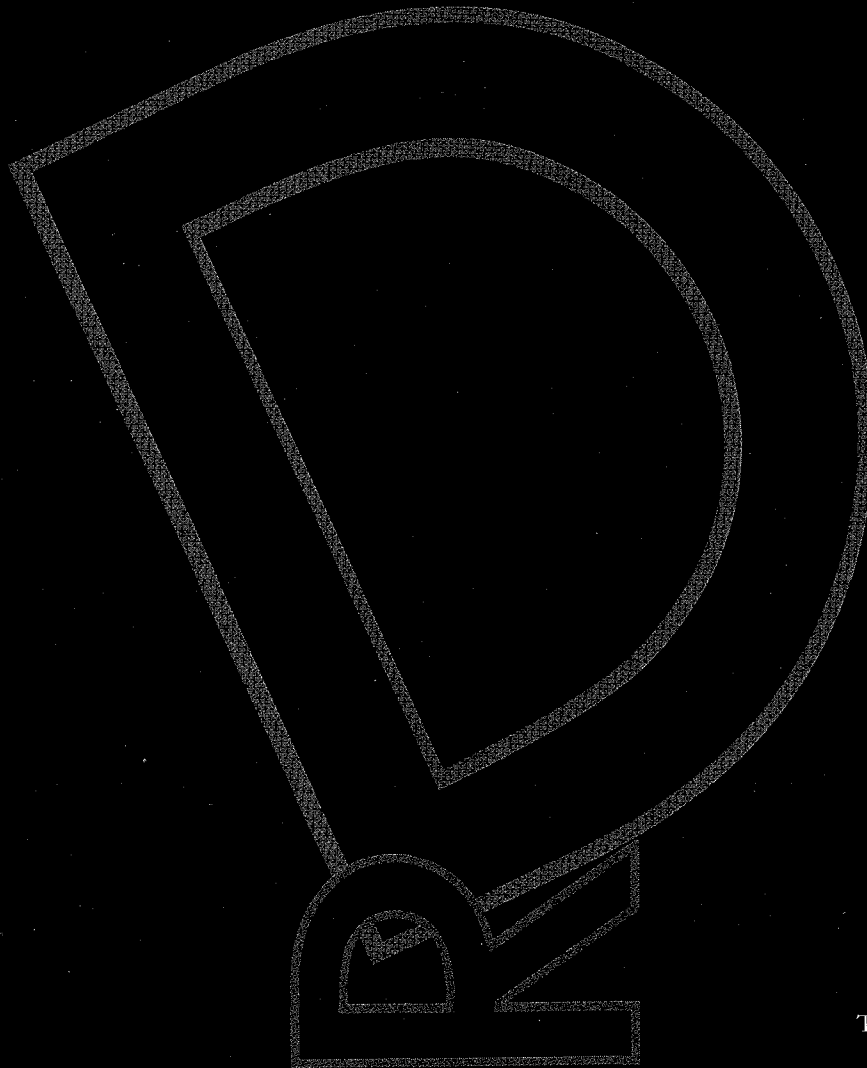


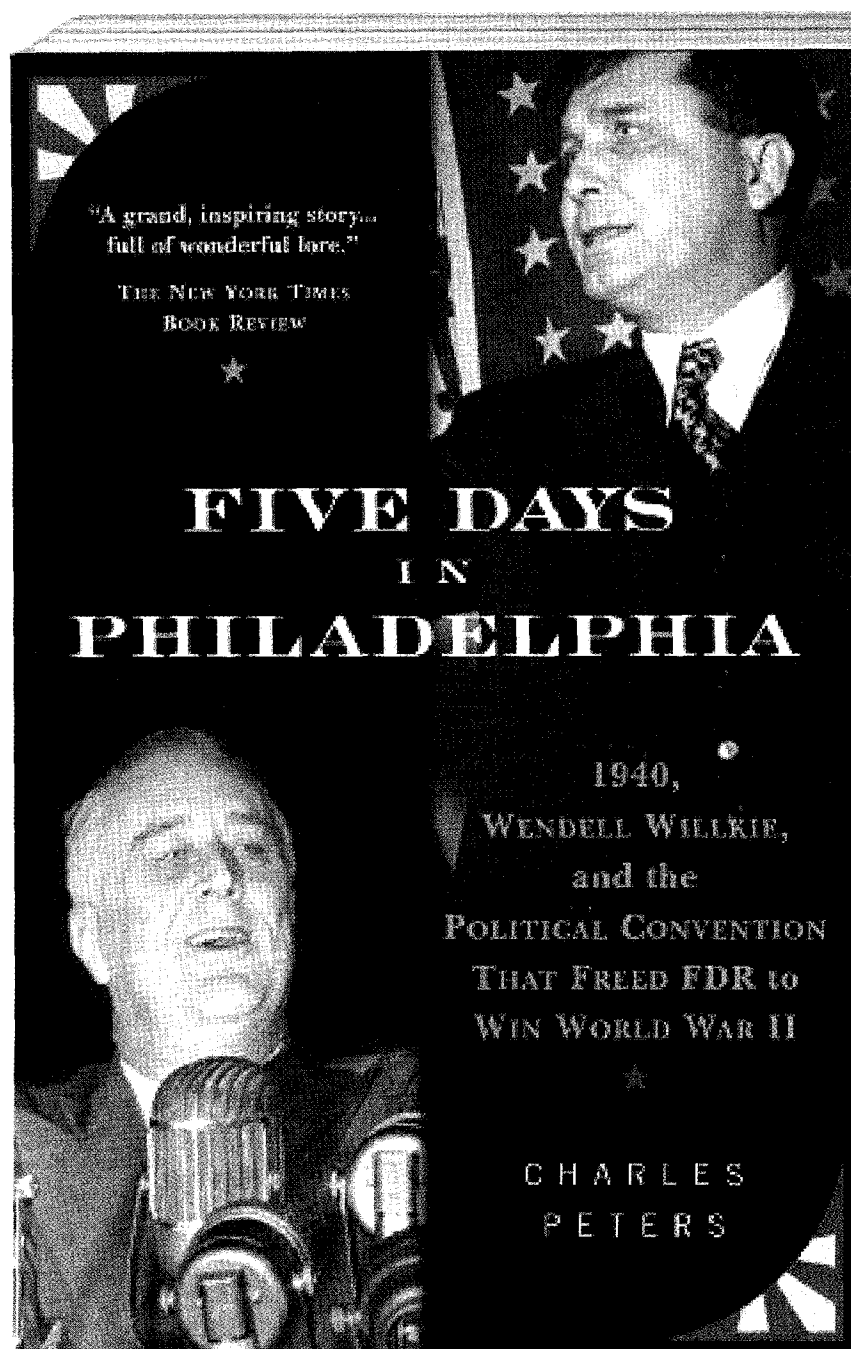
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# DEMOCRATS WIN



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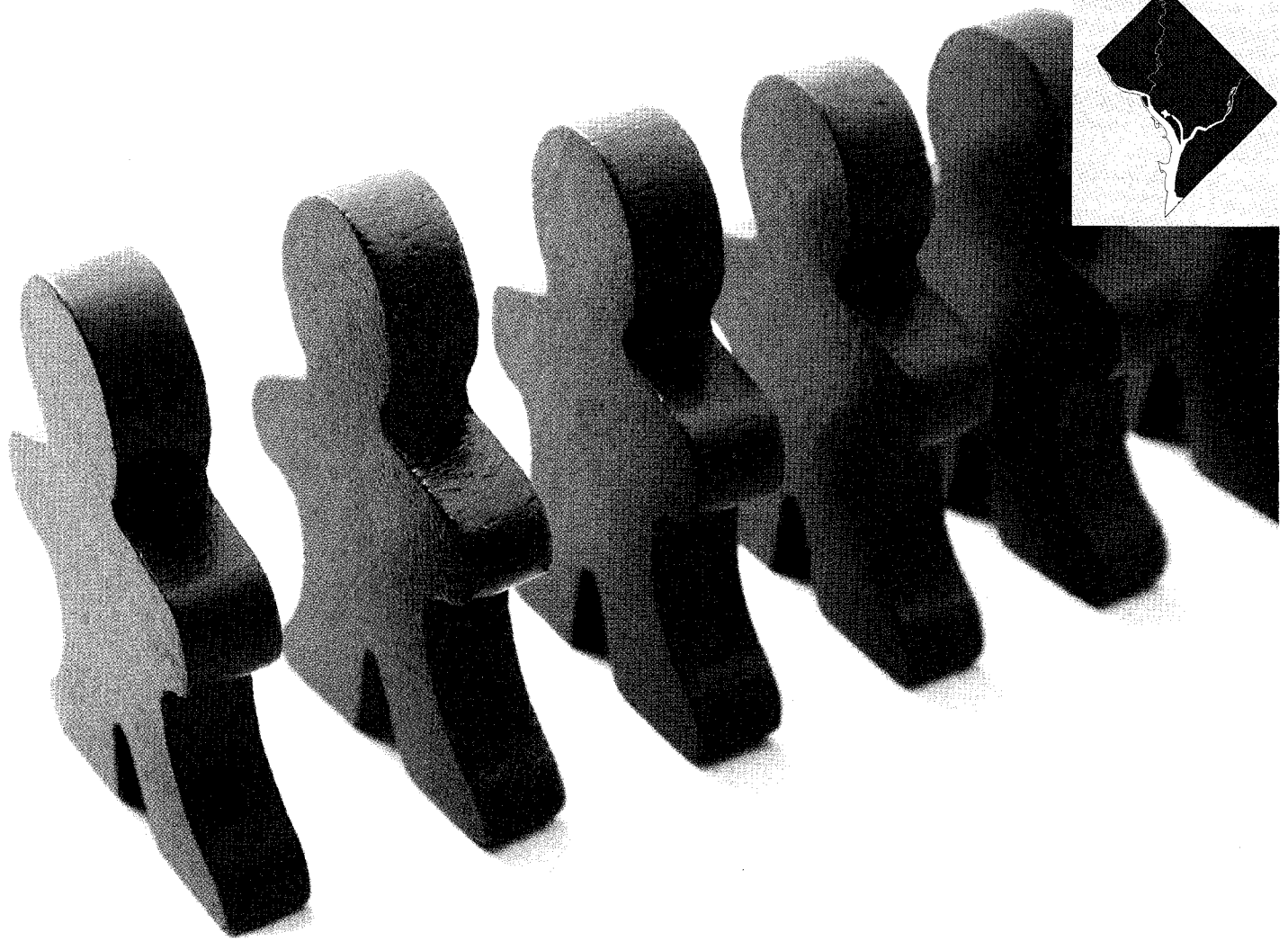
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website for *Human Events*. With a cherubic young face placed squarely above a collar that is buttoned down tight enough to show the outline of the tie underneath, Bluey looks exactly like his politics. For now, he's keeping his chin up, but he admits that things look pretty bad. We joke about the raft of conservative legislative aides that will be looking for work this winter. Are there enough think tanks out there?

Soon, the night shifts to a Dupont Circle bar, and the wisecracks start. "Well, at least Kim Jong Il knocked Foley out of the news for an hour." A little more acidly, I hazard a tasteless joke about the news of the day: "You know who is more disappointed than Yankee fans that it was Cory Lidle who flew into that building in New York?" Everyone knows the punchline already. It's not funny because it's true.

A bright-eyed young woman in a billowy white skirt is smiling at me a bit too hard. She's a legislative aide for a GOP senator and is interrogating me. "So, do you have a girlfriend?" she asks. Perhaps she thinks it'll be increasingly hard to find young conservatives in town after '06.

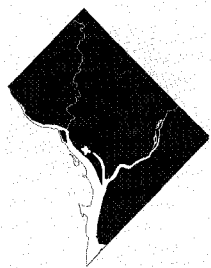
This landscape is new for people in my generation. When Gingrich and friends promised to lay siege to an out-of-control Congress, I was watching cartoons after school and chasing girls with braces. Now, Pelosi and friends promise to lay siege to an out-of-control Congress, the braces are

gone, and I'm being chased by a Senate aide. Times change. Even if I've lost confidence in my party to do anything I wanted them to do—reduce the size of the federal government rather than increase it, or just behave with a shred of decency—it's daunting to think of the GOP losing its majority. Hadn't people just recently been speaking of the conservative majority as a near-permanent realignment?

While I'm hardly sanguine about Democrats controlling the House or Senate, I can't really say I'm that sorry to see the GOP get what it deserves, either. For people like me—and all the other young souls at AFF—the prospect of real opposition at least promises all the frights and thrills of growing up.

I make motions to leave, but I'm told that David Kirby, AFF's executive director, is buying another round. I raise my glass to the Senate aide and try to come up with an optimistic toast: "You know, I moved down here just this summer with only my misguided idealism. Now I have gin, too. I think we're all going to be just fine." She smiles politely, but maybe she doesn't need my good cheer just yet. Her boss, at least, is good until '08.

**Michael Brendan Dougherty** is a writer in Fairfax, Va.



# Social Adjustment

Washington's young conservatives ponder life in the minority.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

America's Future Foundation (AFF), a group geared towards ambitious young Washington conservatives like me, usually holds its monthly roundtable discussions at the Fund for American Studies on New Hampshire Avenue. At each meeting, a spread of wine, beer, chips, and guacamole makes a welcome appearance, and afterwards we head to a bar in Dupont Circle. The debate topics are always engaging, ranging from the high-minded ("The Iraq War: Stay the Course or Bring them Home?") to the low-down ("Cross-Party Dating: The Pick-Ups, Perils and Pitfalls"). The spirited debate and feverish networking are irresistible. Plus, the guacamole really is good.

But at the October AFF meeting, I notice a perceptible shift in mood—due, of course, to the specter of the November elections. In the back of the room, between chip munching, legislative aides share the gallows humor with right-wing journalists about getting "murdered in Indiana. Three seats just gone." Or even more violent hyperbole: "Pennsylvania hasn't seen this much blood on the ground since Lee invaded."

The negative vibe is pretty much summed up by the evening's debate topic: "Do Republicans deserve to lose?"

That the answer is "Yes" is already implied. Now the race is on to explain why. Eventually, after all, the broader movement will settle on a narrative of what went wrong. Every conservative wants to be the one to write it.

The first panelist to speak this evening is Ryan Sager, author of *The Elephant in the Room: Evangelicals, Libertarians and the Battle to Control the Republican Party*. Sager feels that the party has become too Southern and evangelical in character. That's his narrative, at least. Unfortunately, like so many panelists before him, Sager feels compelled to begin at the beginning, with a recounting of the history of the American conservative movement—how conservatives after World War II were united on a few things but divided on many others, how William F.

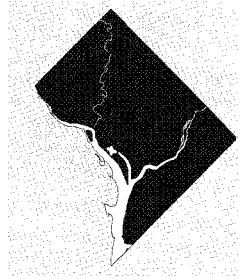
Buckley began "defenestrating" (his word) the kooks from the conservative coalition, how Frank Meyer devised a philosophical justification called fusionism to bring together conservatives and libertarians, and so forth. Sitting through this recitation is akin to having Aunt Gertrude's wedding album thrown in your lap. You have to review the family history before you can roughhouse with your cousins in the backyard.

Then some fighting begins in earnest. Panelist Jonathan Collegio, a swell guy saddled with the un-swell role of spokesman for the National Republican Congressional Committee, informs us lazy critics that "legislation is hard work, especially when we've had such a small majority in these years." The crowd isn't impressed. Someone behind me is quietly responding with a Bush impression: "It's hard work." Collegio goes on to paint a grim future: Speaker—Nancy Pelosi! House Ways and Means chairman—Charles Rangel! House Judiciary chairman—John Conyers! Oh my! Dave Weigel, a young editor from *Reason* magazine, and I mouth the words "talking points" to each other.

The discussion veers from domestic to foreign policy, although several of the panelists mention they are "putting the war to the side" because "we can have an argument about that" another time. No doubt. Sager, for his part, keeps the focus solidly at home and on the pocketbook: The GOP will lose the Western states from Montana down to Arizona if it doesn't shape up and stop passing things like the prescription-drug entitlement. In short, fiscal conservatism equals good. Religious conservatism, which wants zealotry to be on the dole, equals bad.

Maybe. Then again, couldn't someone just as easily confront Sager with the opposite argument? Didn't Bush squander a lot of political capital precisely on fiscally conservative schemes such as privatization? Maybe he'd have pleased the base more if he'd spent even more and built some walls along the border and taken more action against gay marriage. At the end of the day, the arguments all seem to boil down to something similar: If it were more like me, the Republican Party would be better off. It's failing because it's like you.

I accost another panelist, Robert Bluey, who is editor of the



some of these retired generals criticize you and your efforts. What is your response to some of the things that have been said about you? And of course, the mainstream media has taken it and run with it.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** [Laughter].

**GALLAGHER:** It has to be awfully difficult for you to hear some of those potshots that have been leveled your way by some of these retired generals.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** Well, you know there have always been criticisms made in every war.

*Secretary Rumsfeld interviewed on the "Rusty Humphries Show," April 18, 2006*

**HUMPHRIES:** I just saw you on TV a minute ago and I've got to ask you, why do you put up with it? The stupid questions. You've got nothing to prove. You've got these generals, the critics; it's got to be driving you crazy.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** Listen...I've been there before and I understand it. Change is hard for people, but by golly, I'm not going to sit here and not change this place, because it needs change.

**HUMPHRIES:** You keep hearing from these guys, Rumsfeld's a tough guy. You know what? Dang it, we're at war. I want a tough guy in that job.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** [Laughter]. That's nice, thank you.

*Secretary Rumsfeld interviewed on the "Bill Cunningham Show," 700 WLW, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 17, 2006*

**CUNNINGHAM:** I want you to stay there, Donald, because I think you're the best, you're a hard-nosed guy, you know where the bodies are buried in Washington, DC, you know how the department works. Normal Americans who live in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana want you to stay there, and don't listen to the clowns at *The Washington Post* and CNN. You know what I'm saying?

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** [Laughter]. Oh, you're amazing.

*Secretary Rumsfeld interviewed by Mark Davis on WBAP 820, Dallas/Ft Worth, Texas, April 11, 2006*

**DAVIS:** Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld. Continued success, good health to you, sir, God bless you. Poll numbers are what they are, but doggone it, I'll tell you it is those of us who have kept our eye on the ball, have patience, a sense of history, and a little bit of spine and guts to us are going to prevail, and I say that not just about talk-show guys or even defense secretaries, but people in our uniform doing the noble work of this war. God bless them and you for supporting them. I really appreciate it.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** Well said, Mark Davis. ♦

## THE MONTHLY JOURNALISM AWARD

Farah Stockman, Michael Kranish,  
Peter S. Canellos and Kevin Baron  
*The Boston Globe*, October 8-11, 2006

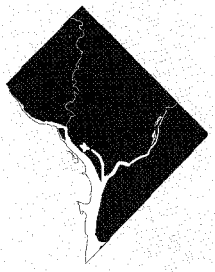
Early in his first term, President Bush urged Congress to overturn 40-year-old rules keeping religion out of government contracting. The bill failed, but a remarkable investigation by *The Boston Globe* reveals that in the realm of foreign aid, Bush has quietly achieved his objective. Using obscure executive orders, he has enabled aid groups to hire employees based on faith and incorporate religion into their work. The percentage of aid money allocated to faith-based groups has doubled under his watch—and Christian organizations received 98.5 percent of

such funds. Leaders of mainline churches criticized the policies as "political payback" to the religious right.

The *Globe* argues persuasively that Bush's orders have "systematically eliminated or weakened rules designed to enforce the separation of church and state," citing government documents and interviews with aid recipients. (One Kenyan woman recounts her conversion to Christianity, after learning in American-run health-care classes that her own deity was "a very tiresome god"). A USAID doctor explains the policy: "I think Christians... have a leg up on, you know, just the regular public system because there is an interest in developing a relationship... that leads them to know Christ as their savior and their lord."







I'm guessing you can't understand, either—but why anybody would have a problem with this. I mean, we have appeasers in our country, and—

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** I've tried to get people to take that speech and show me which sentence they didn't agree with.

**HUMPHRIES:** One—one sentence, please.

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*Secretary Rumsfeld interviewed on "Bill Bennett's Morning In America," Aug. 22, 2006*

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**BENNETT:** Coming to my book party, you were the star of the party; you got the whole spotlight. It went off me, it was on you. All of that was fine, and then, I turn and look, and you are signing my book. I mean, what was going on there?

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** Well, I've never written a book, Bill, so I — why shouldn't I sign your book? (*Laughs.*)

**BENNETT:** (*Laughs.*) Well, it was a thrill for everybody who got one. They wanted your signature, not mine.

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*Secretary Rumsfeld interviewed by Kirby Wilbur, KVI 570 AM Seattle, WA, July 27, 2006*

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**WILBUR:** Now, as someone who has supported the effort from the very beginning, the liberation of Iraq, and still support our president as to what we're doing there, it seems to me that a lot of the American people are used to instant solutions—

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** (*Laughs.*)

**WILBUR:** —and things being solved in 23 minutes on a TV soap opera—and whether or not a free people here has the patience to see this through, given all the complications and how difficult it is.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** Well, you know, you've called it...

...

**WILBUR:** Well, President Lincoln had to put up with the peace movement, draft riots, people urging the war couldn't be won, wanting to surrender. He persevered and he kept the country together. I hope that spirit of perseverance is here in America today.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** Right.

**WILBUR:** Because think what would have happened back then; if it had prevailed in 1864, we would not have had one country.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** Exactly....

...

**WILBUR:** All right. Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you for taking the time with us today and thank you for all you do for our country. And all we have to do is win, and I think we will.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** Thank you, Kirby.

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*Secretary Rumsfeld interviewed on "The Monica Crowley Show," July 08, 2006*

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**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** There's no way we can lose this battle with the terrorists in Iraq or in Afghanistan. The only place you could lose it, if you lost your will here in Washington, D.C.

**CROWLEY:** Amen to that. Amen to that. And you and I both worked for President Nixon and we understand the damage that that did to our side during the war in Vietnam ... I know you take a lot of hits.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** (*Laughs.*)

**CROWLEY:** I know that—and keep good humor about it, too.

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** (*Laughs.*)

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*Secretary Rumsfeld interviewed on the "Hugh Hewitt Show," May 9, 2006*

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**HEWITT:** A few minutes ago, Mr. Secretary—I was watching your press conference—you blasted the media's coverage of the General Hayden nomination saying, quote, "The quality of the debate is pedestrian."

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** [*Laughter*]. Did I say that?

**HEWITT:** Yes, you did. I loved it. I applauded, actually.

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*Secretary Rumsfeld interviewed on the "Brian and the Judge Show," Fox News Radio, May 10, 2006*

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**KILMEADE:** We understand that 3,500 Army soldiers will not be going to Iraq, will be staying in Germany. Some say this is a good sign—that things are stabilizing. What does the Secretary of Defense say?

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD:** I think it would be premature to come to that conclusion ... I think that people are taking one tulip and deciding it's spring.

**NAPOLITANO:** Mr. Secretary— [*Laughter*]. Nicely put. One tulip and deciding it's spring.

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*Secretary Rumsfeld interviewed on the "Mike Gallagher Show," April 28, 2006*

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**GALLAGHER:** Mr. Secretary, I have been pained. It has been painful on a very personal and professional level to see