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## Rumsfeld warns against appeasement

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By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

Wed Aug 30, 7:40 AM ET

SALT LAKE CITY - Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said Tuesday the world faces "a new type of fascism" and warned against repeating the pre-World War II mistake of appeasement.

Rumsfeld alluded to critics of the Bush administration's war policies in terms associated with the failure to stop Nazism in the 1930s, "a time when a certain amount of cynicism and moral confusion set in among the Western democracies."

Without explicitly citing Bush critics at home or abroad, he said "it is apparent that many have still not learned history's lessons." Aides to Rumsfeld said later he was not accusing the administration's critics of trying to appease the terrorists but was cautioning against a repeat of errors made in earlier eras.

Speaking to several thousand veterans at the American Legion's national convention, Rumsfeld said that as fascism and Nazism took hold in Europe, those who warned of a coming crisis were ridiculed or ignored. He quoted Winston Churchill as observing that trying to accommodate Hitler was "a bit like feeding a crocodile, hoping it would eat you last."

"I recount this history because once again we face similar challenges in efforts to confront the rising threat of a new type of fascism," he said.

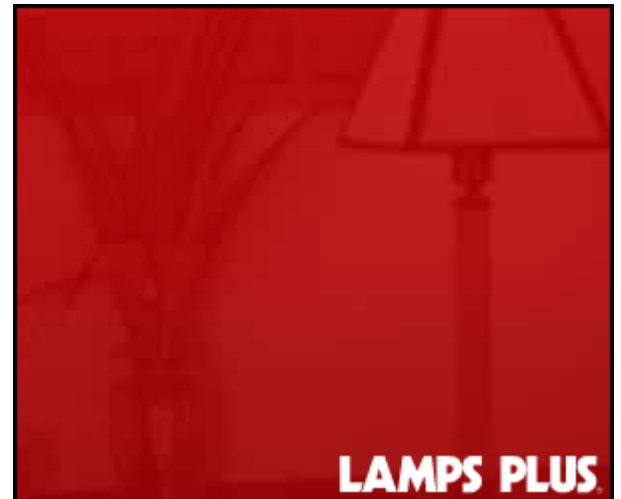
"Can we truly afford to believe that somehow, some way, vicious extremists can be appeased?" he asked.

"Can we truly afford to return to the destructive view that America — not the enemy — is the real source of the world's troubles?"

Rumsfeld spoke to the American Legion as part of a coordinated White House strategy, before the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, to take the offensive against administration critics at a time of doubt about the future of [Iraq](#) and growing calls to withdraw U.S. troops.

Addressing the same audience later Tuesday, Secretary of State said the Bush

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Addressing the same audience later Tuesday, Secretary of State [Condoleezza Rice](#) said the Bush administration is countering extremism with hope and democracy, and that history will bear out that strategy.

"If we quit before the job is done, the cost of failure will be severe, indeed immeasurable," Rice said.

"If we abandon the Iraqi people before their government is strong enough to secure the country, we will show reformers across the region that America cannot be trusted to keep its word," she added.

Bush was scheduled to speak here later in the week.

Rumsfeld recalled a string of recent terrorist attacks, from 9/11 to deadly bombings in Bali, London and Madrid, and said it should be obvious to anyone that terrorists must be confronted, not appeased.

"But some seem not to have learned history's lessons," he said, adding that part of the problem is that the American news media have tended to emphasize the negative rather than the positive.

He said, for example, that more media attention was given to U.S. soldiers' abuse of Iraqi prisoners at [Abu Ghraib](#) than to the fact that Sgt. 1st Class Paul Ray Smith received the Medal of Honor.

He did acknowledge that the U.S. military has its own "bad actors — the ones who dominate the headlines today — who don't live up to the standards of the oath and of our country." But he added that they are a small percentage of the hundreds of thousands of troops who have served in Iraq and [Afghanistan](#).

"Those who know the truth need to speak out against these kinds of myths and lies and distortions being told about our troops and about our country," he said.

On Monday, Vice President [Dick Cheney](#) and Rumsfeld made separate addresses to the national convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Reno, Nev.

Rumsfeld made similar arguments in Reno about doubters of the administration's approach to fighting terrorism, saying too many in this country want to "blame America first" and ignore the enemy.

Rumsfeld's remarks ignited angry rebukes from Democrats.

"It's a political rant to cover up his incompetence," said Sen. Jack Reed ([news](#), [bio](#), [voting record](#)), D-R.I., a former Army officer and member of the [Senate Armed Services Committee](#).

Reed said he took particular exception to the implication that critics of [Pentagon](#) policies are unpatriotic, citing "scores of patriotic Americans of both parties who are highly critical of his handling of the [Department of Defense](#)."

Rep. John Murtha ([news](#), [bio](#), [voting record](#)), the hawkish Pennsylvania Democrat who voted in favor of the war but recently called for troops to withdraw, said in a statement: "It's interesting to me that they generalize the support for the war. They're not realistic with the fact that there's no progress."

Sen. Christopher Dodd ([news](#), [bio](#), [voting record](#)), D-Conn., chimed in that Rumsfeld's

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remarks were trying to "shoot the messenger" rather than examine failed policy.

AP Diplomatic Writer Anne Gearan contributed to this report from Washington.

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