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The Reserve Officers Association

Remarks by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld to the Reserve Officers Association 2003 Mid-Winter Conference and 18th Annual Military Exposition, Washington, DC, January 20, 2003.

Thank you very much, Colonel Davenport, Admiral Hall, General Hemley, General McCarthy, Surgeon General Carmona, and the leaders and members of the Reserve Officers Association. Good morning. I am very very pleased to be with you. This association has been a very strong voice for American military for some 80 years. Goodness - you have been around longer than I have! (Laughter) "Just barely," he said, that's right! The truth has a certain virtue.

As Colonel Davenport said, I was a member of the Reserves. I started as a midshipman in school and then served three and a half years in the Navy as a pilot, and then the day I got out, I joined the Naval Reserve and was a weekend warrior for many years, I guess from 1957 to 1975 when I became Secretary of Defense. I made a command decision that I couldn't call myself up. So I moved from the active naval reserve to the inactive reserve and then some years later, they decided that I should go to the retired reserve. I guess that's a statutory age limit. As you know well, this great tradition dates back to the Revolutionary War, when citizen-soldiers dropped their pitchforks, grabbed their muskets, and left their families and their fields behind to go fight for freedom. You live in that tradition today, and the American people are grateful to you for it, and proud of all you do for our country.

When we were attacked on September 11th, more than 100,000 reservists and National Guard members sprang into action - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard. They helped defend our homeland, they helped drive the Taliban from power, they shut down the terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, and liberated the Afghan people.

At this moment, Guard and Reserve are patrolling streets, seas and skies all across the globe, disrupting terrorist networks and helping to prevent them from killing more innocent men, women and children. These contributions have been vital to our success thus far in the global war on terrorism.

The attacks of September 11th were devastating. Yet September 11th - while unconventional in

conception and planning - was essentially a conventional attack. It did not involve weapons of mass destruction. Terrorists took airplanes, loaded with jet fuel, turned them into missiles, and used them to attack the Pentagon and the World Trade Towers and kill thousands.

Yet, at this moment, terrorist networks and terrorist states are pursuing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons - capabilities that will enable them to kill not simply thousands, but many tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of our people. Our objective in the global war on terror is to stop them - to prevent additional attacks that would be far worse - before they happen.

There are a number of terrorist states that are pursuing weapons of mass murder today. But as President Bush has made clear, Iraq poses a threat to the security of our people, and to the stability of the world, that is distinct from any other. Consider the record:

Saddam Hussein possesses chemical and biological weapons. He has used chemical weapons against foreign forces and his own people, in one case killing some 5,000 innocent civilians in a single day.

Iraq has invaded two of its neighbors, and has launched ballistic missiles at four of its neighbors.

He openly praised the attacks of September 11th against our country.

His regime plays host to terrorists, and has ordered acts of terror on foreign soil.

His is the only country in the world that fires missiles and artillery at U.S. and coalition aircraft on an almost daily basis.

His regime is paying a high price so that he can pursue weapons of mass destruction - giving up literally billions of dollars annually in oil revenues. He is determined.

His regime has large, unaccounted for stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons - including VX, sarin, mustard gas, anthrax, botulism, and possibly smallpox - and he has an active program to acquire and develop nuclear weapons.

His regime has violated some 16 U.N. resolutions, repeatedly defying the will of the international community - without cost or consequence.

As the president warned the United Nations last fall, "Saddam Hussein's regime is a grave and gathering danger." It is a danger to its neighbors, to the United States, to the Middle East, and to the international peace and stability. It's a danger we cannot ignore.

In recent weeks, some have raised the question about the differing approaches between Iraq and North Korea that the United States has adopted. Why, it is asked, is the U.S. threatening military action against Iraq while pursuing diplomacy in the case of North Korea?

It's a fair question. And the answer is that the two cases really are different. Iraq and North Korea are both repressive dictatorships to be sure. And both pose threats. But Iraq is unique.

No other living dictator has shown the same deadly combination of capability and intent - of aggression against its neighbors; pursuit of weapons of mass destruction; the use of chemical weapons against his own people as well as against his neighbors; oppression of his own people; support of terrorism; and the most threatening hostility to its neighbors and to the United States - as has Iraq.

In both word and deed, Iraq has demonstrated that it is seeking the means to strike the United States, and our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction for a reason - so that it can acquire the territory and assert influence over its neighbors.

North Korea, by contrast, is a country in many respects teetering on the verge of collapse. There is starvation. Its history has been one of attempting to use weapons programs to blackmail the West into helping stave off their economic disaster. North Korea is a threat, to be sure. But it is a different kind of threat - one that for now at least can be handled through diplomacy and differently.

Above all it is a proliferation problem for the world, as the world's leading proliferator of ballistic missile technologies. And to the extent it is successful in pursuing its dual nuclear programs and to the extent it then has nuclear materials or even nuclear weapons that it considers excess, it could proliferate those as well.

For more than a decade, the international community has tried every possible means to dissuade Iraq from its weapons of mass destruction ambitions. Think of it. We have tried diplomacy; economic sanctions, embargoes; positive inducements, such as the "oil for food" program; inspections; and limited military efforts, including the northern, and southern no-fly zones. Each of these approaches have been unsuccessful.

Now, in the case of Iraq, we are nearing the end of the long road, and with every other option exhausted. With North Korea, by contrast, that is not yet the case.

We are pursuing the diplomatic route with North Korea. We have robust military capabilities in Northeast Asia. They have, as the people in this room know well, successfully deterred in the past and they are deterring today.

It should be noted that biological weapons - which Iraq and North Korea both possess - can be as deadly, and arguably a more immediate danger - because they are simpler and cheaper to develop and deliver, and are even more readily transferred to terrorist networks than would be nuclear weapons.

The recent "Dark Winter" exercise conducted at Johns Hopkins University simulated a biological attack in which terrorists released smallpox in three separate locations in the United States. Within two months, the worst-case estimate indicated that up to 1 million people could be dead and another 2 million affected. Biological weapons must be of major concern. Let there be no doubt.

Since driving the Taliban from power in Afghanistan, we have already seen a change in behavior in certain regimes. The disarmament of Iraq - whether it be by diplomatic pressure, which is our hope, or if necessary as a last choice by the use of force - will make clear to other terrorist regimes that pursuing weapons of mass destruction will make them less secure, not more secure.

The United Nations Resolution did not put the burden of proof on the United States or the United Nations to prove that Iraq has these weapons. The U.N. Resolution put the burden directly on Iraq - to prove that it is disarming and that it does not have these weapons, or if it does, it is willing to give them up. Thus far, Iraq has been unwilling to do so. Its declaration was false. The cooperation with the inspectors has been, by the inspectors' definition, fallen far short of any time, any place, which had been the understanding. We continue to hope that the regime will change course.

No one wants war. But as the president has said, Iraq will be disarmed and the decision between war and peace will be made not in Washington D.C. and not in the United Nations in New York, but rather in Baghdad. It is their decision. Either they will cooperate or they won't. And it will not take months to determine whether or not they are cooperating.

As we continue to press Iraq to disarm, we will need continuing support of the men and women of the Guard and the Reserve.

At this time of call-ups, alerts, mobilizations, and deployments, and uncertainty, please know that the American people are counting on you, and have full confidence in you. We can all live our lives as free people in this dangerous and still untidy world, and in this new century, because brave men and women like you voluntarily put your lives at risk to defend our freedom.

I thank you all for your selfless service. God bless you all, and let me see if I can organize this. I was told that because we didn't have enough mikes, I couldn't take questions. I veto that.

Now I'm told we have got mikes here that work and I don't see any reason we can't put them somewhere down about a third of the way in each aisle and let folks come and stand behind the mikes and ask a question. I'm happy to do that.

I'm going to go out to Walter Reed a bit later this morning to see some of the folks who have been injured in Afghanistan, but I would be delighted to respond to questions.

What you need to do is just stand up, walk up behind a mike, raise your hand, the lights are kind of bright here so I can't see where you are, and someone just start talking maybe. [Laughter]

Who's got a question?

Q: Sir, Captain Michael Moreford.

We have seen a trend over the past 10-15 years of a growing transition of logistical capacity, specifically in the Army, into the reserve component. And by default that sometimes has created a

dependence on mobilizations of the reserve components earlier in the process than traditionally. I don't necessarily know if that's a good thing or a bad thing, but I think a debate about that is important and I was curious about your comments and if you have any visions for changes in that process over the future.

Rumsfeld: Captain, thank you. I do have some thoughts on it.

I know that Assistant Secretary Tom Hall is here and there are lots of experts that are on your program this week that can answer the technical questions. I'd be happy to weigh in on a question like that, however.

Apparently after the Vietnam War there was a feeling that it would be wise to put critical early-needed skills into the reserves, the theory being that that way we would never have a conflict unless the reserves were mobilized and the country was supportive and it could be sustained.

The problem with that is that we have a wonderful all-volunteer military. We have a terrific total force concept. But the reality is people in the Guard and the Reserves do in fact have jobs and are not signed up to be full time. They're signed up to be part time. They're signed up to be helpful when needed. My personal view is that I've got a group of folks reviewing the current arrangement because my instinct is that it doesn't make sense to have the people who are required very early in a conflict in the reserves. I think we need to have those skills on active duty as well as in the Reserves and we need to be able to live in the world we're living in. Here we are, we've got some activity in Bosnia, we've got some activity in Kosovo, we're training some folks in the state of Georgia -- in the country of Georgia, we're helping out in the Philippines, we have force deployments in Afghanistan. There's no question but that this buildup for Iraq is a serious one in support of diplomacy.

My view is that we need to come up with a proposal where we shift some of those skills and see that we have on active duty people who may be needed, for example, in an instance like this where it's not clear what's going to happen. And instead of having those critical skills only in the Reserve.

That's my bias, that's my preference. I think that's where we'll end up, but until I sit down with folks who are a lot smarter than I am and worry through all of this I won't know precisely how it will shake out.

Q: My name is Colonel Bill Peach. I was born in 1922, the year that the Reserve Officers Association --

Rumsfeld: Where are you? Put your hand up. There you are! I like to keep my eye on who's talking. [Laughter]

Q: I've had the privilege of serving with the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and a few civilian agencies of the United States government.

During World War II I was seconded to the British service. In 1943 I was in London and in other parts of the United Kingdom and I saw the part that old duffers from the 1st World War played in

their security system, the Home Guard, other elements of their homeland security.

Would you say a few words, please, sir, about military support of homeland security and what role do you see for us retired fellows? What can we do to help out? [Applause]

Rumsfeld: Good for you, and God bless you. I love old duffers. [Laughter] I have to. [Laughter]

We are thinking those things through right now. The homeland security circumstance of our country is so totally different today and this year and last year than it was four or five years ago that it is going to take some careful thinking through. The new Department of Homeland Security is going to be stood up pretty soon. We have an Assistant Secretary that's been nominated or close to being nominated for homeland defense. We have Ed Eberhart who's the commander of our Northern Command which never existed in our recent history. I guess probably Ulysses S. Grant was the last - [Laughter] Or maybe George Washington or -- We haven't had one in an awful long time. Someone who has as his area of responsibility the United States of America.

What we do need to do is to think through the role of not just the Guard and the Reserve and the Coast Guard, but also the other kinds of capabilities that we have as a country. And you're quite right, what took place in England was an important incremental addition to the manpower they had available.

So we're at a stage where in the weeks and months immediately ahead we'll be worrying those questions through. Thank you for the good question.

The other day I was speaking to the Foreign Press Club, and I had about three months before, and I got up there and they said you haven't called on a single man throughout the entire process, and here I haven't called on a single woman. I can't see a thing. Somebody talk.

Q: Lieutenant Colonel Michael D. Stermfeld, United States Army Reserve, and I'm a Civil Affairs Branch officer.

Mr. Secretary in the civil affairs community and in the psychological operations community of which many civil affairs officers also are qualified, there are unprecedented call-ups because of our civilian skills that cannot be replicated in a large robust active duty segment.

This leads me to ask you, sir, what is your feeling about age 55 retirement with 30 active years of service for those in the reserves, especially in the communities that have intense call-ups because of our civilian skills? Thank you, sir.

Rumsfeld: Thank you.

First let me say that the process in the Department of Defense, and I'm sure this will come as a shock to all of you, the process for calling people up -- alerting, calling up and deploying -- is imperfect. [Laughter and Applause]

I have been very unhappy in recent weeks and months as these things have come up to me kind of in giant lumps that have not been disaggregated, have not taken into full account the sensitivities involved.

If we want to have a total force, if we want that concept to work, we've got to be respectful of the fact that people in the Reserves and the Guard have jobs. [Applause] And they're perfectly willing to be called up, but they only want to be called up when they're needed and for something that's a real job. [Applause] And they prefer not to get jerked around and called up two or three or four months before they're needed and then found they're not needed and sent back home with a "sorry about that". [Applause]

So I've got General Myers and Pete Pace and the Joint Staff doing a lessons learned on the call-up process and we're darn well going to figure out a way to get the -- At the present time forces are "managed", if you will, in about six locations. The four services, the Joint Forces Command, and the combatant commanders who have an area of responsibility and forces assigned.

Therefore when a combatant commander like in this case General Tom Franks, who I must say is just doing an absolutely superb job. [Whoa and Applause] We are darn lucky to have him where he is.

When he needs forces and a deployment order comes in, it is not managed skillfully in a single place so that the threads come up through the needle head in a way that's respectful of the circumstances of the Guard and Reserve, frankly, and it's not even particularly respectful of the active duty forces because it moves people in big lumps, meaning it's going to be imprecise as to who's needed, where, when.

So we're going to have a very careful look at that subject and do it a whole of a lot better next time.

Now, with respect to civil affairs generally, it is enormously important. That is a set of skills that we're going to have to have both in the reserves, because the competence there is so terrific, and on active duty because we're going to be called upon to do these things around the world and we have to be ready and capable of doing it.

Now, with respect to 55 years old and 30 years service or whatever you said. [Laughter] I'm also unhappy about the way we do that.

I think that the United States armed forces make a terrible mistake by having so many permanent changes of station, by having so many people skip along the tops of the waves in a job and serve in it 12, 15, 18, 24 months and be gone.

You know, when somebody does that they spend the first six months saying hello to everybody, the next six months trying to learn the job, and the last six months leaving. [Laughter] I like people to be in a job long enough that they darn well make mistakes, see their mistakes, clean up their own mistakes, before they go on to make mistakes somewhere else. [Applause]

So what I've got Dr. David Chu and Charlie Able and the P&R office doing is looking at how we can get the benefit of people in a specific job longer, and how we can have people increase the number of total years they serve if they want to. [Applause]

I believe that's important for a couple of reasons. It's important because of the skills and the capabilities and the talents that people develop while they're in the service. The idea that they then should be up and out and shoved out and we should be denied the benefit of those capabilities, it seems to me is a mistake.

The other day was at a retirement ceremony and in comes this senior enlisted in one of the services, a terrific guy, at the top of his game. I said what's this about? He said I wanted to get a picture. I said why? He said I'm retiring. I said how old are you? He said 47. I've got a daughter 47. [Laughter] What in the world is going on? He said it's just the way it is, he says, we've got to make room for the next guy.

In any event, I got so concerned about this that I said let's start showing me precisely how many months each person has served in their job when they come up for a reassignment or a promotion. On the left side of the folder, when someone's going to be getting promoted or going along, they now have a number. It shows, after their training, how many different assignments they had and what the average number of months was. I haven't tried to drop a plumb line through it but I'll bet it's about 17-18 months. Some of them are down 13.2, another was 15. A long one would be 24 months. If you ran a company like that you'd go broke. You could not do it, just constantly churning people in and out.

We have to do something about it. We've got folks looking at it. I'm well aware of the fact that you don't tear down what exists without recommending something better, and I'm also aware of all the ricochet shots that happen if someone stays in a job a little longer and in a post a little longer, and I understand that. We're going to look at it carefully. We're going to try to figure out a way to take the advantage of somewhat longer total service and somewhat longer time in post, and I'm convinced it will improve the capabilities and the warfighting ability of our country. [Applause]

I don't want to leave you with the impression that I'm a bomb-thrower or anything. We'll do it carefully. Promise.

There's a hand -- It looks like a woman.

Voice: It is. I am a woman. Thank you.

Rumsfeld: I'm not going to catch the dickens now, see. [Laughter]

Q: I'm Debra Nelson, Captain, Nurse Corps from Salinas, California.

Mr. Secretary, none of us wants to win the war and lose the peace. How can we create a stable transitional government in Iraq should Saddam be replaced that would improve world peace and not foster chaos and terrorism?

Rumsfeld: Where's a man? [Laughter]

That is a tough question and we're spending a lot of time on it, let me assure you. We've spent two long sessions in the last week on looking at the management of a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq and what one would do, what are the principles.

There are several things we've concluded. One is that whoever succeeds Saddam Hussein, whatever regime it is, has to be one that does not want weapons of mass destruction, is not going to threaten their neighbors, is going to keep a single country -- not allow it to be broken up in pieces, and one that migrates in a way towards something more closely approximating representation by elements of the country and something that we might call democracy but which is respectful of minority rights but certainly not a U.S. template or a U.K. template or another type of democracy template. It will have to be something that's uniquely Iraqi.

The conclusion is that what one would have to do -- and Saddam Hussein could leave tonight -- wouldn't that be wonderful? [Applause] He could be overthrown. There could be a revolution in that country. He's a repressive dictator. Or he could not realize that the game is up and try to stick it out and force would have to be used. But regardless of what happens, there will be an immediate task for the U.S. military and the Coalition military, and let there be no doubt there are large numbers of countries that are signed up to be helpful in the event that force is needed in dealing with Iraq. This business about going it alone or unilateral is nonsense. There are a substantial number of countries that are ready to help. There are also a number of countries that are ready to help after it's over in terms of a coalition to assist with the humanitarian aspects of the country.

The second thing I would say is that whatever comes out by way of a governing body will have to be uniquely Iraqi. Just as in Afghanistan we'd never heard of a Loya Jurga for the most part here in this country. What they did was they had meetings, people were represented, they were elected, they came together, they elected a transitional government, and that government now is trying to find its sea legs.

My impression is that that is what would happen. The country is fortunate in that it has a good deal of money. It's got oil revenues. So it's not like Afghanistan where you have the problem of years and years of conflict and destruction and no money. In this case you don't have years and years of conflict. There have been periodic wars and then periods where they've been able to use their oil revenues to improve their circumstance.

The United States, let me speak for myself instead of the United States. Although we've spent a lot of time with the President and the Vice President and the National Security Council talking about these things. If you think about it, a regime that is that vicious means that the people of Iraq are in a very real sense hostages to that regime. That it is run through fear and it is run through murder and it is run through the control of prisons. I think what will happen is that when he isn't there, for whatever reason, an Iraqi advisory element will be constructed. Just as in any political process, some people will strive to be leaders and fail; others will strive to be leaders and demonstrate the kind of skills and capabilities that wins support from others. They'll find the right tone and tempo to

progress towards an Iraqi government.

What's that going to be like in that region? You talked about the region at the end of your question as I recall. Just think of the advantage for countries like Jordan and Turkey that are in difficult economic circumstance. Moderate regimes, want to have a constructive relationship. Iraq is filled with intelligent people, well educated people, it's got technical capabilities. An Iraq that's at peace, an Iraq that's not invading Kuwait, an Iraq that's not threatening Jordan, an Iraq that's not trying to destabilize other neighboring regimes, an Iraq that can have a free flow of economic activity across the border with Turkey is going to be a positive thing for that entire region.

That is the hope. There are an awful lot of people in and out of government spending an awful lot of time working on it. We have recently brought in a retired Army general, Jay Garner, to stand up an office in the Pentagon to begin the process of thinking through all of the kinds of things that would be necessary in the early period, and going back to the earlier question about humanitarian assistance and civil affairs. Needless to say, that's a major portion of it.

Q: Mr. Secretary. Gordon Austin. I'm the Reserve Officer Association National Dental Surgeon.

With the evolution and expansion of the use of the reserves do you see some changes and some evolution and expansion in providing health, medical, dental care to the drilling reservists?

Rumsfeld: I think I'd save that for Mr. Hall and some of the experts who are going to be with you later this week. That is not something that I have personally engaged as a subject.

Our total health bill in the Department of Defense is something I believe in the neighborhood of \$28 billion. I don't know if someone can calibrate me, but it's roughly that a year. \$28 billion is what we're currently paying, I believe, for the active force and for the retired force.

The task always in the human aspect of any enterprise, which is always the single most important, to make darn sure you're attracting and retaining the people you need to do the job you've got to do, the balance between salary for those currently on active duty, incentives, compensation for those that are in the Guard and Reserve because we need the total force so critically, proper rewards for people who have retired so that the people in the service see that that is a career that is valued and properly rewarded. The difference between current salary, health care, substandard housing, the various elements that go into the total package for people both that are active, that are reserve and are required is a complicated mix and it's best done I think with great care. Certainly the point you raise is something that ought to be a part of the consideration there, but how the experts would come out I just don't know. Thank you.

Q: Mr. Secretary, Colonel Bobs from Michigan, and I'm a member of the Military Police Corps.

My question has to do with homeland security. In the months and days following 9/11 it's been demonstrated that flexibility and agility is needed by law enforcement and military officials to locate, fix and bring to justice these transnational terrorists. In the light of our new Department of Homeland Security and also the reliance on military forces to provide that type of safety and

security for our folks, but walking a fine line between security and preservation of civil liberties, do you foresee or is there a movement afoot within the Administration to look at changing provisions of posse comitatus?

Rumsfeld: We have reflected on that subject. We've discussed it internally. I've been asked if I thought at the present time there was a need for adjustments in posse comitatus, and thus far no one that I've talked to has suggested that we do need changes and no one has proposed any changes.

Q: Mr. Secretary, Jim Fowler, retired Naval Reserve surgeon and Captain Nelson's been telling me how to act in the operating room for years, so welcome to the club. But my question is a medical question, too.

What integration for medical support, both active and reserve, is going on between homeland security and military action, realizing the terrorists may choose to have their warfront in several different places?

Rumsfeld: There's no question but that at any time we have to be aware of the potential for terrorist attacks in this country. Some suggest that in the event force was used in Iraq that we'd have to be still more attentive to that possibility. There are all kinds of discussions that have been taking place between the military and first responders and thinking through ways that we can see that what we do is as efficient and supportive and constructive as is possible.

There's almost no instance where the Pentagon and the Department of Defense is a first responder to the kinds of things that can happen in this country and there's no serious problem that can happen in the country where the Defense Department doesn't become involved in a supporting role.

The answer is there's been a good deal of work. Until the new department gets up and going, which I don't believe Tom Ridge has been confirmed even yet, then he has to get staffed up and going. My guess is that it will take some time after that. But a lot of work's been done during the past 18 months.

Q: Sir, this is Lieutenant Hedda Pestecki of the U.S. Coast Guard - the red-headed stepchild of DoD. [Laughter]

Rumsfeld: We are crazy about the Coast Guard. [Applause] Darn right. We've got a better relation -- the United States Navy has a better relationship with the Coast Guard today than I'll bet at almost any time in their history.

Q: I agree.

My question is, I've done a lot of work with homeland security and one of the problems we run into -- I'm in Alaska -- is especially a lack of platforms, whether it's air or surface platforms to deal with some of the issues that have been given to the Coast Guard, as well as being a small service personnelwise.

Has there been any attempt being made, I know we tried to engage Naval and Air Force assets to assist us in patrolling the coast lines and so forth and the reticence to help out unless we were actually patrolling or providing protection to an actual military asset, it was a very difficult task, and mostly we would not even be answered at all. Is there any attempt to be made to make it more of a give and take in that kind of a situation?

Rumsfeld: Well we have to. The role of the Coast Guard is critical. For it to succeed it has to be well connected with the Navy and with the air capabilities both Naval and Air Force.

There's also a problem that in signing my deployment orders over the past month or two I noticed that I'm ending up activating Coast Guardsmen and sending them over towards the Middle East, towards Kuwait. Because just as we have reservists who are the only ones that have skills, and no skills of that type on active duty, so too the Coast Guard has some skills that for whatever reason the active duty forces of the Pentagon have never bothered to organize, train and equip. And if one thinks about it, if you had an incident in the United States or two, at the same time you were flowing forces to support the diplomacy in Iraq, and we needed Coast Guard people which we are activating and sending, there would also be a need here. We need to think those connections through.

I think that I'm rarely at a meeting at the Pentagon where there isn't someone from the Coast Guard there, and I have a strong feeling that to the extent it's humanly possible those linkages are getting improved and the concern you have should be a thing of the past because protecting the homeland is critically important.

Q: Sir, Cadet Bubbick of the Air Force ROTC.

Rumsfeld: Good. Not everyone can be in the Naval ROTC. [Laughter]

Q: You alluded earlier to the similarities between Iraq and North Korea. If you could --

Rumsfeld: Could you speak up a little bit? I'm having trouble hearing you.

Q: No problem.

You alluded to the similarities between Iraq and North Korea earlier. If you had to label one of them a more volatile or hostile situation, which would it be, sir?

Rumsfeld: First, I was trying to show the differences between Iraq and North Korea in terms of why the policy approach is different as opposed to the similarities, so let's call it the dissimilarities.

Each is dangerous. If you look at North Korea, they have, I don't know, 1.1 million people in uniform. They have enormous artillery capability very close to the DMZ and to Seoul. They have probably the largest special forces element on the face of the earth and they have leadership that - I see the press is back there. [Laughter] Let's just say it's different. [Laughter and Applause] So that's one category of danger.

But on the other hand the United States and South Korea and the UN Command there has had a robust capability to deter and defend for 50 years, plus or minus a year or two. So that issue it seems to me is fairly stable.

They are a danger to the world because they proliferate ballistic missile technologies all across the globe. The terrorist states interact with each other. Each one has some comparative advantage as we say in business, and the effect of that is that they're constantly strengthening each other. So they're dealing with Iran, they're dealing with Libya, they're dealing with Syria, they're dealing with lots of countries.

If they in fact proceed with their nuclear programs, and if they end up with excess, in their mind, excess nuclear material, nuclear weapons, and if they proliferate those weapons to other countries, they will clearly represent a threat to the world's stability and peace.

Iraq -- so which is the more volatile I think was the words you used in your question. I guess I would say which situation is more volatile. I would say at the moment Iraq poses a threat of a different kind because we've worked through, as I said, all of these efforts -- economic, political, diplomatic, inspections, everything's been tried with Iraq and he is so determined to have those weapons of mass destruction that he's willing to forego billions of dollars of oil revenues. That shows a seriousness of purpose that can't be ignored, plus his past record.

So I would say that the President has it right. That we do need to see that Iraq is disarmed, and we do need to proceed with Japan and with South Korea and with Russia and the People's Republic of China to try to put pressure on North Korea to discontinue its nuclear programs and see that they're not rewarded for blackmail.

Q: Mr. Secretary, 2:00 o'clock. Good morning, sir. It's 2:00 o'clock your time. [Laughter] Whooa.

Captain Norman, Military --

Rumsfeld: That's 1:30.

Q: My mistake. I'm not going to correct the SecDef.

Rumsfeld: We'll make this the last question, so make it a pip.

Q: Yes, sir.

My question is two-fold, sir. The first part of it is, do you still see DACOWITS as a relevant group? The second part of it is, I have heard rumblings, and it could be just bad RUMINT (rumor intelligence), that they are thinking of segregating females in basic training. What are your feelings on these two issues, sir?

Rumsfeld: Well needless to say we would not have continued DACOWITS if we didn't think it was a relevant group. As a steward for the taxpayers' money, I just am sensitive to having things going

on that don't make any sense. We decided that the new focus of DACOWITS and the new size and the new direction of their activities made sense and therefore we've kept a number of the people who were on it before and added some additional people and I think it's going to do a good job, and I certainly hope that's the case.

The services normally deal with organize, train and equip and you're talking about a training question. Each service has taken its own route with respect to training in the early stages. In some cases it's gender separate, in some cases it's merged. Am I not correct? Yeah. And I don't happen to know of any of the services that currently have them together that are planning to separate it, nor do I know of any of them that have it separate that are planning to merge them. Maybe somebody knows something. I don't know. I'd ask some of the experts here later in the week.

I'm off to Walter Reed to see those folks. Thank you very much. God bless you all. [Applause]

<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2003/s20030120-secdef.html>