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October 30, 2006

TO: GEN George Casey

CC: Gen Pete Pace  
GEN John Abizaid

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld *D.A.*

SUBJECT: Troop Disposition in Iraq

As you know, every week we have a deployment order meeting. Not too long ago one of those meetings involved your recommendation that we extend the 172nd Stryker Brigade for up to 120 additional days. We did so.

Currently, we are looking at force rotations for the future. Increasingly, they include notice indicating that the dwell times out of Iraq for active duty forces will be less than one year -- by a month or, in some cases, two or three months. The inevitable effect of unexpected extensions and of dwell times of less than one year will be seen in recruiting, retention, and morale. Needless to say, there are risks to continuing on this path for an extended period.

As you will recall, three years ago I started a process called "managing the force more efficiently." We initiated some 35 to 40 different activities to reduce stress on the force, including moving military folks out of civilian posts and the like. We are making headway.

In addition, we are currently considering ways we might accelerate the current program and/or build additional combat, combat support and combat service support capabilities to further reduce stress on the force. We are also working to reduce U.S. forces in other parts of the world. The cumulative effect is that we are finding ways to increase

supply. One of the complicating factors is that the Army is modularizing and



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modernizing the force to brigade combat teams, which means that units are periodically out of the rotation. Lastly, we wisely committed to train Iraqi and Afghan security forces and embed key leaders with them, but this also has resulted in removing some units from the force rotation, thereby adding to the stress.

I mention all of this so you will have it in your mind as we go forward. At your request, we have an assessment team going into Iraq. We are doing the same in Afghanistan. Their task is to see if we can return individuals or units in the theater that made sense two or three years ago but may make less sense today. I am sure the assessment will produce benefits, as it did the last time.

As the President said, we want to resource what you and your team need to get the job done. On the other hand, we want to work the system so it will operate efficiently, sustain the long war, and properly balance risk.

I wanted you to have this background as you work with the assessment teams and as you consider the arrangement of the forces you have in Iraq.

Over the recent period, we have gone from very few Iraqi Security Forces to 310,000 trained and equipped. We have gone from 110 U.S. bases down to less than 55, with the remainder closed or turned over to the Iraqis. Today we have the majority of Iraqi Security Forces in the lead, with Coalition forces in support. However, my impression is that we have plus or minus 145,000 troops, with roughly the same number of headquarters, the sizes of the headquarters growing, and what seems to be roughly the same number of engineers, military police, force protection, and the like. This requires a careful look, and I know you will encourage your people to work closely with General Wood's team and lean forward to propose whatever adjustments are possible.

Thanks.



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IAW EO 12958, as amended  
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

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