Thank you very much. As I sit here and I listen to

this today, I think about the Katrina event. You saw the President go

down and throw his arm around the guy who was fixing Katrina. He said,

Good job, Brownie. I mean, that has become a laughingstock.

Well, this President has done the same thing with Rumsfeld. Beginning

in 2004, when Abu Ghraib came out, the President showed up and said the

Secretary is doing a great job, right? This will not change as long as

the President keeps Rumsfeld in that job, because Rumsfeld is the

controlling power behind it all.

As long as the President puts him out there and let's him run, you

are going

to continue to have this stuff. Rumsfeld went to Iraq in July while we

were on vacation, right at the end, and they found the bodies of 20

kidnapped and murdered bus drivers the day he arrived. A bomber blew

himself up and killed seven people. The Secretary of Defense made what

I consider to be an interesting statement in response to that. He said,

each time I come to Iraq, I see progress.

Now, no one who has any kind of realistic view of this could say that

kind of thing. You could not be watching what is going on, when it is

to our troops who are dying, or the wounded who are coming home, or the

thousands of Iraqis who are being killed and say, I see progress. There

is simply, you have got your military people talking about the fact

that it is coming apart, you had Rumsfeld this week say to some

National Guardsmen from California, no, you can't go home, I know your

enlistment is up, but you have got to stay here for another 120 days.

We are going to send you into Baghdad to calm things down. It is a

mess, and it has been a mess from the start because Rumsfeld would

never listen. Like the President, he wouldn't listen. General Shinseki

came in and said, you are going to need 300,000 troops. Rumsfeld said,

you don't know what you are saying, you are out of here. Here is your

retirement. Get out of here.

That is the response to anybody who comes into this administration

and talks. Unless the President will dump Rumsfeld, you are not going

to get any change in the policy. What is the alternative to the people

of this country? The only alternative they have is on election day to

take the gavel away from the Republican majority so that we can have

hearings run by Democrats where some questions will be asked, where

there will be some accountability so that things will begin to come up

into the public view.

We have never found out what Halliburton's contracts are all about.

We haven't found out who is responsible for Abu Ghraib. No, there isn't

a soldier or a sailor or a marine or anyone near the military.

Only if you care about taxpayer money. I mean, the

examples are so bald and so bad that it is almost laughable if it

wasn't what was going on today and it was taking us down the wrong

trail.

What has been said here today is, I was reading the Middle Eastern

papers today, everybody says that half of Afghanistan is now under

control of the Taliban. That is universal in the press.

The British general there is saying we are losing this thing; he is

worried. We will not get a change unless we get some hard questions

asked. We are never going to get them from the Republicans because they

are going to rubber-stamp what Mr. Bush and Mr. Rumsfeld and all the

rest of that bunch put together. I personally think this election is

the most important election we have had in my lifetime.

You say to yourself maybe I am getting old or something, but I went

through Vietnam, and I went through a whole bunch of things. But this

one, if we have 2 more years of ``stay the course,'' God knows where we

are going to be economically and militarily and politically and

diplomatically in the world. We have got to get some change, and

Rumsfeld would be a start. There are some other people that should go,

but if the President can't see that Rumsfeld cannot handle it; he threw

out Paul O'Neill as the Secretary of the Treasury, and he threw out

some other people, Colin Powell and some others went down the road, but

he keeps the guy who got us in the mess because it means he would have

to admit that he made a huge mistake, and he can't do it. He can't do

it, and that is the biggest problem he has.

As politicians, sometimes you have to say, ``I was wrong. I made a

mistake.''

We could go on with this for a long time, but we have

got Major General John Batiste. He was the commander of the 1st

Division in Iraq, and he said: ``Rumsfeld and his team have turned what

should have been a deliberate victory in Iraq into a prolonged

challenge.'' I mean, that is a guy who was on the ground, who was there

when the war was going on.

General Zinni, who was the central command of the whole forces, he

served in every level of command, and he said: ``We are paying the

price for a lack of credible planning, or the lack of a plan.'' Ten

years' worth of planning was thrown away. That is why we are in the

mess we are. Because Rumsfeld said we don't need these guys like Zinni,

who is my number one guy in the U.S. Central Command. That means he

headed everything in the whole area of the Middle East.

Major General Swannack said: ``I do not believe Secretary Rumsfeld is

the right person to fight that war based on his absolute failures in

managing the war against Saddam in Iraq.'' Now, he was commander of the

82nd Airborne. We all know about the Airborne. We know these are real

soldiers. These are people who follow the leader. They do not speak out

until they cannot stand it any longer.

And, finally, Lieutenant General Paul Riper said: ``If I was

President, I would have relieved him 3 years ago.'' And he said that in

2006.

Now, this man was wounded in action in Vietnam. He won the Silver

Star medal with a gold star, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star. This

man has been wounded, has stood up in the worst kind of war. And,

remember, Rumsfeld never served. Bush never served. Cheney never

served. Wolfowitz never served. You cannot find anybody who has ever

been in a war. And the

guys who know, who have done it, who sent people out to die and been

right out there with them say things like, If I was President, I would

have relieved him 3 years ago. That is 2003. That is when it started,

when they started ill prepared without the battle armor, without the

vehicle armor, without sufficient supplies. We are going to just run in

and do it, and we are going to be out in 6 months. Remember when they

told that lie? And all of us stood around and said, 6 months? Really?

This is going to be a cakewalk.

They didn't tell the truth to the American people or to their own

troops. And that is why guys like this say get them out of there if we

are going to have any change.