

Prisoner abuse scandals hurt US (图)

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[摘要] February 13, 2007, MUNICH, Germany - Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Sunday that prisoner abuse scandals in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay and other mistakes have damaged America's reputation, and work must be done to prove the US is still a force for good in the world.
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February 13, 2007, MUNICH, Germany -

Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Sunday that prisoner abuse scandals in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay and other mistakes have damaged America's reputation, and work must be done to prove the US is still a force for good in the world. While he did not mention the war in Iraq, he told a conference of top security officials from around the world that the US has to do a better job of explaining its policies and actions. For the last century most people believed that "while we might from time to time do something stupid, that we were a force for good in the world," Gates said. And while he said a lot of people still believe that, he added, "I think we also have made some mistakes and have not presented our case as well as we might in many instances. I think we have to work on that."

Delivering his first speech as Pentagon chief, Gates also made an urgent call for NATO allies to live up to their promises to supply military and economic aid for Afghanistan, saying that failing to do so would be shameful. And in a carefully worded rebuke, he used both humor and some pointed jabs to blunt Russia's sharp attack against US foreign policy a day earlier. In remarks before a prestigious security forum, Gates dismissed as dated Cold War rhetoric Russian President Vladimir Putin's charge Saturday that the United States is seeding a new arms race. A day after Putin blamed US policy for inciting other countries to seek nuclear weapons to defend themselves, Gates responded: "As an old Cold Warrior, one of yesterday's speeches almost filled me with nostalgia for a less complex time. Almost." Then, as the audience chuckled, he added, however, that he has accepted Putin's invitation to visit Russia. "We all face many common problems and challenges that must be addressed in partnership with other countries, including Russia," said Gates. "One Cold War was quite enough." The bulk of his speech was devoted to the future of the NATO alliance, and the need to work together to defend the trans-Atlantic community against any security threats. He struck a familiar theme - one he pressed during a NATO defense ministers meeting this week, when he urged the allies to follow through on their promises to help secure and rebuild Afghanistan. "It is vitally important that the success Afghanistan has achieved not be allowed to slip away through neglect or lack of political will or resolve," Gates said. Failure to muster a strong military effort combined with economic development and a counternarcotics plan Gates also sketched out the challenges ahead, from Iran's nuclear ambitions and the situation in the Middle East to China's recent anti-satellite tests and Russia's arms sales.

Just eight weeks on the job, Gates used the conference and a NATO gathering earlier in the week to introduce himself to the international community and meet privately with a number of defense ministers. In other comments, he said the Bush administration would like to close Guantanamo Bay detention facility, but there are a number of serious and committed terrorists there that should never be let free. And he said detainee trials there will be conducted openly and v Referring to problems the US has had convincing other countries to accept some detainees, Gates said the issue is a difficult problem the nation will continue to work through. Delivered amid growing tensions between the US and Russia and to an audience including many Iraq and Afghanistan war skeptics, the speech was the first public test of Gates' diplomatic skills. It came at a venue that at times had been dominated by his more bomb So as he neared the end of his remarks, Gates made a deliberate move to separate himself from Rumsfeld and any lingering discord. In the run-up to the Iraq war, Rumsfeld sharply criticized nations opposed to the conflict - specifically France and Germany - referring to them as "Old Europe." Without mentioning Rumsfeld's name, Gates said some people have tried to divide the allies into categories - such as east and west, north versus south. "I'm even told that some have even spoken in terms of 'old' Europe versus 'new,'" Gates said. "All of these characterizations belong in the past."

