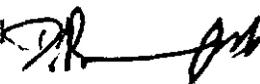


FOUO
Eyes Only Attachment

SEP 23 2005

TO: President George W. Bush
CC: Vice President Richard B. Cheney
FROM: Donald Rumsfeld 
SUBJECT: Texture

The attached memo is from a person we have sent into Iraq from time to time essentially to work with the Iraqi police. He is smart, tough and a keen observer. Nonetheless, you have said you like "texture," and this is texture.

He moves in and out of the country, goes out on patrols with the police and the special police commandos, and has been in a number of firefights in the country. I find his views interesting and stimulating, although his perspective, like anyone's, is limited.

I would appreciate it if this were not circulated to anyone else.

Respectfully,

Attach.
9/19/05 Jim Steele memo to SecDef

DHR.dh
092205-13



Certified as Unclassified
January 9 2009
IAW EO 12958, as amended
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

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OSD 19056-05

EYES ONLY

MEMO TO DON RUMSFELD

19 September 2005

FROM JIM STEELE

SUBJECT: Iraq

I recently returned from ~~Iraq~~ where I had the opportunity to observe the ISF in action as well as spend time with my friend, Sheik Saad Al-Janabi, who is one of the key political players within the Sunni community that worked on the ~~draft~~ constitution. While some of the observations and recommendations that follow may be controversial, they represent my best judgment and ~~are~~ consistent with our past ~~frank~~ and direct discussions.

The accomplishments made by Generals Casey and Petraeus in building the ISF over the past year have been amazing. The sheer size of the forces is well beyond what I thought was achievable during that period. Within the MOI alone, the number of police, commandos, intervention forces and border units is over 140,000. I hesitate to estimate the number of "trained" MOI forces because not **only** is it highly subjective, but dependent on the quality of the enemy. With notable exceptions, the insurgents are not well trained. I contend the real measure of effectiveness is leadership. Iraqis follow strong leaders. There is a "gang" mentality among Iraqis that must be understood for us to achieve both political and military success. For that reason, the rise of militias is one of my greatest concerns.

Despite their improved operational capability, the ISF is susceptible to sectarian political influence, even control. I witnessed this first hand within the MOI forces, particularly the commandos, public order units and the 8th Mechanized Brigade. There is a systematic effort by SCIRI and its Badr militia to take control of the high-end units within MOI. This effort ranges from assigning Badr officers to command units to protecting thugs like the commander of the Wolf Brigade who has been involved in death squad activities, extortion of detainees and a general pattern of corruption. Nearly all of the new recruits within the commandos are Shia, many of them are Badr members. While this effort by SCIRI may be a hedge designed to create a protective force similar to the Pesh for the Kurds, it has the effect of seriously undermining the government's most effective forces. It also contributes to the possibility of a Lebanon-type scenario where the a civil war ensues with the Sunnis being driven into the arms of the insurgents as their militia. This would put us in ~~an~~ untenable position

It is my opinion that the ISF is sufficiently capable militarily right now to permit withdrawal of some US forces and the redistribution of others to areas like Anbar. I recognize that the timing of such a withdrawal with the referendum and an election pending ~~has~~ strong political implications. However, it is essential that the Iraqis assume the burden of their own security as quickly as possible. In this

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regard, Iraqi army units must begin operating more independently. They are highly dependent on their US counterpart units for logistics as well as command and control. Changing this has to be a top priority. In order to make such a change, the Iraqis have to develop a functional logistics system. We also have to focus our efforts on the US advisory teams that are assigned to the Iraqi units. These teams will play an increasingly key role as we begin the withdrawal process. My first-hand experience with the MOI forces and their advisory teams suggest that we could do better. Without detracting from the courage and sacrifices that these teams are making daily, the qualifications of many of those assigned to this duty are lacking. Most are active duty personnel assigned to reserve units with little training or experience in working with indigenous forces. In most cases, they do not live with the Iraqi units they advise and are sometimes left behind because they are unaware of pending operations. Working with host country forces is precisely what the Army's Special Forces were initially designed to do. Unfortunately, they have moved away from this critical mission and focused instead on direct action.

Most of my comments heretofore have been directed toward military matters. However, the current situation is overshadowed by politics and specifically the pending referendum. My friend, Saad, has been working day and night to find common ground between the Sunnis, Kurds and the Shias so that the constitution will have the support of all. I am less than optimistic that this will occur. However, if the Sunnis with the support of strange bedfellows like Moqtada are able to achieve the requisite votes in three provinces to defeat the constitution, there is a silver lining. It will show that the Sunnis do have political power and can be successful within the system. Regardless of the outcome of the referendum, it is essential that the Sunnis are not disenfranchised to the point where they turn to the insurgents on a large scale to protect their interests have left my most controversial and perhaps most important comments for last. Despite the problems, we are making progress in Iraq. I am less confident that we are doing a good job on the home front. An axiom of US foreign policy is that military action receives overwhelming support if accomplished quickly. When it stretches out and casualties mount, support at home wanes. If one traces military actions with overwhelming public support, there is a common thread that I consider significant. The military leader in charge was renowned. Eisenhower, MacArthur, "Blood and Guts" Patton, even "Stormin' Norman" were household names. Very few Americans, even those that are well read, can tell you who is in charge in Iraq. General Casey is smart and has done most things right, but he is not particularly good with the press and he is not the dynamic leader that Americans revere and have confidence that he is going to get this job done and get the troops home. I recommend you find that dynamic general, give him some running room and turn him loose on the press. Unfortunately, there are not many around, but I can think of a few.

Best, Jim



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