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**Presenter: Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz**

**January 31, 2004**

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**Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Media Availability with 1st Infantry Division Commanding General**

Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Media Availability with 1st Infantry Division Commanding General  
(Participating were Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Army Maj. Gen. John R. S. Batiste, commanding general, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division.)

Wolfowitz: It's been a short but wonderful visit here, to meet an old friend, General Batiste, and to get briefed on the plans for the 1st Infantry Division to deploy to Iraq. It's a great tradition with a great history, and also a great present. Wonderful leadership and wonderful spirit among the troops.

One of the statistics we heard, I'm not sure if you heard it before, is that even though this division has been deployed I think more intensely than any other division in the Army in the last couple of years with Balkan deployments, it also has the highest retention rate in the Army. We saw wonderful spirit among the families earlier today in their preparations to face a year of having their loved ones far away from home in difficult and dangerous conditions. And as I said to the families, the positive energy you sensed in that room was very inspiring.

The biggest challenge in the immediate term is doing this big rotation of forces. Just the sheer movement itself in insecure conditions is a challenge. But that handoff from one division doing a very complicated job to another division taking over that complicated job is, you have your work cut out for you. But I must say based on the briefings that we heard today, they have really thought this through carefully. They had the experience of doing this kind of left seat/right seat handoff in Bosnia and Kosovo multiple times over the last number of years, so I think it's been thought through as well as it can possibly be and I think it will go successfully.

I think I'd just like to conclude by taking my opportunity once again to publicly thank our troops and their families for the incredible support they give our country. The skill and the courage with which they face the challenges of this war are something we as Americans have to be always grateful for.

We'll take a few questions if you'd like.

Q: General Batiste, what is it that you will be able to bring there? What can you do differently than the 4th ID has done to move along the security situation and make it more secure than it is now?

Batiste: Initially we're going to take over from the 4th Infantry Division in every respect. They've done a great

job in Iraq and I really commend them for what they've accomplished.

We will conduct a deliberate relief in place, so the answer to your question initially is I'm going to do exactly what the 4th Infantry Division is doing today and then I'll take it from there.

Q: From there any thoughts about what to do differently? You talked about using different kinds of equipment, for instance, and having a slightly different mission than they had going prepared for a war.

Batiste: The mission is the same. We have done a lot to upgrade our equipment in the past three or four months with respect to armored kits on soft-skinned vehicles, with respect to radios, and with respect to up-armored HUMVEES.

Q: Secretary Wolfowitz, I wanted to ask you what you thought about David Kay's comments that he does not believe any weapons of mass destruction existed in Iraq, and whether, how much hope do you hold out that such weapons still can be found? I'm talking about biological, chemical stockpiles.

Wolfowitz: I think I've said before you have to make decisions based on the intelligence you have, not on the intelligence you're going to discover later. It's very important to try to have the best intelligence you possibly can have. I think our intelligence community has done some extraordinary work. We've seen it just recently with Libya where they basically caught the Libyan regime cheating on the non-proliferation treaty. We saw it a couple of years ago when they caught the North Korean regime cheating on the 1994 Nuclear Framework Agreement. I believe, and I want to be careful, I certainly haven't read every statement by David Kay, I think it's clear if we move away from the stockpiles issue that the Iraqi regime was cheating on Resolution 1441 which was in fact their last and final chance to comply with a whole series of U.N. resolutions.

But obviously intelligence is very important. It's very important to try to work any time. It's imperfect. It's not a science, it's an art. It's important to work to understand where you got it right, where you got it wrong, but we could not possibly accomplish what we do in the world without magnificent work by our intelligence community.

Q: Did you say it's clear we move away from stockpiles? Is that what you said? I just want to make sure I heard you right.

Wolfowitz: I said --

Q: In terms of stockpiles.

Wolfowitz: I believe whatever David Kay has said about stockpiles of weapons, that I think his reports have also made clear that Iraq was not complying with Resolution 1441.

Q: So you believe that [if no] WMD is found in Iraq in the future, do you still believe that the war against Iraq was justified?

Wolfowitz: We have an important job to do in Iraq, an absolutely critical job to do, and that is to help the Iraqi people build a free and democratic country. I think you heard earlier today even in the support group that the Victory Division is defining victory, and we haven't made it yet in Iraq but we're heading there and it's going to be a very important turning point in the whole war on terrorism. The Middle East for the last 20 years has been heading down the wrong road. We've seen some of the results of that on September 11th. The Iraqi people have a chance now to start turning the course of history and putting it on the right road. That's what we have to keep our eye on.

Q: On the present situation in Iraq, one of the things we've heard a lot is, General Abizaid has said this, others have said this, you have said this I believe, that there are a finite number of enemies. You can give the

figure 5,000. We believe there are 5,000 here, 4,000 there. How confident are you that there is a finite number, and couldn't that number be growing given what's going on? Going back to Secretary Rumsfeld's slog memo.

Wolfowitz: There is a finite number but we're not talking mathematical. I have never said that we know the number with any kind of precision. In fact what I've tried to emphasize is for 35 years that country was ruled by murderers and torturers. They numbered in the tens of thousands. Saddam didn't kill a million people all by himself. Those people are still around. Some of them have decided to continue killing Americans and Iraqis because they somehow believe they'll get back to power.

Our goal is to kill and capture as many of those people as we can find; to encourage the others to recognize it's a new and different Iraq. But most importantly for the 95 percent or so of Iraqis, and I didn't (Inaudible.) number. There are an overwhelming majority of Iraqis who hate that old regime and want to live in a free country. We have to convince them that that is their future, because if you've been living under that kind of fear for that long you're still going to sit on the fence for quite a while before you decide that it's safe to climb over on our side. Building confidence in the future, which is something that our soldiers are doing every day, is a week-by-week progress in Iraq, but we've been making I think very real progress.

The capture of Saddam Hussein was obviously a huge step in that direction, but there's still a lot more to do.

Q: General Batiste, do you think when you get there that your time is going to be primarily spent on going after former regime loyalists and anti-coalition forces? Or is it going to be primarily on the reconstruction and civil affairs work? How do you think that's going to come down?

Wolfowitz: I think it's going to be done simultaneously. On the one hand we'll be killing and capturing terrorists and foreign fighters, those kinds of people. Simultaneously we've got our work cut out with respect to stability and support operations to set the conditions for Iraqi civil/military self reliance.

Q: Thank you.