

Slip of the tongue? Rumsfeld admits that “Flight 93” was shot down

VIDEO Footage and transcripts

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Theme: [Terrorism](#)

Global Research, May 12, 2007

12 May 2007

[text revised on May 14, 2007]

“Well, I discussed it with the president. Are we prepared to order our aircraft to shoot down these airliners that have been hijacked? He said yes... I-it was my advice. It was his decision.”(Vice President Dick Cheney, September 11, 2001, source CBS News Archives)

“That’s a sobering moment, to order your own combat aircraft to shoot down your own civilian aircraft. But it was an easy decision to make, given the—given the fact that we had learned that a commercial aircraft was being used as a weapon. I say easy decision. It was—I didn’t hesitate; let me put it to you that way. I knew what had to be done.”(President George W. Bush, September 11, 2001, source CBS News Archives)

“The airplace rolled onto its back, and one of the hijackers began shouting, ‘Allah is the Greatest’. With the sounds of the passenger counterattack continuing, the aircraft plowed into an empty field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, at 580 miles per hour....” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, July 2004, Chapter 1)

Rumsfeld stated in a speech to US troops in Iraq (24 December 2004) that United Airlines Flight 93 was “shot down” on 9/11:

And I think all of us have a sense if we imagine the kind of world we would face if the people who bombed the mess hall in Mosul, or the people who did the bombing in Spain, or the people who attacked the United States in New York, shot down the plane over Pennsylvania and attacked the Pentagon

(Donald Rumsfeld, speech to US troops in Mosul, Iraq, December 24, 2004. The speech was broadcast by CNN. For complete transcript of Rumsfeld’s speech see below)

Was it a slip of the tongue on the part of the former Secretary of Defense? Or was he simply corroborating the statements of the President and Vice-President on September 11, 2001? These statements confirm unequivocally that the President and Commander in Chief had ordered the shooting down of a commercial aircraft on the morning of 9/11. (see quote above)

[Click to view/ listen to Rumsfeld](#)

DONALD RUMSFELD SAYS FLIGHT 93 SHOT DOWN

There was virtually no commentary by the mainstream media at the time of Rumsfeld's Mosul 12/24/2004 Christmas speech to US troops. Nor was there discussion regarding the coverup of the President's decision on the morning of 9/11 to shoot down a commercial aircraft. The "official truth" contradicts the official statement of the President and Commander in Chief.

With regard to Rumsfeld's slip of the tongue, a National Public Radio broadcast on December 24, 2004 acknowledged Rumsfeld's words, while casually dismissing their significance:

SIEGEL: One other thing that Secretary Rumsfeld said in Baghdad today was in all likelihood a slip of the tongue, but one that may prove fodder for conspiracy theorists. The Defense secretary said this while speaking about a number of terrorist acts and the people who've committed them.

[excerpt of Rumsfeld's speech in Mosul, see above]

SIEGEL: 'The people who shot down the plane over Pennsylvania.' He was presumably speaking of United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, on 9/11. No US official has ever credited theories that the plane was shot down. We've been unable to get clarification from the Pentagon.

(National Public Radio (NPR), All Things Considered 8:00 PM EST NPR, Donald Rumsfeld's surprise visits to US troops in Iraq, December 24, 2004, Anchor: Robert Siegel)

Contradictory Statements

The "official" version of what happened to United Airlines "Flight 93", which blatantly contradicts the equally "official" statement of President Bush, is contained in the 9/11 Commission Report, chaired by former Jersey Governor Thomas Kean:

"The airplane rolled onto its back, and one of the hijackers began shouting, 'Allah is the Greatest'. With the sounds of the passenger counterattack continuing, the aircraft plowed into an empty field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, at 580 miles per hour...."

(National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, July 2004, Chapter 1, http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Ch1.pdf)

While the words of the former Secretary of Defense (12/24/2004) contradict the official story as contained in the 9/11 Commission report, they are consistent with the statements by President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (who at the time was National Security adviser) to the effect that orders had indeed been given by the President and Commander in Chief to shoot down a civilian aircraft over Pennsylvania. Below are excerpts of the 9/11 statements of Bush, Cheney and Rice recorded by CBS News:

PELLEY: (Voiceover) Down in the bunker, Mr. Cheney was trying to figure out how many planes were hijacked. At the time they feared there could be as many as 11.

As the planes are tracking toward Washington, a discussion begins about whether we should

shoot them down. How did that happen?

Vice Pres. CHENEY: Well, I discussed it with the president. Are we prepared to order our aircraft to shoot down these airliners that have been hijacked? He said yes.

(Photograph of Cheney)

PELLEY: That was your advice to the president?

Vice Pres. CHENEY: I-it was my advice. It was his decision.

Pres. BUSH: That's a sobering moment, to order your own combat aircraft to shoot down your own civilian aircraft. But it was an easy decision to make, given the-given the fact that we had learned that a commercial aircraft was being used as a weapon. I say easy decision. It was-I didn't hesitate; let me put it to you that way. I knew what had to be done.

(Footage of Pennsylvania crash site)

PELLEY: (Voiceover) And the passengers on United Flight 93 also knew what had to be done. They fought for control, and sacrificed themselves in a Pennsylvania meadow. The flight was 15 minutes from Washington.

Dr. RICE: There was that horrible time when we wondered if Flight 93 had, indeed, been shot down by an American pilot.

PELLEY: On the orders of the president.

Dr. RICE: Yes.

PELLEY: It is quite possible that those people gave their lives for you.

Dr. RICE: Its entirely possible. In fact, I think it's probable. Clearly, the terrorists were trying to take out as many symbols of government as they could. The Pentagon, perhaps the Capitol, perhaps the White House. These people saved us not only physically, but they saved us psychologically and symbolically in a very important way, too.

(CBS, 60 Minutes, 8:00 PM ET, The president's story; behind the scenes with President Bush and his staff on 9/11, Anchor: Scott Pelley, September 11, 2002. emphasis added)

These statements acknowledging that flight 93 had been shot down on the orders of the President on the advice of the Vice President were re-broadcast one year later on the first anniversary of the tragic events of 9/11.

While the official story had in the meantime been changed, the September 11, 2002 broadcast of CBS' 60 Minutes, reveals the truth: the President and Commander in Chief gave the orders to shoot down a civilian aircraft.

While Rumsfeld made no public statement regarding the shooting down of flight 93, he was fully informed regarding President Bush's decision.

VIDEO

Click to view/ listen to Rumsfeld on CNN.

Scroll down for complete transcript of his speech to US troops in Iraq on December 24, 2004 as well as the commentary on National Public Radio (NPR), which acknowledges Rumsfeld's "slip of the tongue."

DONALD RUMSFELD SAYS FLIGHT 93 SHOT DOWN

Rumsfeld statement was made on Christmas Eve in Mosul, Iraq, December 24, 2004

Below is the transcript of his speech as aired on CNN

DONALD RUMSFELD, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

24 December 2004 (Source CNN)

And to change that way of living, would strike at the very essence of our country.

And I think all of us have a sense if we imagine the kind of world we would face if the people who bombed the mess hall in Mosul, or the people who did the bombing in Spain, or the people who attacked the United States in New York, shot down the plane over Pennsylvania and attacked the Pentagon, the people who cut off peoples' heads on television to intimidate, to frighten — indeed the word "terrorized" is just that. Its purpose is to terrorize, to alter behavior, to make people be something other than that which they want to be.

And that is exactly what we cannot allow to happen.

The American people recognize the importance of your mission: that you're here for a purpose, and that purpose is not to run the country of Iraq. That's for the Iraqi people. It's not to find an American solution for Iraq.

Indeed, it is to be here, to try to help train and equip and organize and assist the Iraqi security forces so that they, over time, will be able to take on responsibility for their country. And this country will find a solution that will be uniquely Iraqi.

If you think about what's happened in Afghanistan, three years ago it was the training ground for terrorists. It was the place that the attacks against the United States were hatched and launched. And today they've elected their first popularly elected president in the history of the country. They are moving toward parliamentary elections in April. They have established a democratic system that's respectful of all of the various diverse elements in that country.

Women are voting for the first time. They're able to go outside by themselves without being accompanied. Young children can fly a kite, can sing and dance, which they were not allowed to do under the Taliban. The soccer stadium in Kabul is being used for soccer instead of beheading people.

So the accomplishment in Afghanistan was a truly breathtaking experience. I was there for the inauguration. And President Karzai, from the bottom of his heart, thanked the American people and said that without that help they would not be a free society, they would not have

been able to what they are doing, that people would not be going to school.

Here's a country that doesn't have any of the capabilities that this country does. It doesn't have the water, it doesn't have the oil, it doesn't have the population that is as well-educated as Iraq. This country has every chance in the world to make it.

And it's in an important location. It will have a big affect on this region. They've made good progress. If you think about it, they've gone from an Iraqi Governing Council to an interim government, moving toward elections at the end of next month, moving toward then the development of a constitution.

I've lived a few years — a lot of years. And I have seen fascism rise and fall. I've seen communism rise and fall. We've seen the Berlin Wall get built and get torn down. And if you think about the message in all of that, we've seen Afghanistan go from a terrorist training ground to a democracy.

Now, what does that say? It says that the great sweep of human history is for freedom. And that is the side we're on. And that's the side you're on.

Just a few weeks ago, Falluja was controlled by assassins and today it's a free city. Something like 140,000 refugees have come to this country from other countries, Iraqis. Why do they do that? Why do they get up one morning and say to themselves, "I'm going to leave where I am that's safer to be sure, and I'm going to go back to Iraq"?

They are voting with their feet. They are convinced that life is going to be good here, that there is a chance of making it, and that people do need to pitch in and see that it happens.

I must say, as a personal message, before I come out and shake hands and have a chance to tell you how much we appreciate your service, let me just say that we know that you sacrifice. We certainly know your families do. And they certainly serve, just as you do. And they are strong.

I get a chance to see them in Bethesda and Walter Reed and other hospitals. And I meet the families of people who have been wounded, your colleagues, people who have been here and gone back and are recuperating. And I must say, the families are the most amazing thing. They are truly extraordinary.

They are proud of what their sons and daughters do. They have strength and courage. And I don't think anyone can come away from being with them without gaining inspiration for the tough tasks ahead.

Now, it's Christmas Eve. And I don't want to, in any way, paint a picture that's pretty, because it isn't pretty. This is a tough part of the world. This is a tough country. Your friends and your associates are at risk, as you are. And I wish I could stand here and say that the incidents of violence were going to calm down between now and the elections.

I wish I could stand here and say that the incidents of violence will calm down after the elections. I can't say that.

The people that we're up against have a lot to lose, a lot to lose. They also have brains. And they watch what we do, and they adjust to what we do. And they're determined.

But so are we. We are in a test of wills. There isn't a battle anyone could bring against you that you couldn't win. You're not going to be faced with battles. You're going to be faced in the shadows, in the side streets and with people who are using every conceivable time, task and way of attacking you where you're most vulnerable.

And that's what we face.

So there isn't any way that foreign troops, our troops, coalition troops or any other troops from any country can provide security in this country.

What we can do is contribute to security. What we can do is help to train the Iraqis and mentor the Iraqis, and see that the Iraqis develop the capability, the equipment, the training, the organization, the chain of command, the experience, the rib cage, the officer leadership, the non-com leadership, the experience to take over responsibility for their own security.

And that's our task. That's what we have to do. That's what is being done. And we've got wonderful people working on it, and I'm here to simply to look you in the eye and say, "Thank you, every one of you. God bless you."

(APPLAUSE)

(emphasis added, CNN Load date 25 December 2004)

In reviewing news archives, the slip of the tongue was acknowledged by NPR. It was not mentioned in other news stories. The NPR transcript is provided below.

It is worth noting that it took more than 8 months for this NPR transcript to be made available in the news archives. (load date: 5 August 2005)

National Public Radio (NPR)

SHOW: All Things Considered 8:00 PM EST NPR

December 24, 2004 Friday

Donald Rumsfeld's surprise visits to US troops in Iraq

ANCHORS: ROBERT SIEGEL

This is ALL THINGS CONSIDERED from NPR News. I'm Robert Siegel.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld paid a surprise visit to troops in Iraq today. His first stop was Mosul, where three days ago a suicide bomber killed 22 people in an American mess tent. Rumsfeld's message to the soldiers was upbeat. He praised the job they're doing in Iraq, and said that while he did not want to paint a pretty picture of the situation there, the insurgents cannot be allowed to win.

Secretary DONALD RUMSFELD (Defense Department): The thought of turning over this country to the people who behead people on television and videos, to the people who consciously, purposefully kill innocent men, women and children would turn this part of the world and this country back to darkness.

SIEGEL: Later, Secretary Rumsfeld told troops in Baghdad that their efforts are a crucial part of the global war against terrorism.

Sec. RUMSFELD: The American people recognize the importance of your mission, that you're here for a purpose and that that purpose is not to run the country of Iraq—that's for the Iraqi people—it's not to find an American solution for Iraq; indeed, it is to be here to try to help, train and equip and organize and assist the Iraqi security forces so that they, over time, will be able to take on responsibility for their country. And this country will find a solution that will be uniquely Iraqi.

SIEGEL: Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld speaking in Iraq today.

Reporter Alistair Bull of the Reuters news agency traveled with the secretary. He says the visit began very early in the morning.

Mr. ALISTAIR BULL (Reuters News Agency): He has had a whistle-stop tour of Iraq. He started at the crack of dawn in Mosul. We landed at quarter past 5 in the morning with sharpshooters at the perimeter of the airport. We came in hard and fast in a C-7 cargo plane, and he raced and visited the hospital and then addressed the troops at Mosul and went and had breakfast with them.

From there, we whistled off to Tikrit and he met with Major General John Batiste of the Big Red One, the 1st Infantry, and then addressed the troops there. And the message at both Mosul, Tikrit and then later Fallujah and in Baghdad has been the same. He's here to thank the troops and to wish them a merry Christmas.

SIEGEL: Has he taken questions from the troops on this visit as he did the other day in Kuwait?

Mr. BULL: He has taken questions, but they've been slightly different in character. He hasn't had any kind of confrontational questions put to him. He was asked about equipment but in a very courteous and restrained fashion and not at all adversarial. And his answer was, 'Yes, the equipment will be provided.'

He was also asked about bad media coverage, and that was music to his ears. He immediately pointed out that that probably wasn't a question placed there by the press.

SIEGEL: That was a reference to the story that the question about the armor for the Humvees had been placed by a reporter in Kuwait.

Mr. BULL: Exactly. There was—it appeared later that a reporter had helped the soldier frame the question. And, of course, this was an opportunity for the Defense secretary to turn the tables, which he did with delight.

SIEGEL: Reporter Alistair Bull of Reuters, thank you very much for talking with us.

Mr. BULL: A pleasure.

SIEGEL: One other thing that Secretary Rumsfeld said in Baghdad today was in all likelihood a slip of the tongue, but one that may prove fodder for conspiracy theorists. The Defense secretary said this while speaking about a number of terrorist acts and the people who've committed them.

Sec. RUMSFELD: *The people who bombed the mess hall in Mosul are the people who did the bombing in Spain or the people who attacked the United States in New York and shot down the plane over Pennsylvania and attacked the Pentagon.*

SIEGEL: *'The people who shot down the plane over Pennsylvania.'* He was presumably speaking of United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, on 9/11. No US official has ever credited theories that the plane was shot down. We've been unable to get clarification from the Pentagon.

emphasis added



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