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Sunday's Letters to the Editor

• U.S. must fight, not appease, terrorists

While I appreciate Sen. Fritz Hollings' years of service to the state and nation, I must respectfully disagree with his recent column, "Why we are in Iraq." Sen. Hollings is known for his provocative rhetoric and liberal use of hyperbole. Unfortunately, this column crossed the line of decency.

The senator's assertion that America's real reason for invading Iraq was primarily to make Israel, not America, more secure is outlandish. His insinuation that a Zionist conspiracy has hijacked American foreign policy is at a minimum, bizarre, and at worst, chilling.

Further, by stating that in the Middle East "terrorism is a separate problem to be defeated by diplomacy and negotiation, not militarily," it appears that Sen. Hollings is allowing his personal loathing of the Bush administration to cloud his judgment. In the past 20 years, no administration — Democratic or Republican — has succeeded in reining in terrorism through diplomacy and negotiation.

Sept. 11 taught us that Islamic extremists do not merely want to be left alone to practice their beliefs. They want to murder anyone who resists their theology of hatred, brutality and repression. If we retreat, they will follow us. We will fight them in the streets of Baghdad or they will surely fight us in the streets of America.

While Americans do not like to go to war, they understand that sometimes it is necessary. Failing in Iraq would only embolden the terrorists. We must help our troops complete their mission and reject the path of appeasement.

REP. JIM DeMINT

Washington

• Firing Rumsfeld will help nation's image

Like most Americans, I am outraged by the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners of war by our own men and women in uniform. How can we hope to be taken seriously on the world stage as a beacon of freedom, democracy and hope when such atrocities are allowed to go unpunished?

Despite Sen. Lindsey Graham's beliefs to the contrary, Donald Rumsfeld is ultimately responsible for the Pentagon's mistakes. Even if Rumsfeld did not know of the torture in Iraqi jails, he should still be fired because mistakes of this magnitude are unacceptable. While his dismissal will not repair the damage done to America's reputation by the Bush doctrine of pre-emptive war, it is nonetheless a step in the right direction.

HAROLD GEDDINGS III

Barnwell

• There's no reason for secretary to quit

Regarding your editorial calling for Donald Rumsfeld's resignation, only the most foolish would attempt to judge the actions of any defense secretary based upon the limited information now known. There is no evidence today that has been credibly raised to indicate this egregious abuse was anything but limited in scope and time and to a single element of that prison. Suspicions, yes, all of which to date have been rendered distortions and misrepresentations. All of which, nonetheless, are being examined by investigations ordered by various officials in the Department of Defense, and now to be reviewed by an outside panel established by Secretary Rumsfeld.