

Rumsfeld's "Long Hard Slog"

Full text of October 16, 2003 memo from Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense.

Note: USG is US Government; Omar is Mullah Omar Muhammad, deposed Taliban Leader; Hekmatyar is Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, an anti-US Afghan warlord; Ansar al-Islam is an Islamic terrorist group present in Iraq; a madrassa is a fundamentalist Islamic school; a CIA finding is a written Presidential authority to conduct a covert action.

October 16, 2003

TO: Gen. Dick Myers
Paul Wolfowitz
Gen. Pete Pace
Doug Feith

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld

SUBJECT: Global War on Terrorism

The questions I posed to combatant commanders this week were: Are we winning or losing the Global War on Terror? Is DOD changing fast enough to deal with the new 21st century security environment? Can a big institution change fast enough? Is the USG changing fast enough?

DOD has been organized, trained and equipped to fight big armies, navies and air forces. It is not possible to change DOD fast enough to successfully fight the global war on terror; an alternative might be to try to fashion a new institution, either within DOD or elsewhere—one that seamlessly focuses the capabilities of several departments and agencies on this key problem.

With respect to global terrorism, the record since September 11th seems to be: We are having mixed results with Al Qaida, although we have put considerable pressure on them—nonetheless, a great many remain at large.

USG has made reasonable progress in capturing or killing the top 55 Iraqis.

USG has made somewhat slower progress tracking down the Taliban—Omar, Hekmatyar, etc.

With respect to the Ansar Al-Islam, we are just getting started.

Have we fashioned the right mix of rewards, amnesty, protection and confidence in the US?

Does DOD need to think through new ways to organize, train, equip and focus to deal with the global war on terror?

Are the changes we have and are making too modest and incremental? My impression is that we have not yet made truly bold moves, although we have made many sensible, logical moves in the right direction, but are they enough?

Today, we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?

Does the US need to fashion a broad, integrated plan to stop the next generation of terrorists? The US is putting relatively little effort into a long-range plan, but we are putting a great deal of effort into trying to stop terrorists. The cost-benefit ratio is against us! Our cost is billions against the terrorists' costs of millions.

Do we need a new organization?

How do we stop those who are financing the radical madrassa schools?

Is our current situation such that "the harder we work, the behinder we get"?

It is pretty clear that the coalition can win in Afghanistan and Iraq in one way or another, but it will be a long, hard slog.

Does CIA need a new finding?

Should we create a private foundation to entice radical madrassas to a more moderate course?

What else should we be considering?

Please be prepared to discuss this at our meeting on Saturday or Monday.
Thanks.