

# Rumsfeld Meets Saddam: Transcript of Conversation

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## **The Egyptian Magazine published the transcript of an alleged meeting in prison between Saddam Hussein and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.**

The Egyptian magazine al-Usbu', May 2, 2005, published the text of a conversation between Saddam Hussein and US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, which is said to have taken place on Rumsfeld's trip to Baghdad in late April. Rumsfeld, according to the al Usbu' report, visited Saddam Hussein in prison. Al-Usbu' reports that "informed political sources had disclosed the details of the meeting," of which we provide the transcript, translated from the Arabic.

The Report of the Rumsfeld-Hussein meeting was also published in a number of Arabic language news media as well [in French by The Algerian newspaper Liberté. \( Rumsfeld l'a rencontré lors de son récent séjour en Irak Saddam rejette l'offre Américaine par Abdelkamel K\)](#)

The Pentagon in an official statement has denied the Rumsfeld-Hussein meeting:

"The Al Quds news report out of London that Secretary Rumsfeld recently met with Saddam Hussein is not only false but the allegation that he negotiated with Saddam is absolutely ludicrous, "

### ***Translated by Muhammad Abu Nasr***

Al-Usbu' reports that the meeting took place after an escalation of Iraqi Resistance attacks against US occupation forces and their allies and stooges in Iraq. The sources indicated that the US had lost more than 1,600 men killed and wounded in the last three months, only a fraction of which they officially admitted.

The available information indicates that US President George W. Bush held a meeting with his staff in which they discussed ways to stop the Resistance violence in Iraq. In order to save us lives and stop the continued deterioration of relations between the US and its allies and other countries that sent forces to occupied Iraq. The US leadership arrived at a decision to offer to release the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and take him to his preferred place of exile outside Iraq in return for his appearing on television to demand that the Iraqi Resistance halt its armed operations and form a political party to take part in the political process set up by the US occupation forces in Iraq.

Bush entrusted his Secretary of State, Donald Rumsfeld, with the task of going to Iraq immediately to urge the quick formation of a new Iraqi puppet "government" and to meet

with the Iraqi “leaders” who have emerged from the 30 January “election” results held under the threat of US weapons in occupied Iraq. At the same time, however, Rumsfeld was to meet with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in his American prison near Saddam International Airport west of Baghdad.

The Saddam Hussein-Rumsfeld meeting reportedly lasted nearly an hour and took place in the presence of the commander of US occupation forces in Iraq.

Rumsfeld followed up on his meeting by sending a report to President Bush in which he enclosed minutes of his meeting with the Iraqi President and offered outlines for how the US should deal with future developments in Iraq. He is said to have stressed the need for pursuing various ways to hold political dialogue with the Resistance and with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

In his report, al-Ussbu’ said, Rumsfeld emphasized that the situation in Iraq was increasingly dangerous. He said that the Arab Resistance looked like an organized army in the making and that it was training well and had been provided with important support in weapons and other material back up. Rumsfeld said that the number of Resistance fighters in Iraq had now reached 400,000 active fighters and that around them were more than five million people providing the Resistance with support.

Rumsfeld said that what took place in al-Fallujah had a negative impact on the security situation and that the Resistance had succeeded in reaping the fruits of the “war on terror” being waged by the United States to use them for its benefit. He said that Iraqi youths were now vying with one another in volunteering to fight in the ranks of the Resistance.

Rumsfeld confirmed that the names of many of the Resistance organizations that declare themselves here and there are nothing but fronts for organizations of the Arab Baath Party under the leadership currently of Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, the Vice President of Iraq.

Rumsfeld expressed the expectation that the situation would become much more difficult in the coming period since the pace of armed operations against the US forces had greatly accelerated, and now stands at more than 200 attacks every day, making dozens of casualties in the “coalition” and puppet “national guard” ranks likely.

Rumsfeld said that he had reviewed numerous American and Iraqi reports that reveal a deterioration in the security situation in Iraq and a fall in the morale level of the troops as casualties and material losses increase.

Rumsfeld indicated that there have also been serious material losses in US ranks, and that the Americans are now losing an average of at least 30 military vehicles every week, something that is continually depleting American power.

Rumsfeld also disclosed that the Resistance had just recently seized stockpiles of advanced American weaponry including artillery and rocket launchers as well as anti-aircraft launchers and that the US command expressed the fear that these arms would soon have their effect in escalating the movements of violence and Resistance operations.

At the end of his report, al-Ussbu’ reports, Rumsfeld urged the continuation of the dialogue with Saddam Hussein and his supporters until they can arrive at a formula for bringing about a temporary truce to facilitate a discussion of both sides’ proposals.

Al-Ussbu' obtained the minutes of the conversation between Saddam Hussein and Donald Rumsfeld from a reliable American source.

### **Transcript of the meeting between President Saddam Hussein and US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld:**

*AT the beginning of the meeting President Saddam appeared extremely calm, perhaps he was surprised that his visitor was Rumsfeld, but he did not show any nervous tension. Rumsfeld began the discussion:*

**Rumsfeld:** I have come to meet you to talk with out about the situation in Iraq. We have been in communication with some of your supporters inside and outside Iraq and they advised us to listen to you.

**Saddam Hussein:** And what is it that you want? Your forces have occupied the territory of noble Iraq; you brought down the ruling regime without any legal basis; you attacked the sovereignty of an independent, free, sovereign country; and you committed crimes that history will record as testimony against your bloodstained civilization. So what more do you want after all that?

Rumsfeld: (trying to conceal his anger): there no call for going into the past. I've come specially to present you a clear and specific offer and I want to hear from you a clear and specific answer.

Saddam Hussein (mockingly): I suppose you've come to apologize and return authority to the Iraqis.

Rumsfeld: We have nothing to apologize for. You were a danger to your neighbors. You were trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and you practiced dictatorship over your people. So it was natural for us to extend our hands to help the people of Iraq to rid themselves of the perils they faced for more than thirty years.

Saddam Hussein: I know that you're ignorant of history and I know that your president is no less ignorant. But it seems that you've been telling lies for so long that you have come to believe them yourselves. If you mean by "our neighbors" the Zionist Entity, then, yes, we really were posing a danger to it and preparing to liberate our plundered land in Palestine. This is the trust of every Arab person, not just Iraqis, for that land is Arab and its people are Arab and the Zionists have done nothing but occupy the land. They came to us from every corner of the world with your help and that of the old colonial powers. But if you mean Kuwait, I would like to ask you: Have you withdrawn from Kuwait or not?

Rumsfeld: These are security issues. Besides, between us and Kuwait and the other Gulf States there are security agreements. We came in based on their request to defend them from your threats.

Saddam Hussein: Isn't it funny to entrust the wolf to guard the sheep? The Kuwaiti people are an Arab people, and Kuwait is Iraqi territory. So I would ask you to go and read up on history well, except that I am sure that you will never be able to grasp it.

Rumsfeld: Enough of this chatter. I am offering you . . .

Saddam Hussein (cuts him off): Before you offer me your rotten goods, I want to ask you: did you find any weapons of mass destruction or not?

Rumsfeld (confused): we haven't found any so far. But we definitely will find them one day. Do you deny that you had the intention of making a nuclear bomb?

Saddam Hussein: We had no weapons of mass destruction since 1991. We were truthful when we spoke to the International Inspection Team and we were truthful in our letters to Kofi Annan. And you knew those facts, but you were looking for any false excuse to occupy Iraq and overthrow the legal authorities.

Rumsfeld: The Iraqis greeted us happily and welcomed us and the reason was the bloody practices of your regime for all the years in which you ruled Iraq.

Saddam Hussein: I ask you, Mr. Rumsfeld . . . Enough lying. You are the ones who opened up cascades of blood on the land of Iraq. You plotted against us and you came with some traitors to take over rule of the great land of Iraq.

Rumsfeld: The ones you call traitors were chosen as their leaders by the Iraqi people by democratic means and clean elections, such as never took place while you ruled the country.

Saddam Hussein: I knew that you came with a band of traitors with [Jalal] al-Talibani in their front ranks (laughs mockingly). Great Iraq being ruled by al-Talibani and al-Ja'fari, isn't that ridiculous? And what kind of elections are you talking about. Is it possible to hold free elections, as you call them, when our country is occupied? Mr. Rumsfeld, we have learned from history that occupiers come only with their lackeys and agents, then you want after all that to convince me that the people of Iraq are enjoying freedom and democracy? You must really be delirious.

Rumsfeld (trying very hard to control his anger): You are in isolation and don't know the facts of what is going on outside. The Iraqi people have been freed from your oppression. If they saw you or any of your men in the street, they would destroy you!!

Saddam Hussein: And I bet you that if you were able to announce where you are in Iraq, if the Iraqi Resistance learned where you were, you wouldn't be able to get out alive. I want to pass on some advice that you must convey to your stupid president: you must tell him to save what remains of his troops. Death is stalking them in every place and history will not forgive him.

Rumsfeld: I came to talk with you about the 'terrorist' operations that your men are inciting and carrying out. Your men recently carried out a foul attack against Abu Ghurayb prison where more than 50 Americans were killed or wounded, and they killed a number of those in custody on various charges as well. Your men are getting help from terrorists from every corner of the world and they are threatening the democratic experiment in Iraq.

Saddam Hussein: What exactly is it that you want?

Rumsfeld: I'm making you one offer and that is that you will be released and can choose for yourself a place of exile freely, in any country you like, on condition that you go on television and issue a condemnation of terrorism and order your men to stop these acts.

Saddam Hussein: Have you obtained the agreement of your president to this offer?

Rumsfeld: Yes, this offer has been agreed on in a meeting in which the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, and Chief of Intelligence took part. And I have been authorized to inform you of this offer.

Saddam Hussein: It's a trifling offer.

Rumsfeld (with a sigh): We're also ready to bring elements close to you into the government.

Saddam Hussein: And what else?

Rumsfeld: You will be given generous financial assistance and security protection for you and your family in the country of your choice.

Saddam Hussein: Do you want to hear my conditions?

Rumsfeld: I would love to.

Saddam Hussein (with an air of superciliousness and superiority) I want first from you that you set a time table for your withdrawal from Iraq and that your government commit itself to it before the world and that you begin the withdrawal immediately.

Secondly, I ask you to release immediately all the Iraqi and Arab prisoners in the prisons you have set up or in which you have taken the freedom of tens of thousands of honorable people of Iraq. Thirdly, I ask from you to pledge to grant full compensation for the material losses that afflicted the Iraqi people as a result of your aggression against our country since the Mother of Battles in 1991 and until today. And I accept the assistance of an Arab and International Committee in estimating the extent of those losses.

Fourth, I ask that you return the money that you and your men plundered from the treasuries of Iraq, and its oil, in particular that criminal[L. Paul] Bremer and his gang of traitors and renegades.

Fifth, the return of the artifacts that you stole and gave to the archaeological artifact mafia. These are treasures that are beyond all the monetary value in the world, because they carry the history of Iraq and its civilization. It's true that you don't have any civilization or history and that the lifespan of your country is no more than a few hundred years, but all that must not serve to justify your theft and your hatred for the civilization of Iraq and the wealth of Iraq.

And sixth, you must hand over the weapons of mass destruction if you have found any and return to us the lives of all the martyrs whose lives you took and to return the honor of the noble women of Iraq whom you dishonored.

Rumsfeld: Is this some kind of joke?

Saddam Hussein: No! This is the bitter reality. . . which you know, Mr. Rumsfeld. You have committed the greatest crime in history against a peaceful Arab country. We met together in the 1980s. Do you remember your offers?

Rumsfeld: Enough of the past. We are reassessing our positions towards you and towards a number of powers that have been hostile to us in the past. We have decided to hold dialogue with moderate Islamicists and we have no objection to their coming to power through the ballot box. More important than that we have decided to open channels for dialogue with 'terrorist' organizations like Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and Hizbollah, which is pro-Iranian, and also with other fundamentalist organizations in the whole world. We even have a plan for contacting the Taliban movement in Afghanistan to study the possibility of their participation in power, in exchange for their giving up arms.

Saddam Hussein: So you have begun to rethink your erroneous course?

Rumsfeld: It is a natural development of events. We are striving to spread democracy in all countries and movements subject to tyranny.

Saddam Hussein: May you prosper if you are truthful. I know your real aim, though. If you were really truthful, then you and your allies must begin immediately by withdrawing from Iraq. And you would also have to depart from your position of support for 'Israel'. But I know that your president is stubborn and arrogant and is not telling the truth.

Rumsfeld: He is a democratically elected president, not a bloody ruler like you.

Saddam Hussein: Terror is your product and lying is your method.

Rumsfeld: This offer is a historic opportunity for you. You will be released and we will consult with you in everything related to the running of Iraq. If you refuse this offer, the opportunity will not be fulfilled.

Saddam Hussein: I am not looking for opportunities. I am not looking for a way to save my neck from the gallows that you have set up for all of Iraq. If I wanted that I would have accepted the Russian offer and saved my sons and grandson from martyrdom. I don't know what has become of my family and my daughters and grandchildren. But believe me I am concerned with every Iraqi citizen and the future of great Iraq more than I am concerned with myself and my family.

Through your men, you previously made an offer that if I declare that weapons of mass destruction were smuggled to Syria, you said that in return you would release me. I rejected that then and I reject it again now.

Rumsfeld: I don't want a rejection from you. I want you to think about it. We are continuing our reassessment of our stances at the present time. We want to stop the bloodshed on both sides. And therefore we have made this offer out of the logic of power and not the logic of weakness.

We asked Jalal at-Talibani to make a statement denying any intention of executing you as a sign of good intentions on our part. We are ready to reassess our whole position on the political arrangement in Iraq as a whole and to discuss this matter with you and with your men.

Saddam Hussein: Are you ready to withdraw or not?

Rumsfeld: We can possibly discuss redeployment. Our forces have prepared bases for a long stay. We can possibly withdraw from streets and cities, but we will remain in the bases for

some time.

Saddam Hussein: then you want a new stooge to add to that line of stooges. No Mr. Rumsfeld. Don't forget that you are talking with Saddam Hussein the President of the Republic of Iraq.

Rumsfeld: But you lost power.

Saddam Hussein: I have nothing left but honor and honor cannot be bought and sold.

Rumsfeld: But life is priceless.

Saddam Hussein: There is no value to life without honor. You robbed Iraq of its honor when you trampled on its land and we will regain our honor whether Saddam Hussein remains or dies a martyr.

Rumsfeld: Your supporters with whom we have been discussing told us that you were the first and last decision maker. Were they expecting this reaction from you?

Saddam Hussein: Definitely, they know that Saddam Hussein cannot back away at the expense of his homeland and honor.

Rumsfeld: History will hold you responsible for the blood that is being shed in Iraq.

Saddam Hussein: Rather history will judge you for your crimes. I warned you before, saying that you would commit suicide on the walls of Baghdad. And here you are paying the price. I want you to go to London and read the records of the British Foreign Office and learn something about the struggle of the Iraqi people against your British friends who are now repeating their mistakes and fighting with you. The Iraqi people are a stubborn people who do not fear death. The Resistance is stronger than you imagine. So I promise you that you will have even more.

***Translated by Muhammad Abu Nasr***

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