

Strategy Research Project

The Impact of Three Strategic Influences on Donald Rumsfeld

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Abstract

Donald Rumsfeld's desire to transform the Department of Defense into a lean, flexible, and expeditionary organization in 2001 was not a bad initiative. However, in applying the transformation based on three strategic influencers to the plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the result was a failed strategy. The first was a wrongheaded application of the lessons learned in Operation Desert Storm. Second, an emerging Revolution in Military Affairs predicated on network centric and rapid decisive operations underestimated the amount of military power required on the ground in Iraq. Finally, a "New American Way of War" focused on small numbers of special operations forces supported by airpower that initially saw success in Afghanistan reinforced Rumsfeld's concept for regime change in Iraq. The combination of these factors in the decade between Operation Desert Storm and the 9/11 attacks resulted in flawed assumptions and a failed strategy for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Impact of Three Strategic Influences on Donald Rumsfeld

So it is our responsibility to get about the task of transforming this great national asset, the Department of Defense, that is so needed to preserve peace and stability in our still dangerous, untidy and dynamic world.

—Donald Rumsfeld¹

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld arrived on the scene in the newly elected President George W. Bush administration bent on delivering a total transformation of the Department of Defense (DoD). He wanted to change the DoD and the military instrument of power from a cumbersome, lethargic, inflexible bureaucracy into an agile, flexible, and trimmed down expeditionary force. Rumsfeld carried with him inherent institutional influence by his experience as the White House Chief of Staff and Secretary of Defense in the President Gerald Ford administration. He was also shaped by his experience as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of two Fortune 500 companies - Searle Pharmaceuticals and General Instruments. And he was driven by his zealous quest to “transform” the entire Department of Defense. He was quickly influenced by Andy Marshall at the Office of Net Assessment (ONA), airpower enthusiasts, the acolytes of the new Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and proponents of the Navy’s Network Centric Warfare. The lessons from Operations Desert Shield and Storm (ODS) and its impact throughout the services in the decade prior to his arrival culminated in a predominance of technological and informational solutions. The application of airpower and precision strike capabilities would facilitate his desire to increase the military’s lethality and effectiveness while simultaneously reducing the overall size, manpower, and budget of the DoD.

Most scholars agree Rumsfeld’s transformation of the United States military influenced how it fought in Operation Iraqi Freedom. But it is important to understand

where his ideas principally came from. While there is plenty of blame to go around for both civilian and military leadership with regard to failures in OIF, Secretary Rumsfeld was ultimately responsible for formulating the ends, ways and means presented to the President for the execution of the operation. While several high ranking military leaders and planners were offering their best advice, it seems that Rumsfeld relied mostly upon the strategic advisors who most closely mirrored his preferences for substituting technology and information dominance for force size. This paper argues Rumsfeld's impact on the planning and conduct of Operation Iraqi Freedom was primarily influenced by three factors:

- “Lessons” drawn from Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990-1991, which seemed to validate the application of overwhelming precision firepower to compel Saddam Hussein's army to abandon its occupation of Kuwait.
- A perceived Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) predicated on a “new” method of warfare using information networks enabling near perfect knowledge of the enemy for targeting and enabling Rapid Decisive Operations(RDO).
- The idea of a new “American Way of War” founded on the economy of force, use of airpower, and special operations forces for limited objectives instead of the so-called traditional American approach of overwhelming force.

Desert Storm's “Lessons”

The lightning-quick operational victory of Desert Storm occurred during the period when Donald Rumsfeld was not serving in the US government. In 1990-91, Mr. Rumsfeld was still leading Fortune 500 companies Searle and General Instruments

through their transformations toward more profit. However, the strategic approach of the Weinberger-Powell doctrine, AirLand Battle Operations, showcasing of the “Big-Five” weapon systems, and an overwhelming application of firepower for a limited objective, all seemed to be vindicated by Desert Storm, at least in the minds of those in power in Washington D.C.² On the contrary, many leading critics believed the quick and decisive victory in Operation Desert Storm would result in learning the wrong lessons for future warfare that would be seemingly devoid of large state-on-state armored battles in the deserts of the Middle East or on the plains of Europe. “While the Pentagon had proclaimed the Gulf War to be a harbinger of future wars, complete with technology and the Powell Doctrine as its talismans, some had argued that the post-Cold War world would not accommodate DESERT STORM-style conflict.”³

Many lessons emerged from Desert Storm; however, for many, to include Donald Rumsfeld, these lessons were too narrowly focused on the technological advances that quickly destroyed the Iraqi Army in 1991. “For American forces in Iraq in 2004-2011, the 1990-91 war in the Persian Gulf offered little guidance – nothing on fighting a protracted insurgency, nothing on fighting in population areas, and nothing on how to deal with mounting American casualties.”⁴ According to Steven Metz and James Kievit, “The danger lay in being overcome by ‘what American military force could do’ rather than in developing a comprehensive national security strategy that determined ‘what it should do.’”⁵ Therefore, as critics so often claim, the U.S. military continued to prepare for the war that just occurred rather than a future one, creating a comprehensive grand and military strategy to apply the military instrument of power in a way integrated in a whole-of-government approach. Instead, the DoD continued down its path of applying the

technology of the “Big Five” weapon systems - supported by massive airpower - as the proper set of tools for the strategic toolbox.

Admittedly, the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps, supported by Air Force supremacy and projected over long lines of communication by the U.S. Navy, could crush any resistance in its way. However, because the United States did not have to contend with the long and oftentimes messy aftermath of occupation and consolidating the gains in peace after winning the war on the battlefield, there were no lessons for what would confront the American military forces in Iraq from 2004 on – the hard work was just beginning, and would last another seven years.

Had Rumsfeld, along with key U.S. military leadership, been able to learn and apply lessons related to linking a very capable military instrument to a whole-of-government, Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) approach for changing the Iraqi regime, the quagmire of counterinsurgency from 2004-2011 might have been shortened. However, a desire to affect Iraqi regime change by a decapitation strike aimed at Saddam Hussein via an attack with precision guided munitions, with “near-perfect” intelligence, from stealthy air platforms, followed by a “blitzkrieg-like” assault with a relatively small armored force was believed by Rumsfeld and his supporters to lead to ultimate success in Iraq. This belief was a result of more than twenty years of the U.S. military industrial complex exploring technological innovations as the most important lessons from Desert Storm.

The character of war had indeed changed and was on full display in Operation Desert Storm. Advanced technology, doctrine and training methods had enabled the U.S. military to seek, strike, and destroy the enemy at a rate and accuracy that had not

been achieved in history. However, an overreliance on technological solutions caused U.S. civilian and military leadership to become enamored with a “silver bullet” solution. This approach appeared to be working again in March of 2003, but ultimately failed.

While U.S. forces rapidly assaulted and secured Baghdad and continued to search for an elusive Saddam Hussein and his sons, the forces on the ground and leaders at the Pentagon had failed to properly plan for the aftermath. With the rapid removal of the Baath party from the Iraqi government, a vacuum was created that the U.S. military would attempt to fill at the expense of great amounts of blood and treasure. The technology of the Big Five and airpower could not win that phase of the war. It would take hundreds of thousands of Soldiers and Marines, pounding the streets on foot, to restore stability in Iraq. The few lessons that were transferrable from Desert Shield/Desert Storm applied only in the first month of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The U.S. would spend the next several years learning new lessons that had nothing to do with applying massive firepower to easily identifiable enemy targets. In the end, the U.S. military had to re-learn the most valuable lesson of the nature of war – it is mainly a human endeavor, a competition of wills. The character of war had indeed changed, but the nature of war was still about people, and the U.S. military found itself woefully short as regards the number of ground troops it needed in Iraq.

Rumsfeld’s misapplied lessons of the Persian Gulf War, of substitution of technology for numbers, and his disdain for Chief of Staff of the Army General Shinseki’s military advice that Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) would require ‘several hundred thousand’ Soldiers and Marines on the ground to accomplish the desired endstate in Iraq directly contributed to our failed strategy in OIF.⁶ “Rumsfeld told

reporters that it was ludicrous to think that it would take more forces to secure the peace than win the war.”⁷ Additionally, his decision to scrap the planning the State Department did for Phase IV reconstruction activities was another example of his belief that if we only removed Saddam Hussein, the strategic center of gravity of Iraq, the Iraqi people would welcome the United States as liberators with “sweets and flowers”.⁸ Because the U.S. government and DOD had not planned and executed an occupation and nation-building like this since the end of World War Two, lessons from Desert Storm were short sighted and ultimately wrong for OIF.

A Revolution in Military Affairs?

Rumsfeld’s thinking was significantly shaped by emerging RMA concepts. This RMA was based on the success of the Persian Gulf War and acquisition of new technology and information systems that led to the concepts of Rapid Decisive Operations, and Network-Centric Operations, and precision targeting by airpower enthusiasts. This RMA promised victory in a rapid and decisive fashion, through near-perfect information about the enemy and friendly forces, by targeting key parts of a system of systems. This type of warfare was attractive to those who believed wars could be won faster, cheaper, and with fewer ground forces, and ultimately fewer casualties – and the biggest proponent of substituting technology and precision for overwhelming force was Donald Rumsfeld.

That required us to have forces that were agile and could move rapidly. For these lighter forces to be as capable as more traditional heavy forces, far greater precision was required. And to take advantage of the improved precision of our weapons, our forces needed more accurate targeting intelligence...we also had a responsibility to capitalize on advances in science and engineering.⁹

The people and organizations that influenced Rumsfeld's ideas on applying military power along the lines of this RMA were Andy Marshall at the Office of Net Assessment and U.S. Navy Admirals Arthur Cebrowski and Bill Owens with their concept of Network Centric Warfare. The Joint Staff and Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) contributed with a failed attempt to describe a concept for Rapid Decisive Operations.¹⁰ Rumsfeld took these ideas, and together with the influence of special operations and airpower, created his concept of how the operations should unfold in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

One of the first people whom Rumsfeld met upon his return to the Office of the Secretary of Defense for this his second stint in that position was the venerable Andy Marshall. Andy Marshall had led the DoD's Office of Net Assessment (ONA) for over 40 years under twelve defense secretaries and eight administrations. He wielded extraordinary influence over many in the inner workings of the Pentagon and he quickly gained an advocate in Rumsfeld for applying a systems analysis and data approach to assessing ourselves and the enemy. Rumsfeld was eager to put Marshall's statistical analysis and concepts into action as quickly as possible as they furthered his radical transformation ideas to completely overhaul and gut bureaucratic bloat he so vehemently disliked in the growing DoD complex.

In early 2001, soon after Donald Rumsfeld had returned from the Pentagon for a second tour as defense secretary under President George W. Bush, he asked Marshall to conduct a review of US defense strategy. Given the mutual respect that had emerged between the two men during Rumsfeld's first tour at the Pentagon, it was natural for Rumsfeld to ask Marshall for such an assessment.¹¹

Rumsfeld was eager to get his transformation underway, but felt the services were too entrenched in outdated ways wedded to backward facing doctrine and strategy. He

would therefore need to implement a whole new strategic view in the DoD to kick start his initiatives. Marshall, he thought, could provide the statistical detail and analysis to back up what Rumsfeld wished to put into action.

Rumsfeld and Marshall briefed President Bush in March 2001 on their strategy review.¹² Marshall stressed the key to future success would rely upon future experimentation and bright young military officers who could think creatively about the future. “The president replied that he had talked to a lot of officers but had not found many of them who thought innovatively about the future.”¹³ ONA laid out five candidate areas for the US military to maintain a competitive advantage in the future. These included: air superiority, underseas warfare, space, robotics, and realistic combat training.¹⁴ While these were intended to be broad and futures focused, the list elicited negative responses from the service chiefs who searched for ways their big, heavy, expensive, platforms around which their very services were structured would fit in. These recommendations were not bad ideas about the evolving of the future domains of armed conflict and where we might need to focus future concepts and experimentation. However, they focused on the changing character of war vis-à-vis technology, and not upon the continued nature of war which is about interacting with humans in an armed struggle. While many of these concepts played out as critical support roles in Afghanistan and Iraq and continue to be employed today, all but “conduct realistic combat training” failed to focus on the human dimension that was so decisive in the ensuing years of counterinsurgency campaigns.

The burgeoning military-industrial complex in Washington, D.C. contributed to Rumsfeld’s distaste of a bloated, slow, process-driven Defense Department that was

founded on taking decades to design, build, and acquire defense items like the Big Five. But heavy tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, rocket launched artillery, and attack helicopters did not fit into the five emerging concept categories Rumsfeld and Marshall were emphasizing for the future. Something would have to give way in terms of structure, programs, and numbers if Rumsfeld was going to implement his transformation. Based on limited resources, or means, the United States needed more creativity in its ways of employing a smaller, less expensive military, to achieve the ends directed by the National Command Authority.

Despite the best efforts of Rumsfeld and Marshall's ONA to write a new strategy overview that would guide the future transformation of the US military, it ultimately failed because it was overcome by service chief resoluteness and the events of 9/11 and Afghanistan. "Operation Iraqi Freedom drew the United States and its allies into what became a protracted counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq just as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) did in Afghanistan. A key caution of Marshall's 2001 strategy outline had been to 'keep future American wars small, limited in means, and far away' from U.S. shores."¹⁵ While Iraq and Afghanistan were far away from U.S. shores, they were hardly small and limited in means due to a failure by the Bush administration to define the endstate clearly in either OEF or OIF. Because the United States failed to identify the ends it desired and the termination criteria to end the preponderance of the military involvement, an imbalance in means and ways was employed to achieve an unclear endstate. This failure to balance ends, ways, and means created a high amount of risk in both campaigns, ultimately resulting in long, drawn-out counterinsurgencies that still rage in both Iraq with ISIS, and Afghanistan.

Another key influence on Rumsfeld was the idea that a Network Centric Warfare concept was emerging as part of this RMA. The proponents of this were two naval flag officers, Admiral Bill Owens, former Vice Chief of the JCS, who published a book called, “Lifting the Fog of War” in 2000, which challenged the next administration to reverse the “hollowing” of U.S. forces. This hollowing began during the Clinton Administration with reduced force structure, which was justified in part by the RMA. The RMA would revolutionize warfare through:

- Increased battlespace awareness.
- Improved C4I or Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence.
- Precision force.¹⁶

Owens elaborates on the use of precision force by stating,

This involves the array of sophisticated weapons available... including precision-guided gravity bombs, laser guided artillery shells, and cruise missiles that use navigational satellite for pinpoint strikes and others that are still on the drawing board, such as lasers to physically destroy enemy missiles, thermal pulse weapons to wreck enemy transmitters and receivers and even computer programs to target and destroy the information network of the enemy by planting computer viruses.¹⁷

While these technological improvements are all still being applied today, the overreliance on technology and a perceived advantage in information and technology and precision did not in fact win the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan. These are all enablers which can be quite effective in application but they still do not provide a competitive advantage at the tip of the spear on patrol with the infantry squad that is trying to influence the will of the local populace in a protracted counterinsurgency.

Admiral Arthur Cebrowski posited the new concept in an article in *Proceedings* in 1998 called Network Centric Warfare which would derive its power from the strong

networking of well-informed but geographically dispersed force.¹⁸ This idea of information technology dominance would enable a smaller, dispersed force, to gain a competitive advantage over the adversary through less structure and more information was appealing to Rumsfeld. The idea of overwhelming information dominance and increased speed of command were attractive to Rumsfeld, so much so that when Admiral Cebrowski retired from the Navy, Rumsfeld named him the first director of the newly formed Office of Force Transformation (OFT).¹⁹

There is little doubt Andy Marshall, Bill Owens, and Art Cebrowski played key roles in the formative stages of Donald Rumsfeld's second tour as the Secretary of Defense. All three were advocates of transformation and gave Rumsfeld fodder in the way of concepts and statistical data that seemed forward looking, innovative, and less expensive than how the defense establishment was operating at the time.

A New American Way of War?

Rumsfeld was also influenced by the notion that a new "American Way of War" was evolving from the former overwhelming application of American force in a battle of annihilation or attrition in a general war, to an emphasis on small groups of special operations forces (SOF) supported by airpower applying high tech precision targeting of the enemy's system of systems. His notion of being able to defeat an adversary rapidly with small numbers of SOF and heavy applications of airpower seemed to be validated in the early months of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. A SOF-focused campaign, supported by a few light infantry battalions and firepower predominately from the air rapidly accelerated the fall of key Taliban strongholds like Mazar-e-Shariff and Kabul to the SOF-backed Northern Alliance Army.

However, as months grew into years, and the focus moved away from Afghanistan to an emphasis on regime change in Iraq, SOF and airpower alone became woefully insufficient to train a 300,000+ person Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) from scratch. Again, a failure at the strategic level to identify a desired endstate and termination conditions for our military involvement in Afghanistan eventually led to a prolonged nation building adventure with heavy security force assistance and counter terrorism missions for U.S. forces over the next 13 years. SOF and airpower alone could help topple the Taliban regime but it could not consolidate the gains and ensure peace. It would take hundreds of thousands of general purpose Soldiers and Marines from dozens of nations in a coalition effort to prosecute a counterinsurgency campaign. As a human struggle and extension of politics, it would take more than just SOF and precision airpower to make progress in Afghanistan as well as Iraq.

The primary domain for the operation in both OEF and OIF was the land domain. And to address the center of gravity in a counterinsurgency campaign is about the will of the populace and their trust in a legitimate government that will secure and provide essential services for the people. These objectives could not be attained solely by SOF and air. Airpower can project fires onto a land population but it cannot interact, face to face, with the populace or the government forces as our land forces can and must do. While SOF are experts in operating in the human domain on land, by, with, and through indigenous forces, there are not enough SOF forces available to consolidate gains and help rebuild a nation on their own. Although most ground commanders or Soldiers are glad to have an attack helicopter or fast moving jet overhead to apply superior fires when in contact, many misapplications of supposed precision guided munitions

targeting with “near perfect” intelligence, caused many unintended consequences on the ground with civilian casualties and collateral damage. These civilian casualty (CIVCAS) events took months and years to recover from in rebuilding trust with those on the ground.

In his 1973 treatise on American Military Strategy, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, Russell Weigley laid out a very detailed review of American military strategy from the Revolution through the Vietnam War that can be summarized broadly that America’s armed forces sought out either wars of attrition such as in the American Revolution or wars of annihilation with overwhelming mass and firepower such as was applied by the Union Army in the American Civil War on a local scale and again in World War II on a global scale.

According to Weigley,

In the history of American strategy, the direction taken by the American conception of war made most American strategists, through most of the time span of American history, strategists of annihilation. At the beginning, when American military resources were still slight, America made a promising beginning in the nurture of the strategists of attrition; but the wealth of the country and its adoption of unlimited aims in war cut that development short, until the strategy of annihilation became characteristically the American way in war.²⁰

The idea of a decisive American military destroying our global enemies in great battles of annihilation permeated the doctrinal thought throughout our national leadership. A desire to dismiss Vietnam as an aberration contributed to the development of the Army’s AirLand Battle doctrine.

U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5, Operations, dated August 1982, outlined the Army’s operational method for how U.S. forces could be employed to destroy massed Soviet armored formations in depth of the battlespace using synchronized application of

firepower through the air, indirect fire, and directly in battles of annihilation.²¹ This doctrine permeated the military education of Army officers through the mid-1990s. The application of this doctrine in Operation Desert Storm theoretically validated AirLand Battle as an operations concept with a rapid and decisive victory over Saddam Hussein's Iraqi military forces.

In Operation Desert Storm, a national strategic endstate and termination criteria for the end of military operations was well articulated. Strategic ends, ways and means were in balance; hence, risk was low and the strategy succeeded. While the application of overwhelming U.S. military force to attain a clear and limited set of objectives worked well in ODS, Rumsfeld demanded the strategy for OIF be predicated on a smaller, leaner ground force, supported heavily by precision-guided munitions and airpower to decapitate the Hussein regime and thereby win the war quickly, with low casualties. He was applying the language of an emerging "New American Way of War" that was underpinned by a faulty RMA of Network Centric Warfare and Rapid Decisive Operations enabled by a supposed strategic asymmetric advantage delivered by Airpower. This was intended to destroy the enemy system of systems by the right application of precision guided munitions against the critical vulnerability of the enemy, thus causing the entire enemy system to collapse resulting in a rapid, and low cost victory.

In his book, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, Dr. Antulio Echevarria compares the traditional way of war with the emerging way of war based on the RMA that many thought was validated by Desert Storm. "Some historians cautioned that the

new way of war would prove irresistible to American political leaders precisely because it appeared to offer low-risk solutions to a range of strategic problems.”²²

In 2001, Eliot Cohen stated,

The traditional American way of war was associated with the residue of the industrial age and perhaps a stubborn culture resistant to change, whereas the new one was believed to reflect the cutting-edge principles of the information age and to be more open to being deployed as an instrument of quick strikes and limited interventions that eschewed long-term commitments.²³

The key phrase in this description that illustrated the disconnect in the assumptions made going into OIF is “limited interventions that eschewed long-term commitments.” A long term commitment in both Afghanistan and Iraq were not what Rumsfeld envisioned when planning OEF and OIF. However, planning assumptions were dead wrong, and the failure by Rumsfeld and the National Command Authority to delineate the endstate and termination conditions resulted in coalition forces still embroiled in combat and training missions in both countries.

Conclusion

Rumsfeld was indeed adamant on achieving a total transformation of the Department of Defense. His intense desire to make the DoD more lean, flexible, and expeditionary was not a bad initiative. However, when applying the transformation principles to the plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the United States was left with a failed strategy. Rumsfeld was primarily influenced in three ways that would lead to this failure in Iraq. The first was a wrongheaded application of the lessons learned in Operation Desert Storm. Second, an emerging Revolution in Military Affairs predicated on network centric operations and rapid decisive operations underestimated the amount of American military power required on the ground in Iraq. And finally, a “New American

Way of War” focused on the application of small numbers of special operations forces supported by airpower that initially saw success in 2001-2 in Afghanistan reinforced Rumsfeld’s concept of what could change the regime in Iraq in 2003. The combination of these three factors in the decade between Operation Desert Storm and the tragedy of September 11, 2001, resulted in many flawed assumptions and a failed strategy for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

There are many lessons to be drawn from the influences on Rumsfeld and the impact they had on the failed strategy for Operation Iraqi Freedom. First, self-aggrandizing service after-action reviews of Operation Desert Shield/Storm focused on the massive application of firepower from the air coupled with mobile armored formations on open desert as a validation of AirLand Battle doctrine and the utility of the “Big Five” programs for the Army. However, it is foolish to cite the reasons for success in such a narrowly focused application of power on such a limited objective as the recipe for future success. The reality is that although Desert Storm was an overwhelming success at the operational level it actually provided very few lessons to carry forward into Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Its lessons were not applicable to fighting counterinsurgencies in extremely rugged or urban terrain against enemies that blended in with the population using asymmetric techniques to stifle technological advantages.

Secondly, technology has changed the character of war for centuries and will continue to evolve and provide new means and methods for foes to attack one another. However, the promise of technology and information to completely lift the fog and friction of war is unrealistic. While technology enables innovative ways to wage war, it

cannot replace the human interaction required in the land domain. There is a human element to warfare. Humans live predominantly on land, and technology cannot completely replace boots on the ground to interact with the people who inhabit it.

Third, while special operations forces coordinated Northern Alliance offensives supported by airpower were successful in achieving initial gains in toppling the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, there were not enough ground forces available to consolidate the gains and translate into longer lasting stability at the strategic level. The United States is still trying to determine the true endstate and military termination criteria today in Afghanistan, 15 years after the removal of the Taliban from government. While SOF and airpower have their place in the National Command Authority's strategic toolbox, special forces cannot be mass produced and are not large enough to conduct the myriad functions required of a general purpose force to achieve all campaign objectives.

Fourth, the ability of strategic leaders to transform bureaucracies is important for the growth and improvement of the organization and its effectiveness. However, it must be accomplished in a manner that inspires the subordinate leaders of the organization to buy in to the organizational change. Rumsfeld came into his second stint at the Department of Defense rightfully questioning the status quo. But his inability to create consensus between his civilian appointed staffers and senior military leaders doomed his goal for a transformed DoD. Diversity in a strategic leadership environment is critical in order to prevent confirmation bias, groupthink, and ultimately failed assumptions in developing national strategy.

Finally, civilian control of the military remains a paramount value of our nation. Therefore, the civilian leadership of the military, in particular the President and the

Secretary of Defense, must interact appropriately with the senior military leaders, particularly the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the service chiefs. The military leaders must focus on providing the civilian leadership viable options and best military advice and the civilian leaders must be willing to hear out the military leaders and engage with all strategic leaders in a manner that fosters cooperation and positive leadership. Ultimately, Rumsfeld failed to deliver a strategy for victory in OIF because he was unable to build consensus within the Department of Defense and with other inter-agency partners in a whole-of-government approach.

Endnotes

¹ Donald Rumsfeld, "The DoD Challenge," June 25 2001, <http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/93/2001-06-25%20re%20The%20DoD%20Challenge.pdf> (accessed February 14, 2016).

² The Big Five systems were: M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank, M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, Multiple Launched Rocket System (MLRS), AH-64 Apache Attack Helicopter, and UH-60 Blackhawk Utility Helicopter.

³ William Thomas Allison, *The Gulf War, 1990-91* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 158.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁵ Steven Metz and James Kievit, *Strategy and the Revolution in Military Affairs: From Theory to Policy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1995), 9, 40.

⁶ Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 102.

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⁸ Nora Bensahel, et al., *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2008), xx.

⁹ Donald Rumsfeld, *Donald Rumsfeld: Known and Unknown A Memoir* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 297-298.

¹⁰ Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Rapid Decisive Operations: An Assumptions-Based Critique* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, November 2001), vi.

¹¹ Andrew Krepinevich and Barry Watts, *The Last Warrior: Andrew Marshall and the Shaping of Modern American Defense Strategy* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 231.

¹² Ibid., 232.

¹³ Ibid., 233.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 235.

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¹⁷ Ibid., 16.

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