

Casey George GEN MNF-I CG

From: Findley II Rusty M MNF-I Maj Gen Deputy Chief of Staff SPA
Sent: Saturday, March 11, 2006 7:34 PM
To: Casey George GEN MNF-I CG
Cc: Donovan Timothy E Maj Gen MNFI COS
Subject: RE: ~~[S]~~ Key Takeaways
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Sir—

Missed one of my notes that was thematic throughout when I wrote this up: SECDEF was very interested in exploring any/all reachback options for functions that are being performed here inside Iraq. Additionally, looking for creative basing options that satisfy mission needs inside Iraq but that would allow forces/assets to be stationed outside Iraq in neighboring nations. Associated to this wanted CENTCOM to take on the task of seeing if there was a means to "shorten the string" on force posturing so as to lessen response times for forces that could be stationed outside the country but be able to respond to emerging needs within a reasonable time if I&W dictated.

vR
Rusty

Classification: ~~SECRET//REL TO USA MCFI~~

From: Findley II Rusty M MNF-I Maj Gen Deputy Chief of Staff SPA
Sent: Saturday, March 11, 2006 6:50 PM
To: Casey George GEN MNF-I CG
Cc: Donovan Timothy E Maj Gen MNFI COS
Subject: ~~[S]~~ Key Takeaways

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Sir—

I've tried to boil down the key points and takeaways from the session last nite and lay them out to make sure we've captured thoughts, intent, and what needs to be worked from our end and in some cases from their's in DC. Let me know if you want me to expand any of these thoughts based on the notes that I took.

Miscellaneous

- 1) Civil War: SECDEF said he wants us to help him understand what civil war in Iraq would look like and then what should be our response/posture. Said it would be hard to know/distinguish since the violence over here has the tendency to ebb and flow as part of the natural course of the conflict; but, he mused that he felt in the event of "civil war" that it should be somewhat manageable from our perspective if we adopted the right posture. His inclination was to think that the right posture for us was to let the ISF handle it while being supportive of their forces and government in terms of mostly enabling support (mentioned lift, medical, and very limited and situationally dependant kinetic action). He stated that widespread intervention on our part was something he would not support/recommend. Did briefly state that our embedded transition teams present a complicating issue. As you know, (b)(6) and I are collaborating on this and will have something to you tonite.
- 2) Baghdad PRT is a go...tho he is still concerned about DOS commitment in terms of money and people. Wants hard and verifiable commitment up front on agreed upon resources from DOS before we launch

5/6/2006

any further PRTs.

- 3) Wants to pull the string on our intel on Iranian QODs force infiltration and if possible wants us to pursue Iranian "bad guys" in Iraq and be able to use this against Iran.

Force Structure Assessment

- 4) On bringing the Call Fwd Force up for Baghdad security and Arba'een...thinks it's a good idea (has to check with POTUS tho)...demonstrates that while we are still intent on reducing our force in Iraq that we're not opposed to plussing up forces when the situation and conditions demand that we do.
- 5) March decision point on 2/28 and 1/10: seemed satisfied with the current update and specifically said that he'd be surprised, given the uncertainty of the government situation, if we had stuck with the original plan to curtail 2 BDEs this spring. Understood the need to keep the 2/1 AD in Kuwait. Gen Abizaid said we should probably make the decision on them right now and that they should be extended at least another 90 days...SECDEF didn't push back on that but I didn't pick up that he said flat-out okay either.

What the Force is Doing

- 6) Biggest takeaway from this brief was his want to find ways to reduce our presence inside Iraq and tied to this his want to have visibility on/manage some of this thru transition tracking charts for various functions/msn areas (so called star charts popularized by MNSTCI)...areas he mentioned that might lend themselves to star charts were: transition teams/combat spt/combat service spt/medical/detention ops/GRD
- 7) Despite your better efforts to tell him (multiple times) he kept migrating back to the thought that he didn't think we'd yet "got out of the cities" and reduced our visibility enough yet...and to the levels he felt were feasible. This kept playing back to the transition star charts and his desire to have better understanding/visibility on not just BCT transitions but a holistic look at the way ahead.

Joint Campaign Plan

- 8) Hmmmm...this brief, and portions therein, provided the most dialogue and a couple of surprises to me. First of all, he took exception to producing a Joint Campaign Plan...issue of previous experience he has with other agencies (DOS in particular) signing up for something critical but never delivering...as he said due to overly bureaucratic standards within the departments. Thought at the outset of the second session you pushed back pretty hard, with good justification, as to why we needed to go this way...but I didn't leave there last nite thinking he'd signed on to this...probably some more dialogue (similar to the way he's changed his position, at least modestly, on PRTs) on this in the offing.
- 9) This discussion drove several comments on TRA. Not just SECDEF but all the 4 star players on their end seemed convinced that at least publicly we needed to get away from speaking in terms of TRA level. Your point on needing something beyond battlespace assumption to continue to track/measure ISF progress was acknowledged, but, believe it was the VCJCS who said that maybe TRA should just be an "internally kept" metric. You did mention that we were conducting a review of the TRA definitions and would advise them on any adjustments sometime soon.
- 10) SECDEF, warmed to, but was not initially comfortable with the fundamental nature of the conflict as stated in the assumptions. He said it didn't feel right and didn't seem to reflect his assessment of human nature...said that fear had to come to play in this...my impression was that as you and Gen Abizaid engaged him further in this conversation he started to agree with the assumption...tho believe he was still not totally convinced.
- 11) Reference the mission statement...think he read it incorrectly at first...thinking that it placed too much Iraqi dependency on us for this stage of the campaign. Once you pointed out to him that it does say that the Iraqis will "defeat the insurgency" he understood but still suggested that we change "support the development..." to "contribute to an environment where the Iraqis can develop representative and effective Iraqi institutions".
- 12) Quite a bit of discussion on timelines....whether we should have one and how specific it should be if we had one. CJCS suggested a more generic plan stating that we could possibly go to a relatively specific number (conditions based) by a certain time establishing milestones along the way and using the signing of some type of longer term security arrangement as a vehicle to roll this out...that then led to another lengthy discussion of the need and want to determine and put some policy guidance out on what our long term strategic relationship on Iraq should look like and entail...Gen Abizaid said they are starting to work on that and SECDEF suggested that OSD (P) get involved on this now. Also when discussing the

notional timeline that shows us going down to 5 BCTs...SECDEF suggested we explore a place where it might make sense to "notch" the timeline vice the steady but even decline it currently depicts.

- 13) When discussing the '06 Endstate slide, SECDEF also asked us to look at a "stretch goal" for base closure in taking it from "around 50" to 40.

Sir, that's a quick wrap-up from my notes. We're obviously working many of these things already and thinking thru them but we'll redouble our efforts in the areas that make sense to explore. My biggest immediate concern is proceeding ahead on the joint nature of the campaign plan...believe, as you stated and made the point to him, that the initiative we have going on in this respect is key and critical to our strategic success here and this is a great step along that path...understand the SECDEF's suspicion of the ability to deliver "from a piece of paper signed by the Amb"; however, as you and I both know that's better than just working the security piece and leaving the other two LOOs to stumble along as they've tended to do over the past two years.

VR
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