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

**September 30, 2002**

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### **Secretary Rumsfeld Interview with Fox Affiliate - WAGA Channel 5, Atlanta, Ga.**

Friday, September 27, 2002

(Interview with Dan Ronan, Fox Affiliate - WAGA Channel 5, Atlanta, Ga.)

Q: Mr. Secretary, a couple of weeks ago Senator Zell Miller [inaudible] ex-Marine said that he believed that the American public needs to be sold on the idea of a war against Iraq. Is that what you're here to do today?

Rumsfeld: No. As a matter of fact I read that article and I thought it was excellent. What he did, as I recall, is to take a series of questions that constituents and people have asked, and I think that is a very helpful, constructive thing to do. It gets those issues that people have in their minds up front and center.

No. I'm here because I think it's important that these issues be discussed and considered. I've spent a lot of time thinking about them and I think it's useful.

Q: President Bush last night in his address in Texas used the word coalition several times. You were in Warsaw this week. Do you believe now that after meeting with the NATO partners, France, Germany, and others that have been skeptical, will indeed, if we do go to war, will sign on, will go along with what the U.S. is planning?

Rumsfeld: Let's take those two countries and set them aside. It's not for me to speak to particular countries, it's for them to say what they want to say.

There's no question but that there are a number of countries in the world who are very supportive of the President's current position. He has not made a decision to form a coalition and do anything active with respect to Iraq at this point. If and when he does, were he to do so, he could be certain that there would be a number of countries that would be involved and supportive -- some from NATO and from all across the globe.

Q: Earlier this week you came out and said there's a link between Baghdad and al Qaeda. This report [inaudible] came from prisoners, a lot of the intelligence reporting came from prisoners. How credible was this information?

Rumsfeld: I wouldn't have said if it were not totally credible.

Q: So there's a link in your mind.

Rumsfeld: Not in my mind, from the ground. It's in fact. It's just that simple.

Q: What about Iraq after Saddam Hussein? There's been a lot of talk that winning the war would be the easy part. That could be done in three or four weeks and we could --

Rumsfeld: Winning a war is never easy. It's dangerous and it's tough and it's filled with unpredictable events, so I wouldn't want anyone to think that it's easy.

Q: What happens to Iraq after Saddam Hussein?

Rumsfeld: Well, the world would be a better place, but the President's not made a decision. What he has said is that the policy of our country, the Congress has passed a statute for a regime change. He believes that would be in the best interest of the world.

What we have said is that were Saddam Hussein not there, if he picked up tonight and said gee, I think I'll go live somewhere else, and there were to be a new government there, you would want one that would keep Iraq together as a single country. You

would want one that did not have weapons of mass destruction. You would want one that would not threaten and invade its neighbors as it has done twice. You would want one that did not fire ballistic missiles at four of its neighbors as it has done. And you'd want one that did not repress and terrorize its people. And one that respected the rights and circumstances of individuals as well as minority groups in that country.

That is not an easy task. That would require effort on the part of the United States and other countries, international coalitions.

Q: The Iraqi people as you understand it, do they want to get rid of Saddam Hussein? Do they want to --

Rumsfeld: Oh, my goodness, yes.

Q: Why?

Rumsfeld: Why? Because he's a butcher. He tortures people. He kills people personally. He has kept billions and billions and billions of dollars from going to the people of that country because he is determined to have weapons of mass destruction.

So by virtue of his insistence on having those weapons and developing those weapons, he has perpetuated the sanctions that exist on that country and damaged the economic circumstances of those people. Those people and the neighboring countries would be vastly better off were the Iraqi people liberated. And they're intelligent people. They know that.

You can be certain there would be the same kind of joy you saw in Afghanistan when people went to the streets and women started going to schools and people were able to fly kites and play music and not go out in the soccer field and watch executions which the Taliban were doing.

Q: Prime Minister Sharon of Israel has said that if Iraq attacks that country that Israel would be prepared to retaliate, but 12 years ago the United States was able to keep Israel out of the first Gulf War. How do you convince the Israelis who have endured a terrible time of terrorism, bus bombings and the like, that they should stay out of this and they shouldn't get involved if indeed Iraq were to start throwing SCUD missiles or other types of weapons [inaudible].

Rumsfeld: Well, for any country it's difficult if you're being attacked to not defend yourself.

Each sovereign country makes their own decisions on those things. Obviously it would be the task of the President and the Secretary of State Colin Powell and others to make sure that other neighboring countries that may be disadvantaged during a short period, whether it be a conflict, had a good understanding of what the effects of their decisions might be. Sovereign countries make their own decisions.

Q: There was a report out yesterday that Saddam Hussein has doubles, actors, three or four of them who are very very close in physical resemblance.

Rumsfeld: He does.

Q: How would the United States catch him, make sure they've got the right guy?

Rumsfeld: The task is, the goal is, it seems to me, to not have that individual governing Iraq. If he's on the run he's not governing Iraq. The goal is to free those people. The goal would be to have a regime change by the Congress. I don't know what the President will ultimately decide, or what the United Nations will or Congress. But in your hypothetical case, clearly the Taliban are still alive in various places around the world and in neighboring countries, some still in Afghanistan but they're not governing Afghanistan. I don't know where Osama bin Laden is. We've seen no hard evidence on him since December of last year. He is clearly having difficulty managing his activities because he's on the run.

So I don't know that that's the critical problem.

Q: Okay. Thank you very much.

Rumsfeld: Good.