

STRAT
REVIEW

From: Casey George GEN MNF-I CG
Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2006 9:38 PM
To: 'Pace, Peter, Gen, CJCS'
Subject: [SECRET] RE: Feedback on (v2) 22 Nov Paper

↳ Council of Col's ?
↳ Crouch ?
see 25 Nov STIC

Classification: ~~SECRET~~
Resending just in case

Pete, here are my thoughts on the brief. I'll call before I go to bed.

In general, this doesn't seem to capture the essence of what is going on here. It may be in there, but it's not stated as clearly as I believe it should be for potus.

↳ Does not address the fundamental conflict—division of political and economic power among Iraqis. Believe a judgment should be made on whether folks agree that this is the case and whether or not it is relevant. From my view, everything else stems from this.

↳ The greatest threat to the accomplishment of our strategic objectives is sectarian violence—because it makes resolving the fundamental conflict harder and it threatens our investment in the security forces. Al Qaida and the militia are fomenting sectarian violence and thus the major antagonists. The irony is that the resistance is an operational threat to us, but not a strategic threat.

↳ Does not put a fundamental assumption on the table—enduring strategic success will only be achieved by Iraqis. Again, believe that folks should consider this and decide whether they still subscribe to it. It leads you to the fact that Iraqis have to solve their own problems—including the division of political and economic power and sectarian violence. It also leads you to the fact that we have to rely on them to make the tough choices and expect them to move at a pace that is probably slower than we want.

↳ Takes a dim view of prospects for near term reconciliation. Probably accurate, but we should not walk away from it. They won't reconcile by themselves and will need our help and lots of \$ to make the compromises they need to reconcile. As I have said—transfer of control without progress on reconciliation risks our strategic investment in the armed forces—and that's strategic failure.

Other thoughts:

--This has a decidedly Shia bias. If I thought that they had the best interests of the country at heart, I might support that, but I don't. We can't walk away from the Sunni at this juncture. They are in the middle between al Qaida, JAM and us. The regional impacts of a Shia-first strategy are unthinkable.

--PG #7--1st bullet: problem with force levels in Baghdad is poor reliability and poor availability, not numbers. We don't have enough reliable Iraqi police and national police.

--not sure what they mean about being on the strategic defensive and our posture being fixed.

--pg #8--2d assumption (now): security difficult without movement on reconciliation. Also, think they left out two key assumptions I mention above.

--pg #9--#1: need more than special forces to deny safe haven—borders, neighbors, isf, info ops. Lots more to this.

understand conflict
- view of violence
- implications of Central tenet
- idea in transition

add implications re facts

as equally true...
US effort in Iraq after 6/2003 derailed by res tensions b/c ops by gov.
- US interests

↳ in critiquing CoA, revealed own internal contradictions
↳ if not contradictions, at least holding two opposing ideas

--pg 11—2d bullet: reconciliation is a must

--pg 12—as noted above, don't agree that shia are cog—maybe moderates, but not just shia.

--2d bullet: we've been assigning battlespace and partnering since early '05. this should not be presented as a new idea.

--surge: issue is how much sectarian violence can we tolerate? I am not in favor of surging more US forces without an agreement by them to reconcile and get on with things. If they were to come to an agreement among the political leaders to move forward and asked for more of forces to stabilize things so they could proceed, i'd be more inclined to support that.

That said, it is going to get ugly here over the next few days—lots of reports of JAM posturing for extended violence against us and Sunni and we may need to do some of the things John mentioned in his memo.

--3d bullet: we've been executing a coin strategy in the sunni areas since late '04, early '05. they have felt marginalized by the past two shia governments and have had no reason to stop fighting.

Pg 13—"target assistance to govt to vital functions; build capacity outside green zone". Must do both and must have support from key ministries for isf—health, justice, oil, finance, etc.

--not sure where freeing up US bdes for independent missions came from. That would not be useful. We're working on battalions.

Not sure what intent of 22 November paper was, but I didn't find I very useful. We're doing most, if not all, of the operational things mentioned, and have been for some time.

george

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