

DECEMBER 8, 2004

**SCHAKOWSKY TO RUMSFELD: □ □
YOU DESERTED OUR TROOPS □
ON THE BATTLEFIELD**

CHICAGO, IL - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Chief Deputy Whip, today said that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has deserted American men and women serving in Iraq for failing to ensure that they have enough lifesaving equipment. □ Schakowsky reacted to Rumsfeld's comments where he dismissed the concerns of soldiers who are forced "to dig through local landfills for pieces of scrap metal and compromised ballistic glass to uparmor" their vehicles.

In a letter to Rumsfeld, Schakowsky wrote, "The fact that our brave men and women have been fighting in Iraq for 18 months without the equipment they need to do their job and remain safe is an indictment of the Bush Administration's policy and your conduct of this war."

"I disagreed and continue to disagree with the necessity for this war, but it is a fact that this was a war of the Bush Administration's choosing on your timetable. □ Yet, you sent our brave men and women into battle without the best equipment available," Schakowsky continued.

Schakowsky concluded, "Secretary Rumsfeld, it is clear to me that you have deserted our troops on the battlefield. □ It is time for you to go."

Below is the full text of Schakowsky's letter to Secretary Rumsfeld:

December 8, 2004

**The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld
Secretary
United States Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301**

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

I cannot tell you how offended I was by your cavalier response to a soldier's question about why he and his fellow soldiers are forced "to dig through local landfills for pieces of scrap metal and compromised ballistic glass to uparmor (their vehicles)." The fact that our brave men and women have been fighting in Iraq for 18 months without the equipment they need to do their job and remain safe is an indictment of the Bush Administration's policy and your conduct of this war.

As a member of Congress representing the 9th Congressional District of Illinois, I hear almost daily from military families, service men and women, and their supporters wanting to know why we cannot afford to give our troops in Iraq the life-saving equipment they need and deserve. You have been given the largest defense budget in the history of the world. In addition, Congress has provided you with another \$130 billion for the war in Iraq. I disagreed and continue to disagree with the necessity for this war, but it is a fact that this was a war of the Bush Administration's choosing on your timetable. Yet, you sent our brave men and women into battle without the best equipment available.

Your response yesterday was, "You go to war with the Army you have not the army you might want or wish to have at a later time." When you send American men and women into harm's way, you don't just do your best with what you have. You do everything possible to make sure that they have whatever they need.

You, Secretary Rumsfeld, ignored the advice of top military officials about the conduct of this war. You are responsible for making sure that our soldiers have what they need. You are not doing your job and soldiers are losing their lives.

I wrote to you over a year ago, on October 21, 2003, asking for you to certify to Congress that our troops will have the critical, lifesaving items they need. A year has passed and our soldiers are digging through landfills because they cannot rely on you to give them what they need.

Secretary Rumsfeld, it is clear to me that you have deserted our troops on the battlefield. It is time for you to go.

Sincerely,

**Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress**