iraq. It's not true. And if we can have clear steps toward Iraqi self-rule in the near term, we are helping to negate, to contradict, that line of argument that is an asset for the terrorists and the former regime loyalists in their fight against us in the country. So it has important political and security implications.

Audience: Walter Pincus. I'm at the Washington Post. I want to follow up on Bob's original question about why Iraq. Because if you take all your definitions, and particularly your nexus, there are two issues I agree. One is there is no hint, although he had plenty of time that he ever did contemplate giving weapons of mass destruction to terrorists. But the second part is you have North Korea and you have Iran -- and particularly Iran, which is openly supporting terrorists. I imagine your nexus is there. And why did you choose diplomacy with those two countries, when you had as you said a kind of containment which wasn't perfect, but it appeared to be working because he wasn't doing the thing you feared the most and because your own intelligence said he wouldn't do it unless he was attacked and his back was to the wall?

DF: First of all, on the issues of Saddam's intentions, we knew that he had these programs, these weapons of mass destruction, we knew that he had used it. We knew that he had relationships with various terrorist organizations and supported them in various ways, including by the way, in some cases in connection with training and exercising regarding chemical weapons, we had information about that in exchanges between the Saddam Hussein regime and terrorist organizations in that area. But our information is, as everybody knows, never complete about a subject like that, never perfect, and the idea that we didn't have specific proof that he was planning to give a biological agent to a terrorist group doesn't really lead you to anything because you wouldn't expect to have that information even if it were true. And our intelligence is just not at the point where if Saddam had that intention

that we would necessarily know it. What we knew were the things I said from which one could infer he had these connections, he supported the terrorist groups, the danger was there. So I think it was, as I said, reasonable to take that threat seriously

Audience: (Off mike – unintelligible)

DF: Well, there are other problems in the world. Each problem has its own unique circumstances. I mean, the argument that there are other problems in the world and that becomes an argument for not addressing a particular problem, I don't quite understand that logic.

RG: That's good. We don't want to discourage you from diplomacy in the other cases. (Laughter.)

Right here.

Audience: Katie Jennings, Council on Foreign Relations. Very quickly. I don't want to be flippant, but we've done Afghanistan, we've done Iraq, so what's the next stop on the war on terror and if you have any ideas how were going to pay for it, that would be good too.

DF: The next steps in the war on terror are going to be continuations of steps that we've been taking.

Audience: The next stop, not step.

DF: The next stop? You mean the next place we go?

RG: The stop as in the series of places you go. What's your next endeavor? (Laughter.)

DF: You seriously expect an answer to that question? (Laughter.)

RG: I do.

DF: The fact is we are operating in the war on terrorism in numerous countries right now, and we're going to continue to do so. And the operations are in some cases military, in some cases intelligence, and some cases law enforcement. There's a lot going on in the war on

terrorism and it's in many countries around the world.

RG: The last question, we'll be right there.

Audience: Hi, Ira Stoll, from the New York Sun. Do you buy the argument that one of the reasons that the terrorist and people who aren't terrorists hate America is because of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and that America is allied with Israel in that conflict? And how great a part of the hatred of America do you think that accounts for, if any?

DF: Don't know how to measure it, but it's clearly an element. There are a lot of people who are focused on that conflict and don't like our policy. But I think that the terrorist phenomenon is considerably bigger and more complex than just the Arab-Israeli conflict. And I think that a large part of what is going on in the world that underlies, that motivates terrorism is really a clash within the world of Islam between people of a particularly extremist view and school and the people that oppose them. And al Qaeda's main enemy for years, as one gathered from their public pronouncements, was not Israel or even the United States, but Saudi Arabia and the government of Saudi Arabia. There is a large fight going on within the world of Islam, and the war on terrorism should not be seen, as I believe, as a war between the United States and Islam. It is largely a war going on within Islam where the United States is allied with the opponents of this extremist's view of Islam.

RG: Doug, I want to thank you on the behalf of the Council and everyone here for not only a very intelligent presentation, solid one, but for being very frank and open in your comments and answers to questions. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

DF: Thank you.

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