

Remarks as delivered
Paul Wolfowitz
Deputy Secretary of Defense
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Thank you, Frank. That's the kind of introduction that makes you want to sit down before you spoil the impression. (Laughter) Frank is a great friend, and a great friend to have, and a major part of the reason why I'm here. He's a hard man to say no to. But also, I really would not have wanted to say no to an invitation to speak to this important organization.

Minister Tang, members of the Taiwan delegation, Representative Chen, ladies and gentlemen... Frank, I have to tell you that your former wrestling partner sends his regards. For those of you don't know, that's my boss, Donald Rumsfeld. He wrestled with Frank at Princeton, and he still wrestles. (Laughter) Only now, he wrestles with the challenges of running the campaign against terrorism. He wrestles with the challenge of running the Department of Defense, and occasionally he even wrestles with the press. And so far, he seems to be winning on all counts.

As Frank knows, and as he mentioned, when Rumsfeld welcomed me back to the Pentagon for my third tour, he said, "we'll keep bringing you back until you get it right." (Laughter) Hopefully it's third-time-lucky, but we are certainly doing our best to try to get it right.

Someone told me you chose St. Petersburg as the site for your conference for two reasons. First, because it's nice and warm here. Second, because it's not Washington, D.C. (Laughter) I took the opportunity of coming to this meeting to have two very good visits, one with General Holland and his people at Special Operations Command, and then with General Franks at Central Command. They're doing an magnificent job.

In one of his briefings we attended together in Washington, General Franks said, "I always look forward to the opportunity to leave Florida to come to Washington, D.C." and he was greeted with the peals of laughter he expected to get. (Laughter) Actually, I think the General agrees with my point of view, which is I always look forward to leaving Washington to go just about anywhere. (Laughter) And today I'm delighted it's Florida.

Before I go into the main subject of my talk today, which is about U.S.-Taiwan relations and the larger picture in Asia, I actually thought I would share with you an experience from earlier today at Special Operations Command. It was an extraordinary chance to meet with two Special Forces officers and two Special Forces NCOs who have recently come back from spending two months with General Dostum in northern Afghanistan. And it was a particularly special experience for me because unknown to these guys and I think unknown to anyone else, but it turned out I have been publicly reading from their

dispatches for the last couple of months because they were two of the most extraordinary documents I've turned up in the course of this three or four months of this campaign.

The first of them is from the Special Forces Captain who was inserted with General Dostum on October 19, and I mention the date because that is within less than a month from the President directing General Franks to plan a campaign in Afghanistan, less than two weeks of that campaign beginning. We had Special Operators on the ground in northern Afghanistan, and for a Defense Department that is frequently accused of being sluggish, obstinate, inflexible and lacking agility, I think it's a pretty remarkable performance. The dispatch itself is even more remarkable. This from October 25: "I am advising a man on how best to employ light infantry and horse cavalry in the attack against Taliban T-55s, mortars, artillery, personnel carriers, and machine guns, a tactic which I thought had become outdated with the invention of the Gatling gun. The mujahadeen have done that every day we have been on the ground. They have attacked with ten rounds of ammunition per man, with snipers having less than a hundred rounds. I observed one man who walked ten miles to get to the fight, who proudly showed me his artificial right leg from the knee down. We have witnessed horse cavalry attacking Taliban strong points, the last several kilometers under mortar, artillery and sniper fire. There is little medical care if injured, only a donkey ride to the aid station, which is a dirt hut." And today, among the photographs they showed me was a photograph of their ambulance with a wounded Afghan soldier on it, and it was indeed a donkey. "The muj are doing very well with what they have however. They have killed over 125 Taliban while losing only eight. But we could not do what we are doing without the close air support. Everywhere I go, civilians and Muj soldiers are always telling me they are glad the USA has come. They all speak of their hopes for a better Afghanistan once the Taliban are gone. Have to go now. General Dostum is finishing his phone call with a Congressman back in the United States." (Laughter)

With that, he went literally charging off on horseback. I learned today by the way he was the only member of his 12-man detachment who had ever sat on a horse in his life. They kept up with, literally, cavalry people. His commander sent a dispatch a of weeks later after the fall of Mazar-e-Sharif, on November 10: "Departed position from which I spoke to you last night. We left on horseback, and linked up with the remainder of our element. I had a meeting with General Dostum. We then departed from our initial location, and rode on begged, borrowed and confiscated transportation. While it looked like a rag-tag procession, the morale into Mazar-e-Sharif was triumphant. The locals loudly greeted us and thanked all Americans. Much waving, cheering and clapping." This from an Army man. "The U.S. Navy and Air Force did a great job. I am very proud of my men who have performed exceptionally well under extreme conditions. I have personally witnessed heroism under fire by two U.S. non-commissioned officers -- one Army, one Air Force -- when we came under direct artillery fire last night less than fifty meters from our position. When I ordered them to call close air support, they did so immediately without flinching, even though they were under fire. As you know, a U.S. element was nearly overrun four days ago, but continued to call close air support, and ensured the Mujahadeen forces did not suffer defeat. These two examples are typical of the

performance of your soldiers and airmen. Truly uncommon valor has been a common virtue."

I tell that not only to bring a little new from the front, and not only to give a testimonial to the extraordinary bravery of the men and women who are risking their lives for us even as we speak, but also because I think there is a lesson in this about the subject of your conference, which is Taiwan's future security. The lesson that it was possible to take 19th century horse cavalry and 50-year-old bombers and combine them with modern communications into a truly 21st century capability. And when Secretary Rumsfeld was asked about what he had in mind by reintroducing the horse cavalry into modern warfare, he said, "it's all part of our transformation plan." (Laughter)

And indeed it is. And I believe that as important as it is -- and I think it's very important - - to make sure that we make available to Taiwan the right defense articles and defense systems to provide for Taiwan's defense, it is even more important, if possible, that those instruments be used intelligently, be used innovatively, be used jointly among the services, and even be combined with old systems. I know I've heard often from my friends in Taiwan about how old some of their systems are -- our B-52's are even older. And those horses are pretty old. (Laughter) Using the old and the new in creative ways I think is the key to success in modern warfare, and that's why I thought it was worth reading that dispatch.

But now let me talk about the main subject that we're all here for: the U.S.-Taiwan relationship, and specifically the defense aspect of it. Even though our relationship is an unofficial, people-to-people relationship, the ties between the United States and Taiwan are strong and vigorous, as we see by this conference. The United States has a fundamental interest in peace and stability in the Western Pacific. An open, democratic Taiwan that embraces free markets and respects human rights, and is a model for democratic progress throughout the region, adds to the prospects for peace and prosperity in this vital part of the world. The success of Taiwan's democracy is an important U.S. national interest, and we intend to work with our friends in Taipei to promote the growth and flourishing of Taiwan's democracy in an environment of peace and security.

This meeting is taking place is taking place during a period of significant change in the Taiwan Strait. Economic relations between Taiwan and the mainland have picked up dramatically, and are expected to continue to grow with positive consequences for the medium and long-term. Increased confidence between the people on both sides of the Strait, and economic and cultural matters is an important, positive development. But of course, it does not by itself equate to resolution of the fundamental issues that divide the PRC and Taiwan. One only has to look at the PRC's continuing deployment of military forces across the Taiwan Strait to draw the conclusion that peaceful resolution of these problems cannot be taken for granted. It is something both sides will have to work hard to achieve. While the PRC voices a preference for peaceful unification, it still refuses to abandon the use of force against Taiwan as a policy option.

We are therefore monitoring the PLA's force modernization opposite Taiwan very carefully, including the PLA's growing arsenal of tactical ballistic missiles. These missiles are clearly designed to project a threatening posture, and to try to intimidate the people and the democratically elected government of Taiwan -- so far, I'm happy to say, without much success.

China is also modernizing its Navy. Virtually every country in the world is undertaking this sort of modernization in some form or another. But we have to watch closely for the potential impact on Taiwan's sea lanes of communication, or access to its ports. Taiwan needs to remain vigilant, and it should commit to increasing professionalization of its military ranks, and increasing jointness among its services to keep pace with potential changes in the security situation in the Strait.

As for us, the Taiwan Relations Act remains the firm foundation for U.S. policy towards Taiwan. Its premise is that as long as fundamental differences remain between Taipei and Beijing, Taiwan will require an adequate self-defense capability to maintain peace and security in the Western Pacific. The TRA states clearly that any attempt to change Taiwan's status by other-than-peaceful means, would be of "grave concern" to the United States, and a threat to peace and stability in the Western Pacific.

As President Bush and others have said, the United States is committed to doing whatever it takes to help Taiwan defend itself. Our position is clear. We don't support Taiwan independence, but we oppose the use of force. We believe that the PRC and Taiwan should engage directly in dialogue to resolve peacefully the issues that divide them.

Taiwan needs reform in its defense establishment to meet the challenges of the 21st century. I suppose I could substitute the United States for that sentence as well. (Laughter) This reform includes strengthening civilian oversight of the military, to reflect the growth of democracy on the island. It includes rationalizing the military acquisition process through formation of a strategic planning department under the minister of defense. And it definitely includes enhancing jointness between Taiwan's three services.

With the recent enactment of the National Defense and Reorganization laws, Taiwan is already taking positive steps to transform its military into a more effective fighting force. We think that this makes sense for Taiwan. The Taiwan peoples' elected representatives have to make their own decisions, of course. But we hope that the civilian and military leadership in Taiwan will look at these kinds of issues from a professional perspective.

Taiwan faces numerous challenges as it modernizes and reforms its defense establishment -- the challenges of developing the right relationships between civilians and military, and the right degree of jointness among the military services. These are challenges that we in the United State have had a lot of experience with over the years, and we are eager to help. Just as important as arms sales issues, these non-hardware or software exchanges serve very important purposes. They can help Taiwan to better

integrate newly-acquired systems into its inventory. And these initiatives can provide an avenue to exchange views on Taiwan's requirements for defense modernization, to include professionalization, organizational issues, and training.

Moreover, these types of exchanges enhance Taiwan's ability to assess longer-term defense needs, and develop well-founded security policies. Such exchanges enhance Taiwan's capacity for making operationally sound and cost effective acquisition decisions.

We take very seriously our responsibility under the Taiwan Relations Act to make available to Taiwan defense articles and services that can enable it to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. The TRA outlines our approach to arms sales, and I think all of you must be very familiar with it. We are following through with our commitments, and we believe that Taiwan is similarly committed to overcome the kinds of challenges I've just mentioned.

Along with the arms package that was approved in April 2001, the President directed the establishment of a new process for "normal, routine consideration" of Taiwan's requests for defense articles and services. This normal approach should mirror process the United States employs around the world. Since 1982, Taiwan had submitted formal requests for defense articles and services in annual talks. Taiwan is now able to submit requests throughout the year, like all our other security assistance customers. As a result, we no longer require annual arms sales talks. But we intend to continue a close, effective dialogue.

The people of Taiwan were shocked by the attacks of September 11, and they made large voluntary contributions to the victims here in the United States. Taiwan is making other significant contributions in our war against terrorism, including providing Afghanistan with significant humanitarian aid. These contributions speak well for the people of Taiwan and their commitment to all those things that terrorists would try to undermine or destroy.

Let me spend a few minutes on the larger region, of which Taiwan is a part, a region I think in which Taiwan's success and prosperity is so crucial to long-term stability.

With respect to China, the United States seeks a balanced and constructive relationship. China is not an enemy. We wish to develop areas in which our interests converge. That includes military-to-military contacts which are in our mutual interest. But these must be disciplined, purposeful and systematic. A peaceful approach by the PRC to the issues dividing them from Taiwan will be important for everyone in this important region.

Turning to Korea, the President has emphasized the seriousness of the threat posed by North Korea and the seriousness with which must address it. North Korea is a regime that arms itself with missiles and weapons of mass destruction while it starves its citizens. North Korea's missile exports threaten U.S. forces as well as those of our Korean allies and other friends. There is no question that the most immediate and pressing threat on

the Korean peninsula is North Korea's large conventional force posture. We are determined to work with South Korea to address our shared concerns over this threat. But the door to dialogue is open. We stand by our offer to meet with the North -- anytime, anywhere, without preconditions -- for substantive discussions. It is up to North Korea to take advantage of that offer and enter into positive discussions with South Korea and with us to address our concerns.

Over the past ten years, we have witnessed extraordinary changes in Japanese security attitudes and policy. During the Persian Gulf war ten years ago, Japan was only able to contribute money... only money -- tell the defense comptroller "only money."
(Laughter) It was a lot of money -- some \$13 billion -- but the Japanese people knew that no matter how much money they contributed, it would never be enough when other countries were putting lives on the line.

Since that time, there has been a slow but steady evolution in Japanese security attitudes, beginning with peacekeeping deployments in Cambodia and on the Golan Heights in the Middle East. Then in 1997, we issued a new set of defense guidelines for our security cooperation in peacetime, for the defense of Japan against armed attack, and to respond to regional contingencies. Under those important guidelines, Japan will provide a variety of rear-area, search and rescue, and other support for U.S. forces in a regional contingency, as well as continuing to take the lead in its own defense.

Following September 11, the planning that we had conducted under the guidelines provided the model that the government of Japan followed as it drew up a package of support for the coalition. That support has included airlift -- using almost one-half of Japan's C-130 fleet -- as well as at-sea refueling for U.S. and British naval ships operating in the Indian Ocean. Those are not things that Japan was required to do under our mutual security treaty. Rather, these were the actions of a close and trusted friend. They were actions that Japan took on its own initiative, because Prime Minister Koizumi recognized that fundamentally the attacks of September 11 were a threat to Japan and the rest of the world, not just the United States. We welcome the Prime Minister's courage in putting together a seven-point plan of action, and the leadership he has demonstrated in delivering on that plan. As Japan takes these and other steps, the region and the world are seeing just how much Japan has to offer if people will put aside the past and focus instead on the possibilities of the present, and opportunities and promise of the future.

Southeast Asia has also unfortunately emerged into prominence in this global war on terrorism. Clearly there is a significant in that region. We have not yet determined the full extent of the Al-Qaeda presence in East Asia, but recent arrests in Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia clearly demonstrate the need for concerted action with our friends to identify and eliminate that threat. At the invitation of the government of the Philippines, the United States has deployed some 600 military personnel, including 160 military advisors, to assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines in conducting operations to combat international terrorist groups in the southern part of that country. The mission of our deployment is to build Philippine military capabilities to help continue the war on terrorism, to defeat the Abu Sayyaf Group, to secure the release of

U.S. hostages, and to ensure that the Philippines does not become a haven for terrorists. We hope that our assistance in the Philippines will lead to the elimination of the Abu Sayyaf Group, and the creation of conditions in the Philippines that will prevent the recurrence of terrorist activity.

(Tape ends.)