Donald Rumsfeld publishes memoirs of an unrepentant war criminal

By Tom Eley

The publication of the memoirs of an individual who was for decades so intimately involved in the perpetuation of US imperialism as Donald Rumsfeld, who served as defense secretary under both George W. Bush (2001-2006) and Gerald Ford (1974-1977), is of major interest. The book, *Known and Unknown*, should be read closely against the bloody record of US policies all over the world, for which Rumsfeld’s name will forever be linked: torture, extrajudicial assassinations, disappearances, “extraordinary rendition,” and, especially, the role of the US in Iraq under false pretenses.

This has not been the intention of the recent media attention focused on Rumsfeld, who, when he left office in 2006, was arguably the most despised cabinet secretary in US history. The aim is instead to whitewash his crimes.

So much effort has definite purposes. As Rumsfeld himself explained in a Tuesday interview with Diane Sawyer of *ABC News*, the same policies continue today under Obama administration and will be carried on for years to come.

“For all the criticisms of Presi- dent Bush and the people working around him for the things he put in place—the Patriot Act, the Guantanamo Bay [prison] and various things, military commissions—you know, a lot of positions that we took,” they said as they fussed at it,” Rumsfeld said. “The fact is, they’re still there. Why are they still there? They’re there, because they make sense in the 21st Century. They’re needed. And the new administration has not been able to figure out a better way to do it.”

Rumsfeld bears enormous personal responsibility for the act that set the US government on a descent into lawlessness and barbarity that continues today: the invasion of Iraq. As was established at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders in the wake of World War II, the war crime of war crimes, from which all others stem, requires the unprovoked invasion of other nations. Sawyer’s studied effort to elide this central issue is another measure of the US media’s complicity and complacency.

There is overwhelming evidence that Rumsfeld, together with Vice President Dick Cheney, President George Bush, and other top officials, beginning the day of the Sep- teMBER 11, 2001, terrorist at- tack, actively falsified information in a bid to justify the invasion of Iraq. In the lead-up to the invasion, Rumsfeld infamously declared, “we know where they are;” referring to the weapons of mass destruction claim that served as the ultimate casus belli.

Sawyer, who began her career as an assistant to Richard Nixon and now earns an estimated $12 to $15 million a year as a talking head, had no interest in confronting Rumsfeld with any of this. She allowed him to act as if the failure to find “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq was some sort of innocent mistake.

The only hint of criticism Sawyer served up came from the right, when she suggested that his decision to not send a much larger occupation force into Iraq might have “cost lives.”

On Tuesday morning, Rumsfeld was interviewed live by *ABC’s George Stephanopoulos*. Stephanopoulos, while assum- ing a more critical posture, fol- lowed the same right-wing tack as Sawyer, chastising Rumsfeld for opposing the “troop surge,” but allowing Rumsfeld to act as if the failure to find “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq was some sort of innocent mistake.

**Peshawar, Pakistan.—** A suicide bomber Thursday attack- ed tanks at a highly secured parade ground in a northwest- ern Pakistani city and killed at least 20 soldiers, the army said.

An army statement said that another 20 soldiers were also in- jured in the attack, in a main city some 60 kilometers northeast of Peshawar, the provin- cial capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The injured were transferred to a military hospital in Mardan and several critical injured were shifted to Peshawar.

Police sources said that the bomber blew himself up at the Punjab Regiment Center, a unit of Pakistan army, around 8:15 a.m. local time when the sol- diers were engaging in a routine training.

The banned Pakistani Taliban outfit, Tehrik-i- Taliban Pakistan, has claimed the responsibility for the sui- cide attack, sources said.

Taliban militias have launched at least two attacks on the military center in the past.

Security sources said that the bomber, a teenager wear- ing school uniform, walked into the parade ground and blew himself up near the military tanks.

The army sealed the road and only allowed ambulances to transfer the injured. The army conducted the rescue and relief operation and arrested a person investigating as to how the bomber succeeded to sneak into the highly secured training area with boundary walls and guards round the clock.

Sources said that the bomber may have taken advantage of the relaxed security for a school in the cantonment area and resem- bled the one of the school.

Witnesses said private and military ambulances were seen heading to the blast site and emergency was declared in the military center as the injured soldiers were shown guarding main gates of the center.

Residents said the explosion was huge and people in most parts of the city heard its bang. The military hospital where the center was also closed after the sui- cide attack.

Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has condemned the attack, reiterating that such cowardly attacks cannot affect moral of the security agencies and re- solve the nation to eradicate terrorism, a statement from the PM office said.

While commiserating with the bereaved families, the prime minister directed the relevant authorities to provide best medical care to the injured.

(Xinhua)