

## SecDef Rumsfeld's Pentagon News Conference

Thursday, Oct. 18, 2001

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**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, I wonder if you can give us an update on the Pentagon's anthrax vaccine program? The sole manufacturer in Michigan hasn't produced vaccine for quite some time, and it could be months before they could start producing again. You have a minimal amount of vaccine and you're only doing a certain number of troops--small numbers of troops.

And finally, last week there was a petition sent to FDA by military officers and others calling for them to pull the license and destroy the stockpiles of the vaccine. Can this program be saved, do you think, or are you going to look at alternatives to the vaccine?

**RUMSFELD:** We're going to try and save it. There have been other efforts that have failed over a period of years. And it may or may not be savable.

But I met this morning with Pete Aldridge and David Chu, and we discussed this at some length. And they or their representatives are going to be meeting with people from HHS and Secretary Thompson's office, and try to fashion some sort of an arrangement, whereby we give one more crack at getting the job done with that outfit. It's the only outfit in this country that has anything under way. And it's not very well under way, as you point out.

We're trying to fashion a way that the--it's a combination of things, but they have not been approved by the FDA, as I understand it. They do not have what looks to be--well, I shouldn't be characterizing our private entity that way. But things have not been going swimmingly for them. And what we're trying to do is figure out a way where we might get some help, so that they might improve their performance.