
Book Review

Rumsfeld's Killing Obsession

by Edward Spannaus

Rumsfeld's War: The Untold Story of America's Anti-Terrorist Commander

by Rowan Scarborough

Washington: Regnery, 2004

253 pages, hardcover, \$27.95

If you're going to be a suck-up, at least have a sense of timing. Pity poor Rowan Scarborough, whose book puffing Donald Rumsfeld as the military genius of the age, came out just as Rummy's war in Iraq was collapsing in the face of a popular insurgency—and, as *EIR* has been informed, even the neo-cons now favor dumping him as Secretary of Defense. Scarborough, a Pentagon reporter at the neo-con-dominated *Washington Times*, obviously intended to present the most favorable possible portrait of Secretary Rumsfeld—in exchange for access to all manner of classified documents—but what he has actually written, is better characterized as a scathing indictment, confirming what *EIR* and many other critics of Rumsfeld have previously charged about him.

The picture of Rumsfeld that emerges is that of a McNamara-type business manager, whose bottom line is killing. Rumsfeld hasn't a clue about military strategy: For him, it all boils down to killing as many of the "enemy"—now defined as "terrorists"—as efficiently and quickly as possible. This is totally antithetical to the classical notion of "strategic defense," as Lyndon LaRouche recounts it in the radio interview on page 7. The traditional conception of military strategy—that war is fought in order to win the peace—seems never to have entered Rumsfeld's muddled thinking. The current collapse of U.S. military operations in Iraq is the inevitable consequence of this absence of any political-strategic conception. As competent strategists know, killing may win battles, but isn't sufficient to win wars.

EIR and many others have written extensively about Rumsfeld's war on the uniformed military, his disdain for the military leadership, especially that of the Army, and his fascination with air power and special operations. We have also written about his desire to turn Special Operations units into assassination teams reminiscent of the Vietnam-era

Phoenix program. What Scarborough has done, is to confirm this picture and to add some new detail. In his zeal, Scarborough probably overstates Rumsfeld's influence, particularly in contrast to Dick Cheney, who is clearly the overarching power in this administration, and the behind-the-scenes controller of the President.

For example, in the opening passages of his book, Scarborough describes what he has been told was Rumsfeld's almost-instantaneous response to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. "This is not a criminal action," Rumsfeld allegedly told Bush. "This is war." Scarborough brags: "This is the first time Rumsfeld's instant declaration of war has been reported, and it took America from the Clinton Administration's view that terrorism was a criminal matter, to the Bush Administration's view that terrorism was a global enemy to be destroyed."

Rumsfeld or Scarborough may flatter themselves that this was an original idea, but the false dichotomy of military versus legal action has been a long-held mantra among the neocon clique dominating the Bush Administration, the group whose de facto head is Dick Cheney, and which was assembled by George Shultz during the campaign period and dubbed the "Vulcans."

It is established that this gang was committed to an imperial war strategy, one heavily centered on the Middle East and Iraq, long before regaining power in 2001. The Cheney-Wolfowitz 1991-92 Defense Policy Guidance envisioned America as the sole global superpower that would crush any emerging challenger. The 1996 "Clean Break" manifesto, with the current Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith and Rumsfeld's Defense Policy Board chairman Richard Perle as key members of its drafting team, called for war on Iraq as part of a strategy to redraw the map of the Middle East. Rumsfeld himself was a signator on the "Clean Break" follow-on statement issued in 1997 by the Project for a New American Century. Some of this is mentioned, but glossed over, by Scarborough.

Not surprising then, that Rumsfeld started pushing for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein immediately after Sept. 11, according to Scarborough's account. As to 9/11 providing the pretext for what Rumsfeld and the neo-cons wanted to do all along, Scarborough quotes a "senior Pentagon official" (Rumsfeld?) as telling him: "I hate to say this and would never say it in public, but 9-11 had its benefits. We would never have gone into Afghanistan and started this war [on terrorism] without it. There just was not the national will."

Scarborough describes superficially, what *EIR* has investigated and put widely into circulation: Rumsfeld's creation of a special unit in the Pentagon, the Office of Special Plans (OSP), which *EIR* knows to have been set up to "cook the books" and pump fraudulent intelligence assessments into Cheney's office and the White House, bypassing the CIA and even the Pentagon's own Defense Intelligence Agency. Scarborough's story is that Feith wanted to refute CIA analysts who "believed that al-Qaeda had no links to anti-Zionist

terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah." Feith, reports Scarborough, "thought there were links—all the way to Baghdad." Feith's team produced "a catalogue of contacts" between Iraq and al-Qaeda going back almost a decade. It was compiled into the infamous "Feith memo" to the Senate Intelligence Committee—later leaked to the *Weekly Standard*.

William Luti, the lunatic who has been exposed in the LaRouche campaign's two influential *Children of Satan* pamphlets, is naturally given a quite sympathetic treatment in Scarborough's book, as a key combatant against the State Department's "soft line" on Iraq, and whose OSP "produced the arguments for invading Iraq."

Flattery Has Its Price

Scarborough did get a substantial inducement to pen such a flattering portrait: extraordinary—and apparently illegal—access to a significant number of secret documents and other highly-classified information. Apparently having been assured that he will have no problem over unlawful access to this material, he repeatedly boasts about it. In a series of questions posed to the Defense Department's press office, this writer pointed to statements by Scarborough indicating access to classified information, such as the following:

- Scarborough writing: "I obtained a highly classified White House document. . . ."
- quotations from a "SECRET" document that went to the JCS in the Summer of 2003.
- Scarborough revealing information concerning the Joint Special Operation Command's Grey Fox unit, which would appear to be classified information, in that almost everything about Grey Fox is classified.
- Scarborough reporting Rumsfeld's demands that Special Operations Forces be tasked to hunt down and kill terrorists, as follows: "I can reveal for the first time that Rumsfeld didn't wait for [Gen. Charles] Holland's new plan, but on July 22 [2002] initialed a highly-classified order to Joint Chiefs chairman General [Richard] Myers. . . ."; and then printing excerpts from Rumsfeld's order.
- Scarborough's book contains photographic reproductions of this and other documents, bearing the original classification markings, but no declassification stamps.

At least with respect to the first document questioned, a 160-page DIA report classified "Secret," the DOD confirmed that Scarborough was not authorized to have access to it; but it has not reported any action taken concerning its disclosure. Executive Order 13292, signed by President Bush on March 25, 2003, set mandatory administrative procedures for safeguarding classified information, and for investigating any unauthorized disclosures; there are administrative, civil, and criminal penalties for such unauthorized disclosures.

Did Rumsfeld tacitly authorize leaking classified defense information, in return for an expected flattering depiction of himself? Since Scarborough interviewed him, Rumsfeld can hardly claim not to have known. If so, he got the worst of the deal, despite the author's fawning efforts.