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Presenter: Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

November 14, 2002

Secretary Rumsfeld Live Interview With Infinity CBS Radio

(Interview with Steve Croft, Infinity CBS Radio Connect)

Narrator: Live from our nation's capital, this is Infinity Radio Connect, American Security. A coast-to-coast interactive conversation with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Rumsfeld: Saddam Hussein needs to understand that the choice does not rest in Washington, it does not rest in New York; it rests in Baghdad. For the sake of peace, let's hope that the Iraq regime chooses wisely.

Bush: Iraq can be certain that that the old game of cheat and retreat will no longer be tolerated.

Blair: Iraq has defied the United Nations and, therefore, the whole international community. The Security Council has made it clear beyond doubt that the United Nations will tolerate no more of this.

Bush: Saddam Hussein will disarm. If not, for the sake of peace, for the sake of securing the homeland, the United States will lead a mighty coalition of freedom-loving nations and disarm Saddam Hussein.

Narrator: This is Infinity Radio Connect, American Security. Made possible through the support of the New York Stock Exchange.

Now, live from the Pentagon, CBS News Correspondent Steve Kroft.

Kroft: Good afternoon. You're all part of a unique radio audience. This program is being broadcast live on 25 Infinity Radio stations around the country, by National Public Radio, and by American Forces Radio around the world.

These are difficult and historic times for the United States and for the world. We're at war with international terrorists, American soldiers are fighting in Afghanistan, others are preparing to fight in Iraq should that become necessary. And to make matters worse, Osama bin Laden seems to have resurfaced again with new threats against America and its allies.

These are things that are all weighing heavily on our minds, but they are weighing heavily on the shoulders of the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who is sitting next to me at the Pentagon. This is your chance to ask him questions. Our call-in number at the Pentagon is 1-800-736-3666. That's 1-800-736-3666.

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for doing this.

Rumsfeld: Thank you. I'm delighted to do it, and welcome to the Pentagon.

Kroft: Well, thank you.

There are many questions, and I would like to ask the first one, if it's all right. U.N. weapons inspectors are preparing to go to Iraq very shortly and begin searching for evidence of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction. What do you expect them to find, and what happens if they don't find anything? Is Saddam Hussein off the hook?

Rumsfeld: Well, we know that Saddam Hussein has chemical and biological weapons. And we know he has an active program for the development of nuclear weapons. I suppose what it would prove would be that the inspections process had been successfully defeated by the Iraqis if they find nothing. That's what one would know if that turned out to be the case. There's no question but that the Iraqi regime is clever. They have spent a lot of time hiding things, dispersing things, tunneling underground, taking documentation and moving it to different locations in the past, preventing inspectors from getting access, listening in on what inspectors intend to do. And before the inspectors arrive to do it, seeing that what was there is moved or the effort is frustrated in some way.

Kroft: Does Saddam Hussein win if that's the case?

Rumsfeld: I think the quotation you heard from the president kind of answered that question. The president believes it's important that the Iraqi regime be disarmed. He has indicated that his first choice would be that it would be done peacefully with the Iraqi regime acquiescing in the unanimous Security Council vote for the new resolution, and that they disarm themselves. The president has said that if not, he intends to lead a coalition of the willing to see that that happens.

Kroft: We have our first caller from Abington, Massachusetts, who is listening on WBZ. Evan, you're talking to the Secretary of Defense.

Caller: In the event that we ultimately go to war with Iraq, what do you think the Iraqi response will be in Iraq, and then what do you think the Iraqi response would be on U.S. soil?

Rumsfeld: Of course, those questions are awfully tough to answer. We're looking at all conceivable contingencies because, in any event, war is your last choice, not your first choice. There is a danger that Saddam Hussein would do things that he's done previously. He has, in the past, used chemical weapons, for example, on his own people. And he's used chemical weapons on his neighbors. And one has to be prepared and concerned that that could occur.

Terrorists have attacked the United States on September 11th, and U.S. interests around the world on other occasions. And I don't doubt for a minute that if he's able, he would like to try to see that terrorist attacks would occur in the event that force were to be used by the United Nations, or by a coalition of the willing.

However, I would have to say that I think that one ought not to think of that as a direct response to the use of force, because he's already done these things in the past, and his inclination and his words today suggest that he would like to do them today. So, I don't think that the use of force would necessarily precipitate it.

Kroft: Mr. Secretary, how likely do you consider it that he might, again, try to sabotage oil wells, possibly contaminate them with biological weapons, and things like that?

Rumsfeld: Well, of course, you're right. He did it in Kuwait when that invasion took place 10 or 12 years ago. It's a possibility. It was a terrible environmental disaster what he did. We were able to get the fires put out, and to restore the oil wells, and we certainly would be prepared to see that the fires are put out and that they're restored again if he were to do that. He would be harming his own people if he were to do that, but that wouldn't be the first time he'd done that.

Kroft: Our next caller is Bart from Michigan, who is listening on WWJ Radio. Go ahead, Bart.

Caller: Hi, Mr. Secretary. How are you?

Rumsfeld: Good, Bart.

Caller: I wanted to ask you about a cyber attack, and I'm very concerned about, would that have an impact on the U.S. military? And I also want to know, with the military installations throughout the world, are you concerned about an attack concerning about any terrorist attack on any of the military installations, and would that have an impact on our military operations?

Rumsfeld: Well, it's a good question. We do worry about attacks against military capabilities around the world, both ours and our friendly coalition partners. And, as a result, we have various force protection techniques which we use, and they've been reasonably successful, although we've suffered some attacks. We had a soldier shot in Kuwait recently, and we had the USS Cole hit not too long ago.

With respect to the cyber attack portion of your question, the enemies of the United States and of Western countries today tend not to have big armies, navies, or air forces. And they tend, in some cases, not even to be countries, they're terrorist networks. And, therefore, it's natural that they would attempt to do things that would attack us asymmetrically, as they say. That is to say, not go after our strength, the Army, Navy, or the Air Force, but to go after our buildings, the Pentagon, and the World Trade Center, and cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles, and biological and chemical weapons, as well as nuclear.

And one of the ways they can do that, of course, is a cyber attack. And we are so dependent on high technology that our country, and other Western countries tend to be the most vulnerable to a cyber attack. Our society, if you think back to when we had the attack on -- a satellite went out involving pagers. And everyone suddenly was out of pager. Well, to the extent people were dependent on the pager, it was a problem. Needless to say, the United States military is sensitive to the risks and the vulnerabilities, and as a result we have taken steps so we have in many instances redundant systems that enable us to have backups, which of course costs some extra money but it also gives you the security and the protection you need.

Kroft: Mr. Secretary, our next call is from Brick, New Jersey, a listener of WCBS Radio. Greg, you're on the line with the Secretary of Defense.

Caller: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for taking my question. Very briefly, my question is as follows: Apart from the difficult task of ascertaining whether or not Saddam has hidden weapons of mass destruction within his geographic boundaries, there is certainly the possibility that he has hoarded them in third countries, or with organizations that have interests inimical to the United States. What, if anything, can we do to address that distinct possibility?

Rumsfeld: You're right. It is possible that Iraq, or any country could make arrangements with a terrorist network, and have them assist them in conducting terrorist attacks. It is also true that from time to time over my lifetime we've seen countries put their weapons in other locations to make -- to complexify the problem for the other side. In fact, during the Gulf War, Iraq flew their air force into Iran so that they wouldn't be shot down by the United States of America. And there had been countries that had moved other types of weapons around. It's something we have to be sensitive to, and alert to, but I think it's a manageable problem.

Kroft: Next caller, Ron who is listening on KTSA in San Antonio, Texas. Ron, go ahead.

Caller: Yes. What military effort is planned to relieve the problem of tribal warfare in Afghanistan, and in liberated Iraq?

Rumsfeld: Well, I guess we're not likely to have the ability to change human nature, and as you properly point out in Afghanistan there have been various ethnic groups and tribes, and clusters of people throughout the history of that country, and they have tended from time to time to not get along perfectly. At the present time they have come together and participated in a process they call a "loya jirga" and elected a transitional government, led by Mr. Hammed Karzai, and they are providing reasonable stability in about three-quarters of the country. It's just along the Pakistan border, on the eastern side of the country that there is an unacceptable level of instability. And the reason for that is really two-fold. One, in every other part of the country there tends to be a warlord, or a regional leader, who tends to be in control. In the case of the eastern border of Afghanistan, there is still a competition between armies and leaders in that region.

And the second problem is, they have that long border with Pakistan, and a number of the al Qaeda and Taliban have gone across the border, are on the other side, and move back and forth, sending in weapons, and attempting to weaken the Karzai government. How do you deal with that? Well, the hope is that over time the various elements in the country, in the north and the west, in the south and east, will come to the conclusion that they have an interest, an economic interest, and a social interest, and a political interest in having the government succeed, that they're better off not allowing the Taliban back in and the al Qaeda back in, and that they're better off having a relatively peaceful environment so that the refugees can come home, humanitarian workers can get into the country and move around and assist people, and the economic energy, what's possible for that country, can be reinvigorated.

In the case of Iraq it's a quite different situation. And absent a dictator, absent the Saddam Hussein regime, our goal is to first have a single country, not have the country broken up into pieces. It would be to see that it was a country without weapons of mass destruction, it was a country that did not try to impose its will on its neighbors, and it was a country that was respectful of the rights of the minorities and the various religious and ethnic groups that exist in the country.

Kroft: Mr. Secretary, we've also, in addition to phone calls, we've gotten emails, and I want to read one to you. I'm the parent of an Army Reserve soldier who has already gone through his training and is on the next call up list to be deployed to the Persian Gulf area within the next few weeks, for a period of six months to two years. I'm not yet convinced that Iraq is such an imminent threat to the United States that it justifies having my son placed in harms way. If I were there in person, speaking to you, what would you say to convince me?

Rumsfeld: Well, first, we're grateful that your son is serving, and wants to serve. And I can't help but recognize the feelings that a parent has. What would I say to you? Well, I would look you in the eye and I would say, go back before September 11th and ask yourself this question, was the attack that took place on September 11th an imminent threat the month before, or two months before, or three months before, or six months before? When did the attack on September 11th become an imminent threat? When was it sufficiently dangerous to our country that had we known about it that we could have stepped up and stopped it and saved 3,000 lives? Now, transport yourself forward a year, two years, or a week, or a month, and if Saddam Hussein were to take his weapons of mass destruction and transfer them, either use them himself, or transfer them to the al Qaeda, and somehow the al Qaeda were to engage in an attack on the United States, or an attack on U.S. forces overseas, with a weapon of mass destruction you're not talking about 300, or 3,000 people potentially being killed, but 30,000, or 100,000 of human beings. So the question is, when is it such an immediate threat that you must do something, is a tough question. But if you think about it, it's the nexus, the connection, the relationship between terrorist states and weapons of mass destruction with terrorist networks that has changed our lives, and changed the security environment in the world. And right now in the Congress the intelligence committees in the House and the Senate are working very hard, trying to connect the dots as to who knew what before September 11th, how might it have been stopped. Our task, your task as a mother, and as a citizen, as a voter, and my task, is to try to connect the dots before something happens, not afterwards. People say, well where's the smoking gun? Well, we don't want to see a smoking gun from a weapon of mass destruction. We have an obligation to try to defend the people of our country and the interests we have, and that is why the president went to the United Nations and sought a resolution, and received unanimous support to try to see if we can't get a peaceful solution to the Iraqi problem.

Kroft: Live from the Pentagon, I'm Steve Kroft, along with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. And you're listening to Infinity Radio Connect. We'll pause 15 seconds now for station identification.

(Station identification.)

Kroft: We're back, along with the Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon. The call in number is 1-800-736-3666. Mr. Secretary, our next call is from Philadelphia, who's listening on KYW Radio. Kevin, are you on the line?

Caller: Yes, I am.

Kroft: Okay. You're talking to the Secretary of Defense.

Caller: Okay. I remember shortly after September 11th there was talk and rumor of there being a draft again, because we were low in reserves, and troops. I was wondering, since there's troops being deployed to different areas if that's even

more of a possibility now, or if that's something that's being thought of right now?

Rumsfeld: I'm afraid your question is being cut out, and I couldn't follow it. Can you try and repeat it?

Caller: Yes, shortly after September 11th I heard talk about there being a draft reinstated, since we were low --

Rumsfeld: I've got the question, good. Yes, we're not considering having a draft. We've been very fortunate in being able to attract and retain the number of men and women that are needed in the armed forces. Indeed, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marines all are meeting their recruiting quotas, and their retention quotas well in advance of their targets. Morale is high in the military, and there's absolutely no need, for the present, for us to even think about returning to a draft.

Kroft: Mr. Secretary, how dependent is the United States right now on the National Guard, and Reserve units?

Rumsfeld: Well, it is very dependent, because we have what's called a total force concept. We're arranged in a way that we keep on active duty the number of people we feel is necessary to maintain a ready force, and then we keep in the ready reserves the number of people that we feel are appropriate to augment that force. There's no way we can function in this somewhat dangerous and untidy world of ours without using Guard and Reserve from time to time. And they do an absolutely terrific job, they really do.

Kroft: Okay. Next call is from Bob, in Monsey, New Jersey, or Monsey, New York, who is listening on WCBS Radio.

Caller: Yes, thank you for accepting my question, Mr. Secretary. My question is basically, in the event of what seems to be an almost inevitable war with Iraq, would the State of Israel be allowed to defend herself, and to what extent?

Rumsfeld: Any sovereign country certainly has the right, indeed the obligation, to defend themselves if they believe that their circumstance requires it. Our hope, and intention would be that in the event force were to be used in Iraq that the coalition of willing countries would be able to do the task, and it would not require Israel having to defend itself. But, needless to say, Israel would have to make that judgment themselves. You may recall that during the Gulf War, early in the 1990s, they did not become engaged in the conflict, which in my personal view was the correct decision, even though they were subject to having some SCUD missiles fired at them.

Kroft: The next caller is Marty, from Las Vegas, who is listening on KXNT.

Caller: Yes, Mr. Secretary, I'm very interested in -- we seem to be kind of a target here, we had a scare a few weeks ago, not weeks, but months ago. What if these

Muslim terrorists focus on our town, what are we supposed to do as just ordinary citizens?

Rumsfeld: That's a tough question, Marty. It seems to me that the purpose of terrorism is to terrorize people. It is to get them to alter their behavior, to change their lives. And we're free people, and that's what we're about. We want to be able to get up in the morning and go out of the house, and not look to each side to see if we're going to be shot at. We want our children to be able to go to school and come home safely. Therefore, if we allow ourselves to be terrorized, and fundamentally alter the way we live our lives, the terrorists have won. So I guess what I would say is that we need to be alert, and sensitive to what's going on around us. But, we have to go ahead and live our lives. And I personally believe we're capable of living in this world. It's not a perfect world, but we're putting a lot of pressure on the terrorist networks.

It's entirely possible that there could be additional terrorist attacks. A terrorist can attack at any time, any place, using any technique and it's not possible to defend at every time against every technique. Therefore, there's a big advantage to these attackers. So what we're doing is we're putting pressure on them, we're trying to dry up their bank accounts, we're bringing all elements of national power into play, we're arresting people that are connected to terrorist organizations, we're gathering intelligence, we're making it more difficult for them to move between countries. All of these things are helping us disrupt these networks. Now, again, it's not perfect, there very well likely could be another attack in some place in the world and we have to recognize that fact. But, every day we're making it more difficult for them, and making their task more expensive, and delaying the kinds of things they're trying to do.

Kroft: Mr. Secretary, what kind of significance do you place on this latest audio tape that was played on Al-Jazeera, allegedly from Osama bin Laden?

Rumsfeld: I'm open-minded on it. I don't know if he's alive or dead. I suspect if he were alive and healthy he would be doing video tapes, which seems to be his preference. I'm told that in this instance he very likely called in, somebody called in and gave those words over a telephone of some sort. So a tape does not exist that was an original tape. So the experts that are trying to listen to the voice can come to their individual conclusions and say, well it is, or it isn't, or it might be, or I think it is. On the other hand, they can't go and see if it had been altered in any way. And as a result, I'm in the hands of the experts, I don't speak Arabic myself, so we'll just have to wait and see what they think.

Kroft: And what do the experts tell you?

Rumsfeld: I guess the only -- it would be interesting to know if it were bin Laden, simply because then you'd know for sure he's alive or dead. On the other hand, it doesn't make a lot of different in terms of the threat. There's no question but that the -- we've always said that Al Qaeda did not depend on Osama bin Laden,

there are other people in that organization who are perfectly capable of knowing where the bank accounts are, who the trained terrorists are, where they're located, in which countries. They're in 40 or 50 countries, there were thousands of these people trained. And the organization can go on quite apart from whether or not it's that individual. Therefore, if it happened to have been bin Laden, or if it's not bin Laden who did the tape, but the people who have taken over the network, it is pretty clear that that tape was intended to be a very clear threat. And so we've got various things being done around the world to try to be somewhat more heightened sense of alert. But, we'll just keep putting pressure on him.

Kroft: Our next call is from Ran in Chicago, listening on WBBM.

Caller: Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Secretary. My question has to do with the recent elections that were held in Pakistan. Can you comment on the possibility that the next government in Pakistan may be pro-Taliban?

Rumsfeld: I'm from Chicago, so it's nice to hear you're from Chicago. With respect to the election, I think that the situation in Pakistan is a difficult one, that President Musharraf has one of the more difficult assignments of anyone I know in the world. He is attempting to manage that country as a moderate Moslem state, which I think is a good thing to do. And he has been stalwart in his support of us, and in the global war on terrorism he's one of the 90 nations in the world that have come together to fight the terrorists. He has a problem in his own country, which he's sensitive to, and aware of, and attempting to deal with it. The last thing in the world I think anyone would want would be to see Pakistan as a failed state or a Taliban state, which would be the same thing.

Kroft: Next call is from Pittsburgh, from Lance who is listening on KDKA Radio.

Caller: Good afternoon, Mr. Secretary.

Rumsfeld: Good afternoon.

Caller: I wanted to ask, in the eventuality, or hypothetically if we do go in and overthrow the Iraqi regime currently in place, what is our position on the occupation of Iraq in the future? Thank you.

Rumsfeld: Yes, indeed, in the event that force had to be used, and the Saddam Hussein regime were to be gone, there would need to be a period of time when the coalition countries that were involved in removing the Saddam Hussein regime were in the country, and working to do several things. Number one, to find the weapons of mass destruction and destroy them. Number two, to see that the humanitarian assistance was provided. Number three, to see that the oil wells, to the extent that they'd been damaged, were back in working condition, and providing the kind of revenue that's going to be necessary for the health and welfare of the people in that country. And then at some point, some sort of a provisional government of Iraqis would find its way in the world. And other than

saying it ought to be representative and protective of the minority groups in the country, I don't think it's for outsiders to necessarily prescribe precisely what that ought to look like. Just as Afghanistan found its way through this loya jirga process to a government form, I suspect that would be the case in Iraq, too. There's no question but that the institutions in Iraq that manage things like water and sewage, and those types of things would have to exist, and they'd have to be operating and functioning, so that the health and welfare of the people was looked out for. And at some moment, then there would be no coalition forces in the country, at that point where there was a stable situation. How long that would take is not knowable at the present time.

Kroft: Is it possible that there could be a U.S. military figure running the country for a period of time?

Rumsfeld: There's no question but that, in the event force were used, there would be a military command in the country. During that period you're trying to find and destroy the weapons of mass destruction, that simply is going to be a very difficult task. They have dispersed these things throughout the country, they've got so many underground facilities, they have things that are mobile, and the only way it will ever be found, in my view, effectively is if you find people who have been involved in it who are willing to come and talk to you about it, and tell you where they are. The last time the inspectors were in, that's how it happened. Two sons in laws of Saddam Hussein defected, went into Jordan, and the word came out and they told where these inspectors could go look, they went and looked, and they found weapons of mass destruction. And eventually Saddam Hussein talked his two sons in laws, I can't imagine it, but he did, talked them into coming back to Iraq, and then he killed them.

Kroft: Live from the Pentagon, I'm Steve Kroft, along with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and you're listening to Infinity Radio Connect. We'll pause for 15 seconds now for station identification.

(Station identification.)

Kroft: Mr. Secretary, back in the '80s, when you were a Middle East envoy for the Reagan administration you actually met Saddam Hussein on one or two occasions. You're probably one of the few Americans who have met him. What do you remember about that meeting, and has it influenced your response in dealing with him in this crisis?

Rumsfeld: I remember the meeting well, but it hasn't influenced my response in this crisis at all. If you think back to that time, Iran and Iraq were in a war. Our friends in the Gulf region were concerned about the possibility that Iran could win. And were deeply concerned that it could upset, and create an instability in the entire region. So I was asked to go over there, and I met with Tariq Aziz and with Saddam Hussein and talked to him about our interests. And the fact that -- it was one of the few countries from the Middle East war that we had not

reestablished relationships with. So I was, I guess, the first senior American to go in there in some time. And we had a good discussion. He recognized his situation, and was interested in getting some assistance, so that he had better information. And I was Middle East envoy for about six months, right after 241 Marines had been killed by terrorists in Beirut, Lebanon, at the airport there. And it's my understanding that subsequent to my visit, the United States government did, in fact, provide some intelligence assistance to him, so that he -- the war ended up kind of at a standstill, or a stalemate, rather than either country being defeated.

Kroft: Do you remember anything about it, did he impress you one way or the other?

Rumsfeld: Well, he's -- I suppose anyone who lives in a country that he's the head of, like Saddam Hussein is, and sees his picture in every room in every building, in every city of the country, begins to inhale and believe that he's different. I suppose that could happen to most anybody. But, he is clearly a survivor, he is a brutal, repressive dictator; he has imposed enormous harm to his people. His determination to have weapons of mass destruction is so great that he's denied his people billions and billions, and billions of dollars of revenue they would have if he wanted to give up his weapons and have the sanctions lifted. But, he won't do it. He has an attitude about himself that suggests that he wants to try to destabilize the neighboring countries, and periodically describes them as illegitimate, and attempts to take them over. I guess he is a long-term dictator who has killed an awful lot of people. He's even used chemical weapons on his own people.

Kroft: We're live at the Pentagon. If you would like to talk to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the number to call is 1-800-736-3666. Our next caller is, again from Chicago, Matt, listening on WBBM.

Caller: Hello to Secretary Rumsfeld, and thank you to Infinity Radio for putting this together. My question, how does our national security have anything to do with Iraq, and has the United States illegally armed Iraq?

Rumsfeld: Has the United States illegally armed Iraq? I don't know quite what you mean, but no, I don't know of anything the United States has done that's illegal at all. If you're asking, has the United States ever provided arms to Iraqis, as opposed to the Iraqi government, the answer is yes, there are various Iraqis that are in opposition to the Saddam Hussein regime and it is correct that some time, in past years, they have provided some military capabilities to some Iraqi opposition forces. And then there's the Kurdish forces in the north, and I believe that the United States, again, going back some years, provided some military equipment to the Kurdish forces in the north.

Kroft: I think he may be talking about when the United States was backing Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war.

Rumsfeld: Well, I am told that we did not, but I don't know, I was not in the government during that period. I saw an article in Newsweek that reported on some -- I think it was various types of biologicals. And I'm told that they went through a medical relationship that we had with many countries in the world, and they were for medical purposes. But, I don't know of any weapons that went to Iraq. I do know that the United States government in the 1980s, I'm told, as I said, provided intelligence to Iraq.

Kroft: The next call is from Detroit, John, who is listening on WWJ.

Caller: Hi, Mr. Secretary, this is John. If the Iraqis use chemical weapons on our troops, would we consider responding with nuclear weapons? And I ask that, because my dad was a Marine at Iwo-Jima at the end of World War II, and I believe, and he believed that his life was saved by Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Rumsfeld: It is always possible that Iraq, in the event of conflict, could use chemical or biological weapons. The United States government, the president and others, are communicating with people in Iraq, in the military, very forcefully that they ought not to use those weapons. If you think about it, Saddam Hussein can't use those weapons himself. He has to use intermediaries. He simply has to go through a general to a colonel, to some person who physically can do what it is required to actually employ a chemical or biological weapon. We are communicating with people in that regime, the truth. And the truth is that anyone who is any way connected with weapons of mass destruction and their use, in the event of a conflict, would be held accountable. And people who help to avoid that would be advantaged.

Kroft: Another question that came in from email: How many Americans would you estimate might be killed in an invasion of Iraq? What number do you consider acceptable, and what about Iraqi civilian casualties?

Rumsfeld: There is no way to know the answers to those questions and, of course, they're terribly important questions. You don't ever want to use force and put men and women in uniform, or civilians, into the dangerous position where they could be injured or killed. The United States government in the Desert Storm conflict was actually on the ground fighting for four days. The Iraqi Army surrendered tens of thousands, a total of something like 70,000 troops started surrendering in the first three or four days of the war. They know what kind of a regime Saddam Hussein is running. They know what the damage that's done to the people of Iraq. They know the truth that the United States of America doesn't covet the land of any other country. They know this is not an issue between the United States, or England, or the coalition countries, or the United Nations and the Iraqi people, or the Iraqi Army. It has to do with a small clique in the Ba'ath Party leadership in Baghdad that Saddam Hussein uses to work his will. I think that there would be -- in fact, there was one instance where hundreds and hundreds of Iraqi soldiers surrendered to a journalist who didn't even have a gun. So, the idea that it's going to be a long, long, long battle of some kind, I think, is

belied by what happened in 1990. Now, can you be certain of that, no. Do you have to be prepared for the worst, yes. In the event that it becomes necessary the United States would do it in a manner that would be respectful of human life on all sides, but would be determined to do the job, and to finish it fast.

Kroft: Next caller is from Minneapolis, Steve, who is listening on WCCO.

Caller: Yes, Mr. Secretary, my question to you is, the air strike in mid-September from Basra to Tallil airfield, it looks like that we're softening a corridor right through the Tigris Euphrates Valley right to Baghdad. Is that what I'm seeing?

Rumsfeld: No. What you're actually seeing is the, above the 36th Parallel or Latitude, there is a Northern no fly zone, and below the 33rd Parallel down to the south is the Southern no fly zone, and coalition aircraft patrol those areas to try to avoid having Saddam Hussein go down and attack the Shi'ia or go down the in South, or go down and invade Iraq, or go North and attack the Kurds. And so we fly those flights and gather intelligence, and keep an eye on what's taking place, enforcing the U.N. resolutions. From time to time, in fact, weekly, two or three times, our coalition aircraft are fired on, and they're fired on by antiaircraft, or they're fired on by surface to air missiles, and when that happens, we go -- these pilots who are putting their lives at risk every day, they go in and they attack the radars and the air defense system, and the surface to air missiles, or the antiaircraft that they can find and locate, and attack them and destroy them. And they do it wherever they find them. It's not in any particular path, or any particular direction.

Kroft: Next caller is Bob from Providence, Rhode Island, who is listening on WPRO.

Caller: Yes, Mr. Secretary, thanks for taking my call. My question is, after 9-11, countries like France and Germany were like behind us 100 percent. They seem to have tapered off quite a bit. Do you think that's because they're afraid of their countries being terrorized, or they really believe that we should go with the peace thing first?

Rumsfeld: Well, it's hard to know why individual countries behave the way they behave. We do know that President Bush and Secretary Powell have gone out and formed a coalition of 90 nations that are cooperating with us in the global war on terrorism. We do know that the president just got a unanimous vote of 15 nations in the Security Council in the United Nations in favor of the resolution to put inspectors back into Iraq.

Frequently what you see in the press in the United States is not what another country thinks, or says, or does. What you read is what some politician in one of those countries says, or what some newspaper says, a columnist, or some editorialist, or some reporter. And that gets splashed around the United States. And, of course, we're much more interested in reading about controversies and

fighters, so every time someone takes a position against the United States in France, or someone takes a position against the United States in Germany, to use the two examples you mentioned, it makes big press. But that isn't France, and that isn't necessarily Germany. It is simply a reflection of the fact that people have different views, just like they do in our country. And that's fair enough.

I think that the single -- if you drop a plumb line through what's happened since last September 11th, what's happened is, 90 nations, the biggest coalition in the history of mankind, have come together under the leadership of the United States to fight terrorism. And if you could see what I see every day, the number of countries that are coming in saying, look, if you decide that something needs to be done in Iraq because Iraq refuses to disarm, we want to help you. And there are country after country coming in saying that they want to help in this way, or that way.

Now, there may be someone in their country who is standing up and saying, they don't like that, or they're against it. But that's to be expected. I mean, most of the countries that we work with are free countries, and they're free to say what they want, and think what they want.

Kroft: Live from the Pentagon, I'm Steve Kroft, along with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and you're listening to Infinity Radio Connect. We'll pause 15 seconds now for station identification.

(Station identification.)

Kroft: This is Steve Kroft live with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld at the Pentagon.

Our next call from New York City, Chris who is listening on WCBS.

Caller: Mr. Rumsfeld, I think most Americans love the work you're doing, and we respect you for it. One of the questions I have for you is, can you elaborate a little bit about the connection between al Qaeda and Iraq as I think a lot of Americans are sort of perplexed by the lack of information we have about that, and could you just make that connection a little clearer for us?

Rumsfeld: Well, Chris, it is -- the reason people are perplexed is because it is perplexing. The terrorist states, one of which is Iraq. Another is Iran, and Libya, and Syria, and Korea, and Cuba, and they're all on the terrorist state list, have varying relationships with these so-called terrorist networks, Hezbollah, Hamas and al Qaeda, and six or eight others. In some cases, the relationships are quite well known, and well defined. For example, Iran works with Hezbollah, and against Israel, and sends weapons, and terrorists down into Damascus, and down into Beirut, Lebanon, and down into Israel to engage in terrorist acts.

In other cases, it's rather mysterious, the relationship is, and they don't advertise it or publicize it. In some cases, it's because they're ideologically oriented, and

agree with each other. In some cases, they have marriages of convenience, where they have a common enemy, so that even though they may be different philosophically, or religiously, their common enemy brings them together and they work together on things.

I think that what I've done is, I see, of course, a lot of classified information, and what I've done is to go to the Central Intelligence Agency, and ask them, what is it that we can say about a relationship or a situation that is not going to damage our sources and methods, and expose anyone to harm, or reduce our ability to gather additional intelligence? And when that information comes back, I tended to almost repeat it word-for-word. And in the case of the relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda, the words that have come back as being appropriate for release publicly are something like this: That the relationship -- that our understanding of the relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda is still developing. That there is no question but that there have been interactions between the Iraqi government, Iraqi officials, and al Qaeda operatives. They have occurred over a span of some eight or ten years to our knowledge. There are currently al Qaeda in Iraq. It is less hard --

It is not possible for me to elaborate as to exactly what the linkage between the people in Iraq who are known Al Qaeda operatives, and the Iraqi Intelligence Service is. While I can't comment on that, I can say that if you're living in a dictatorship that's repressive, that is as controlling as the Saddam Hussein regime is, it's hard for one to believe that there would be senior people from the al Qaeda in that country and have the regime not be aware of them.

That is probably the best I can do.

Croft: Mr. Secretary, another email.

Rumsfeld: Can I ask you a question?

Kroft: It depends on what it is.

Rumsfeld: I've been struck that I think almost every question has been from a man. Do you have any women who ask questions?

Kroft: We'll have to ask the switchboard. We'll try and find you one.

Rumsfeld: It's the first time I've ever been on a question show where it was all one, male or female.

Kroft: Actually, we do have one. Karen from KYW in Philadelphia.

Caller: Well, that was an easy way to slide up.

Rumsfeld: Well, Karen, I'm so glad I asked for you.

Caller: Well, good evening, Mr. Secretary. A few minutes ago you made the statement, if I could see -- or if you could see what I see every day. Well, I can't, and my question goes to that point. My brother serves proudly with the Army. If he and the other men and women are asked to go to Iraq, and if this is an unpopular war, these soldiers could return to a nation that has a similar view that we did in the '60s and '70s with the Vietnam conflict, and the soldiers who fought there. And I think that would be horribly sad. I guess I'm wondering when the PR effort is going to step up. You know, we're asked to take this threat at face value just because you and Mr. Bush say we're facing it, but when do we get to see something?

Rumsfeld: Well, let me say two things. First of all, I'm delighted your brother is in the Army, and appreciative of that service. I think it would be wrong to say that it would be an unpopular war, or a popular war. I don't think anyone likes war. And, a decision has not been made that war is necessary. And I think that that being the case, it's not surprising that there's not enthusiasm, if you will, for a conflict in Iraq because the president has not suggested that that was going to be needed necessarily. That step is away.

In the event that it becomes necessary, one would think that the precipitating event of rejecting the inspectors would be such that people would nod, and say, fair enough. If he's that determined to keep the weapons of mass destruction, and that unwilling to disarm himself, then he must have a darned good reason, and that isn't going to be very good for the neighborhood, or for the rest of the world.

Now, in terms of a PR effort, I don't know that you can do that really, and I -- we have no plans to engage in a PR effort. I think that the seriousness of what happened on September 11th is so real, and so vivid for so many Americans, people from 80 countries, I believe, died, over 3,000 of them. And the idea that an attack using a weapon of mass destruction against our country, or our friends and allies around the world is a thought that I think most of us don't want to contemplate.

But the reason it seems somewhat perplexing, or at least raises questions, it seems to me, is because we're in a new security environment, and we, as a people, have to roll it around in our heads a little bit, and think about it, and talk about it, and get used to the fact that the world has changed. Weapons that would kill 5, 10, 15 or 100 people are what we were living with in the preceding period. We're now talking about weapons that can kill tens of thousands of human beings. Our margin for error has shrunk. We can't be wrong. We have to recognize the carnage and the lethality of those weapons, and the carnage they can impose. And, therefore, the task we're faced with, which is not an easy one, and God bless the President for the way he has addressed this problem in a serious and purposeful way, going to the Congress and getting an overwhelming vote, going to the United Nations and getting a unanimous Security Council vote. The case is being made, and it's being made persuasively. And in the event force

is used, there's no doubt in my mind but that the evidence as to why it had to be used will be very real.

Kroft: We're live at the Pentagon. Ladies, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld wants to talk to you. The number is 1-800-736-3666.

Back to that email, Mr. Secretary. Hundreds of people have been awakened with dreams of a war with Iraq quickly escalating into World War III. What can effectively be done to limit the conflict, and what is your opinion about the possibility of a wider war breaking out?

Rumsfeld: In the event that force has to be used with Iraq, there will be no World War III. The Gulf War in the 1990s lasted five days on the ground. I can't tell you if the use of force in Iraq today would last five days, or five weeks, or five months, but it certainly isn't going to last any longer than that. And, it won't be a World War III. And if I were to characterize the difference between 1990 and today, the United States military is vastly more powerful. And the Iraqi Army and military capability has declined substantially. The difference is, the reason for needing to disarm Iraq, and that is chemical and biological weapons today, and a very robust effort to develop nuclear weapons tomorrow. And, that is the difference between today and then.

Kroft: Our next caller is Peter from New York City, who is listening on 1010 WINS.

Caller: Good evening, Secretary Rumsfeld. How are you doing?

Rumsfeld: Good, Peter.

Caller: Good. A quick question regarding Australia, recently, with the bombing in Bali. I'm just wondering, there were official warnings, I think, in the U.S. targeted to Americans to be careful in that region, but there were no official warnings coming from the Australian Government to Australians. My question is, does American intelligence share information gathered or intercepted with its close allies regarding, particularly, this situation in Bali?

Rumsfeld: I cannot speak to the particular situation in Bali. But I can say that the United States and Australia have an exceedingly close degree of cooperation with respect to intelligence sharing, and it is a wonderful relationship between our two countries, and the Australians have -- I'm 70 years old, and the Australians have been in every, side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States in every single conflict that the world has seen that we've both been involved in.

Kroft: Mr. Secretary, what do you say to people who think this is about oil?

Rumsfeld: Nonsense. It just isn't. There are certain things like that, myths, that are floating around. I'm glad you asked. It has nothing to do with oil, literally nothing to do with oil. It has nothing to do with the religion. People who have a

viewpoint frequently throw up those two issues, and say, well, this is really against Muslims, which it certainly isn't. The United States is the country that went in and helped Kuwait, a Muslim country. We worked in Bosnia to stop ethnic cleansing. We've done Afghanistan. And it's certainly not about oil. Oil is fungible, and people who own it want to sell it, and it will be available.

Kroft: Well, I'm afraid that's going to have to do it for this afternoon, Mr. Secretary, we've run out of time.

Rumsfeld: That went fast.

Kroft: I want to thank you, and thank all of our callers, all of you who emailed us. I'm sorry we didn't get to all of your questions. But mostly, I want to thank you, Mr. Secretary, for giving us an hour in your very hectic schedule, and joining us live, Infinity Radio Connect Broadcast, American Security. I'm Steve Kroft, CBS News at the Pentagon.

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