

Military Revolt Grows Against Rumsfeld

by Edward Spannaus

The war between the uniformed military and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is showing no signs of letting up, with a full-scale revolt now reported to be brewing within the Army, against the top civilian leadership in the Pentagon, starting with Rumsfeld and his Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz.

The revolt extends from the rank and file of enlisted men and women, through the top layers of the Army brass.

Fueling the anger at Rumsfeld, is the growing mess in Iraq, in which regular Army soldiers are facing the anger of the Iraqi population. Iraqis are enraged by the lack of basic services such as electricity and water, and also by heavy-handed tactics used by some elements of the Special Operations Forces—apparently operating outside the regular chain of command—who conduct bloody raids with heavy civilian casualties, leaving the mess to be cleaned up by infantry troops.

A leading front of this ongoing conflict is Rumsfeld's purge of the Army—a part of his campaign to downgrade the Army in favor of fancy technology and special operations. Rumsfeld's firing of Army Secretary (and former General) Thomas White in April, and his contemptuous treatment of the highly respected Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Eric Shinseki, caused deep anger within the Army.

Rumsfeld's purge of top Army ranks is reportedly still continuing. On orders from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the Army's Vice Chief of Staff, Gen. John Keane, recently has informed 10-12 Army generals that they are being retired. Those being removed are viewed by Rumsfeld and Co. as being too close to the retired General Shinseki, who had publicly clashed with Rumsfeld on "transformation" and force-size issues. Pentagon officials were cited saying that Keane was cleaning house on orders from Rumsfeld, to prepare for the arrival of the new Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker.

But despite the claim that Schoomaker is somehow involved in the purge, the view in some military circles is that Schoomaker will not be a push-over for Rumsfeld. The open conflict and tensions between the two was a recurring theme in Schoomaker's Senate confirmation hearing on July 29. When asked where he stands on Shinseki's estimate that the Army needs at least 20-40,000 more people, Schoomaker indicated his agreement with Shinseki, responding that "intuitively, I think we need more people. . . . It's that simple."



Commander of Iraq coalition forces Gen. Ricardo Sanchez has acknowledged publicly that by following the Pentagon's occupation policy, "You create more enemies than you capture." Other serving and retired generals are protesting far more strongly, and being sacked for it.

In his speech at his retirement ceremony on June 11—a ceremony blatantly boycotted by the top civilian Pentagon leadership—Shinseki had warned: "Beware the 12-division strategy for a 10-division Army."

Generals Contradict Rumsfeld

In discussions with *EIR*, a number of retired military officers have also pointed to the significance of recent statements by the new Central Command Commander, Gen. John Abizaid, who described the situation now being faced by U.S. forces in Iraq as "a classical guerrilla-style campaign." This declaration was in direct contradiction of Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz, who have insisted that the continuing attacks on U.S. troops are just being carried out by disorganized, desperate, rag-tag "dead-enders."

Likewise, comments made by Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the commander of coalition forces in Iraq, publicly acknowledged that the "iron-fisted" raids conducted by U.S. forces were alienating Iraqis, and causing some to feel obligated, as a matter of dignity and self-respect, to retaliate against American forces. Sanchez said that the message he is getting from Iraqis, is that the impact of these tactics is such that "you create more enemies than you capture." (Imagine Rumsfeld or Wolfowitz making such an admission!)

Before and during the Iraq invasion, a number of retired Army Generals took the point in articulating criticisms of the drive for the war, and the faulty planning which put U.S. forces in jeopardy; it was widely understood that they were speaking on behalf of many active-duty officers who were constrained by military discipline from making their criticisms public.

Most prominent among these retired flag officers were Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey, and Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni. General Zinni told the *Toronto Star* on Aug. 9 that he had been subjected to being labelled a “turncoat” by some senior officers in the Pentagon, and that he lost his position as the Administration’s special Middle East envoy because of his questioning of the Iraq war. But, Zinni said, he has no regrets for speaking out. “It’s an obligation you have,” he said, adding that “in our history, there have been too many times when generals didn’t say what they thought. We all swear an oath to the Constitution. One of the things I thought I was defending was the right to dissent.”

The right to dissent without being called traitors was also emphasized at “Bring Them Home Now” press conferences held on Aug. 13 and 14, in Washington, D.C., and at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, by the groups Military Families Speak Out and Veterans for Peace. Many families of soldiers were particularly incensed by President Bush’s “bring em’ on” taunt, which one called “words of false bravado uttered by Bush from a safe and secure location in the White House.” Stan Goff, a 26-year Army Special Forces veteran said that “Bush and Rumsfeld care for soldiers, like Tyson Foods cares for chickens.”

Ashcroft Demands More Gestapo Powers

by Edward Spannaus

In a June 5 appearance before the House Judiciary Committee, Attorney General John Ashcroft demanded that Congress give him still more powers—more surveillance powers, more drastic sentencing provisions, and more death penalty applications. Ashcroft made it clear that his desire for harsher sentences is not for purposes of punishment or deterrence, but as a lever for coercing “cooperation” and plea-bargaining. He complained that “existing law does not consistently encourage cooperation by providing adequate maximum penalties to punish acts of terrorism,” and called for greater use of the death penalty and life imprisonment.

Ashcroft is continuing to pursue his demand for more Gestapo-type powers, and more draconian punishments, in a number of ways. He is undertaking a 10-day, 20-state tour later in August to defend the 2001 USA/PATRIOT Act, and

to promote the new “VICTORY Act” (Vital Interdiction of Criminal Terrorist Organizations Act), which would give Ashcroft still further powers to go after alleged terrorists and narco-terrorists. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) is expected to introduce the bill next month, but it will face opposition from both Democrats and Republicans. The proposed bill—not yet public—reportedly includes provisions allowing the Justice Department to:

- Clamp down on *halawa* money transactions, used widely in the Arab world, and based on an honor system rather than formal banking transactions;
- Obtain financial records without a court order in terrorism investigations;
- Track wireless communications with a roving search warrant; and
- Increase sentences and fines for drug kingpins.

Second, Ashcroft has launched a major attack to “black-list” Federal judges whom he considers to be too “soft” in sentencing. Expanding on the “Feeney Amendment,” which was written largely by the Justice Department and passed by Congress in April, Ashcroft has ordered U.S. Attorneys and Federal prosecutors to report on judges who give more lenient sentences than provided in Federal sentencing guidelines, and to appeal almost all “downward departures” from the guidelines.

The Feeney Amendment, and Ashcroft’s new order, have infuriated Federal judges, including even Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who regard it as an attack on the independence of the judiciary. Rehnquist has warned that the Feeney Amendment will “seriously impair the ability of courts to impose just and responsible sentences.”

Draconian sentences and punishments are not only an end in themselves for Ashcroft. They also serve as a threat to be used to compel suspects—whether guilty or not—to plead guilty and cooperate with prosecutors in framing up other targets. A most egregious case of the use of such thuggish tactics, is how Ashcroft is using the threat of declaring a suspect an “enemy combatant” and throwing him into the black hole of endless military custody, to coerce defendants to plead guilty to charges which the government might not be able to prove in court.

The Case of the Lackawanna Six

The *Washington Post* reported recently how Ashcroft’s Justice Department has used the threat of indefinite military imprisonment, to compel guilty pleas from six young Yemeni-Americans from Lackawanna, New York. The six were coerced into pleading guilty to terrorist crimes, with sentences of 6 to 9 years, under the threat that if they didn’t, they would be designated as “enemy combatants” and shipped off to military prisons, where they would have no access to lawyers or to the courts.

The six have admitted attending an al-Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan prior to the 9/11 attacks—having been recruited to go there for ostensibly religious purposes—but