

Data taken from the May 7, 2004 testimony of Donald Rumsfeld before the Senate Armed Services Committee. Transcript courtesy of the Washington Post.

1 *With respect to your other comments*, I do need to answer this. I mean, the
2 commanders on the ground, from the beginning, asked for and received all the
3 troops they needed, all the troops they wanted, all the troops they asked for
4 they got them.

5 *You're right*. General Abizaid called up and said, "Look, the situation in Iraq
6 is difficult. I'd like to keep an extra 20,000 in this crossover period and go
7 from 115,000 to 135,000."

8 *And* we said, "Yes." *And* I went to the president and the president said,
9 "Yes." *And* the senior military adviser, General Myers, said he thought that
10 was correct.

11 *And* you say you don't like surprises. My Lord, who likes surprises? Nobody
12 in the world likes surprises.

13 *But* the world's not perfect. Facts change on the ground. *And* when facts
14 change on the ground, commanders tell us. *And* when commanders tell us,
15 they get the troops they need.

16 *Now*, on the budget, you don't like surprises.

17 *Well*, I don't, either. It happens more troops are needed and more money's
18 needed. *And* it happens that it's a difficult thing for the military commanders
19 to cash flow, taking out of one account to sustain something that came up that
20 was not anticipated. *And* so the president said, "Fine."

Rhetorical Structure

This excerpt begins in the middle of Secretary Rumsfeld's turn. He has just answered a question of Senator Pryor's and is beginning to address some other things to which the Senator referred. The rhetorical structure is one of restating and elaborating on accusations, then providing defense. The pattern appears three times in a row in this excerpt: Rumsfeld paraphrases the position of the interlocutor, asserts his version of the facts, then states what was done based on that version of the facts.

In lines 1-4, Secretary Rumsfeld is responding to Senator Pryor's accusation that there were insufficient forces in Iraq. In 5-7 he states his version of the facts, then in 8-10 he states the action that was performed in relation to the facts.

In lines 11-12 he is restating the accusation that knowledge of insufficient troop deployment had been kept from congress (in reference again to a previous comment by

Pryor). In lines 13-14 he asserts his position, then in 14-15 he says what happens when things are the way he thinks they are.

In line 16 he is paraphrasing the Senator's accusation that congress was not made aware of serious cost overruns in Iraq. In 17-19 he explains why more money was needed, then in 20, the source of the approval for the overrun.

Discourse Markers

In line 1, the entire phrase 'With respect to your other comments' operates as a discourse marker. It serves to indicate that the answer to the previous question has been completed and that the topic is going to shift back to earlier comments.

In line 5, 'You're right' serves to link the assertion that there were insufficient troops in Iraq, to Rumsfeld's paraphrasing of an actual event that supports the assertion.

The 'and' in line 8 ties the resolution to the previously stated problem: *You're right*, there were too few troops in Iraq, *and* here's how we dealt with it.

The 'and' in line 11 however, works on a much more global level. It refers back to something said by Senator Pryor much earlier in the exchange. It ties this portion of the discourse back to that comment and allows Secretary Rumsfeld to set up his next proposition, which is that the world is not perfect and situations can change very quickly.

He opens this proposition with a "but" in line 13. This clearly demonstrates the direct relationship between "nobody in the world likes surprises" and "The world's not perfect." Without the 'but,' there would be a disjunct here.

The 'and' in line 13 introduces Rumsfeld's assertion of how the imperfect world is dealt with by the military, and the 'and' in 14 specifies the administration's reaction.

Line 16 opens with 'now.' 'Now' serves as a global DM to link Rumsfeld's next topic to a previous comment by the Senator. 'Now' may also be indicative of the upcoming disagreement.

'Well' in line 17 serves to link line 16 with Rumsfeld's version of the facts. The 'and' in line 18 links a justification to the fact: more money is needed, *and* it's difficult to budget for things you can't anticipate.

The 'and' in line 20 serves to link the resolution of the budget issue to the description and justification of the issue.

Pattern of Overlap

The rhetorical pattern is:

1. Rumsfeld relates to something Pryor has mentioned in his questioning. He essentially restates an accusation.
2. Rumsfeld states what the situation is and the military's reaction to it.
3. Rumsfeld states the administration's handling of the situation in relation to the military reaction.

The Discourse Marker pattern overlaps perfectly:

1. Global DM links to earlier comment by the Senator.
2. Local DM (never 'and') introduces the situation and military response. The military response is linked to the situation by a local 'and' except in the first set.
3. Local DM (always 'and') links the administration's response to that of the military.

The effect is that, in each iteration Rumsfeld gives the appearance of agreeing with the Senator's disapproval of the situation, while at the same time justifying the handling of the situation by the military and the administration. By always linking the military's response to the issue, and only linking the administration's response to that of the military, he manages to distance the administration from the issue. In effect saying that the administration can only act on what the military presents to it, thus absolving the administration of direct responsibility.