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THE ROSS REPORT FROM THE CHRONICLE FOREIGN & NATIONAL DESK

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 03, 2006

Army Times: "Time for Rumsfeld to go"



AP

An editorial scheduled to appear on Monday in [Army Times](#), [Air Force Times](#), [Navy Times](#) and [Marine Corps Times](#), calls for the resignation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

The papers are sold to American servicemen and women. They are published by the [Military Times Media Group](#), which is a subsidiary of [Gannett Co., Inc.](#)

Here is the text of the editorial, an advance copy of which we received this afternoon.

Time for Rumsfeld to go

"So long as our government requires the backing of an aroused and informed public opinion ... it is necessary to tell the hard bruising truth."

That statement was written by Pulitzer Prize-winning war correspondent [Marguerite Higgins](#) more than a half-century ago during the Korean War.

But until recently, the "hard bruising" truth about the Iraq war has been difficult to come by from leaders in Washington. One rosy reassurance after another has been handed down by President Bush, Vice President Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld: "mission accomplished," the insurgency is "in its last throes," and "back off," we know what we're doing, are a few choice examples.

Military leaders generally toed the line, although a few retired generals eventually spoke out from the safety of the sidelines, inciting criticism equally from anti-war types, who thought they should have spoken out while still in uniform, and pro-war foes, who thought the generals should have kept their critiques behind closed doors.

Now, however, a new chorus of criticism is beginning to resonate. Active-duty military leaders are starting to voice misgivings about the war's planning, execution and dimming prospects for success.

Army Gen. John Abizaid, chief of U.S. Central Command, told a Senate Armed Services Committee in September: "I believe that the sectarian violence is probably as bad as I've seen it ... and that if not stopped, it is possible that Iraq could move towards civil war."

Last week, someone leaked to The New York Times a [Central Command briefing slide](#) showing an assessment that the civil conflict in Iraq now borders on "critical" and has been sliding toward "chaos" for most of the past year. The strategy in Iraq has been to train an Iraqi army and police force that could gradually take over for U.S. troops in

Executive Foreign and National Editor Andrew S. Ross, along with contributors from the Chronicle's foreign and national staff, respond to reader questions about international and national news, and provide some thoughts, information and links to resources on major trends and developments.

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[China, Africa Pledge Closer Ties, Trade](#) 4:00pm

[Ex-Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit Dies](#) 3:45pm

[Taiwanese President Refuses to Resign](#) 3:28pm

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[Saddam Verdict Opinion Differs Worldwide](#) 2:49pm

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providing for the security of their new government and their nation.

But despite the best efforts of American trainers, the problem of molding a viciously sectarian population into anything resembling a force for national unity has become a losing proposition.

For two years, American sergeants, captains and majors training the Iraqis have told their bosses that Iraqi troops have no sense of national identity, are only in it for the money, don't show up for duty and cannot sustain themselves.

Meanwhile, colonels and generals have asked their bosses for more troops. Service chiefs have asked for more money.

And all along, Rumsfeld has assured us that things are well in hand.

Now, the president says he'll stick with Rumsfeld for the balance of his term in the White House.

This is a mistake.

It is one thing for the majority of Americans to think Rumsfeld has failed. But when the nation's current military leaders start to break publicly with their defense secretary, then it is clear that he is losing control of the institution he ostensibly leads.

These officers have been loyal public promoters of a war policy many privately feared would fail. They have kept their counsel private, adhering to more than two centuries of American tradition of subordination of the military to civilian authority.

And although that tradition, and the officers' deep sense of honor, prevent them from saying this publicly, more and more of them believe it.

Rumsfeld has lost credibility with the uniformed leadership, with the troops, with Congress and with the public at large. His strategy has failed, and his ability to lead is compromised. And although the blame for our failures in Iraq rests with the secretary, it will be the troops who bear its brunt.

This is not about the midterm elections. Regardless of which party wins Nov. 7, the time has come, Mr. President, to face the hard bruising truth:

Donald Rumsfeld must go.

Posted By: [Andrew S Ross \(Email\)](#) | Nov 03 at 05:55 PM

Listed Under: [Bush Administration](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(15\)](#) : [Post Comment](#)

Borat: Kazakhs with little to laugh about

Kazakh journalist [Borat Sagdiyev](#), makes his debut on [U.S. screens](#) today, to introduce Americans to [the country](#) "with the cleanest prostitutes in the world."

Some Kazakhs, including President [Nursultan Nazarbayev](#), are [not sharing](#) in the general hilarity. Nazarbayev has [had words with President Bush](#) on the matter, and his government has veered between [threatening to sue](#) and sponsoring various ads in an attempt to correct [misimpressions](#) of the [country](#).



One thing seems certain: Borat appears to operate with considerably more freedom than his journalistic colleagues in Kazakhstan. Ahead of the movie, the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) put out this "Kazakhstan press freedom primer":

Threats

[Irina Petrushova](#), founder and editor of the Almaty-based opposition newspaper

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[Respublika](#), endured a sustained campaign of harassment for her reporting on government corruption. In May 2002, a decapitated dog's corpse was hung from a Respublika window, and Molotov cocktails were thrown into its offices. Petrushova fled to Russia, where she still edits Respublika, but even there Kazakh agents follow her.

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Posted By: [Andrew S Ross \(Email\)](#) | Nov 03 at 05:13 AM

Listed Under: [News of the day](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) : [Post Comment](#)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 02, 2006

November surprises

Two stories posted on the New York Times website this evening could be of major political significance four days before the midterm elections.

[U.S. Web Archive Is Said to Reveal a Nuclear Guide](#)

Last March, the federal government set up a Web site to make public a vast archive of Iraqi documents captured during the war. The Bush administration did so under pressure from Congressional Republicans who said they hoped to "leverage the Internet" to find new evidence of the prewar dangers posed by Saddam Hussein.

But in recent weeks, the site has posted some documents that weapons experts say are a danger themselves: detailed accounts of Iraq's secret nuclear research before the 1991 Persian Gulf war. The documents, the experts say, constitute a basic guide to building an atom bomb

[Congress Tells Auditor in Iraq to Close Office](#)

Investigations led by a Republican lawyer named Stuart W. Bowen Jr. in Iraq have sent American occupation officials to jail on bribery and conspiracy charges, exposed disastrously poor construction work by well-connected companies like Halliburton and Parsons, and discovered that the military did not properly track hundreds of thousands of weapons it shipped to Iraqi security forces.

And tucked away in a huge military authorization bill that President Bush signed two weeks ago is what some of Mr. Bowen's supporters believe is his reward for repeatedly embarrassing the administration: a pink slip.

The order comes in the form of an obscure provision that terminates his federal oversight agency, the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, on Oct. 1, 2007. The clause was inserted by the Republican side of the House Armed Services Committee over the objections of Democratic counterparts during a closed-door conference, and it has generated surprise and some outrage among lawmakers who say they had no idea it was in the final legislation.

Posted By: [Andrew S Ross \(Email\)](#) | Nov 02 at 07:59 PM

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Kerry's "botched" joke: I still don't get it

What Sen. Kerry meant to say, [we are told](#), was:

*"You know, education, if you make the most of it, you study hard, you do your homework, and you make an effort to be smart, you can do well. If you don't, you get **us** stuck in Iraq. **Ask President Bush.**"* (Alleged missing words in boldface)

Presumably then, Kerry wasn't casting aspersions on the lack of intellectual ambition amongst U.S. troops in Iraq, he was taking aim at the smarts and study habits -- or lack thereof -- of the president.



NBC

Well, we know that Bush in his youth was something of a [party animal](#), who had little regard for collegians like -- John Kerry. But he did get a Bachelor's degree in history at [Yale](#), albeit with a "C" average. He also attained a Masters in Business Administration from [Harvard](#), whose alumnae include both President Roosevelts, John F. Kennedy and John Adams.

Kerry also graduated from Yale, but his [performance](#) was pretty much the same as Bush's. "I always told my dad that D stood for distinction," Kerry once said, referring to the 4 "D's" he got. At the time flying was more a more compelling pursuit than studying, Kerry acknowledged.

But if we are to assume that Kerry did all the things, education-wise, that he presumes President Bush didn't, how does he explain [his vote](#) in 2003 in favor of the Iraq war that America is now "stuck in"?

As said, I don't get the joke.

And while Republicans understandably make hay with Kerry's "botched" joke, a number of [Democrats](#), for the record, don't see the funny side of it either. E.g. "What Senator Kerry said was inappropriate" (Sen. Hillary Clinton). "Whatever the intent, (he) was wrong to say what he said." (Harold Ford Jr.).

Kerry has since [left the stage](#), having cancelled scheduled appearances with a number of Democratic candidates in Tuesday's election.

Posted By: [Andrew S Ross](#) ([Email](#)) | Nov 02 at 09:18 AM

Listed Under: [Democrats](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(24\)](#) : [Post Comment](#)

Nov. 7: A "wave" building ?



Ocean World

While not accounting for the [John Kerry flap](#), the latest prognostications from the respected [Cook Report](#) can't make for encouraging reading for the GOP.

At least not today.

According to Cook's latest survey (completed Sunday) on virtually every criteria -- basic preference, most likely to vote, party identification -- the [Democrats](#) look to take the House by more than the 15 seats needed.

Despite an uptick in [President Bush's ratings](#) Republican losses "look very likely to exceed 20 seats, and a 20- to 35-seat loss is most likely, but we would not be surprised for it to exceed 35 seats," says Cook.

One of the endangered Republican seats, as Cook has reported, is [Richard Pombo's](#) in Tracy.

Cook's report projects "at least" a 4-seat Republican loss in the [Senate](#), leaving it a 51-49 seat majority, and an "outside chance" of a 7-seat loss, giving the Dems a 52-48 margin.

Posted By: [Andrew S Ross](#) ([Email](#)) | Nov 01 at 12:29 PM

Listed Under: [Republicans](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) : [Post Comment](#)

Understanding Suicide Terrorism

"Understanding that [suicide terrorism](#) is mainly a response to foreign occupation rather than a product of Islamic fundamentalism has important implications for how the U.S. government should conduct the war on terrorism," writes [Robert Pape](#), author of "[Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism](#)," in a new [Cato Institute](#) policy analysis, "[Suicide Terrorism and Democracy: What We've Learned since 9/11](#)." (PDF file.)



Chronicle / Kim Komenich

Kim Komenich/Chronicle

Victims of a suicide car bombing in Tikrit, Iraq

Pape, professor of political science at the [University of Chicago](#), analyzes the psychology

behind [suicide attacks](#). His analysis challenges the conventional wisdom about what drives suicide bombers.

Suicide terrorism, Pape writes, is merely a [fundamentalist Islamic](#) phenomenon: at least 30 percent of suicide bombings committed by Muslims are committed on behalf of groups pursuing secular aims. Nor is it the last resort of the disaffected: suicide terrorists come from "a [broad cross-section](#) of lifestyles" and [classes](#), making it harder to pick out potential suicide bombers in advances, he writes.

"America needs a [new strategy](#) that safeguards our vital interests, but that does not stimulate the rise of a new generation of suicide terrorists," Pape writes.

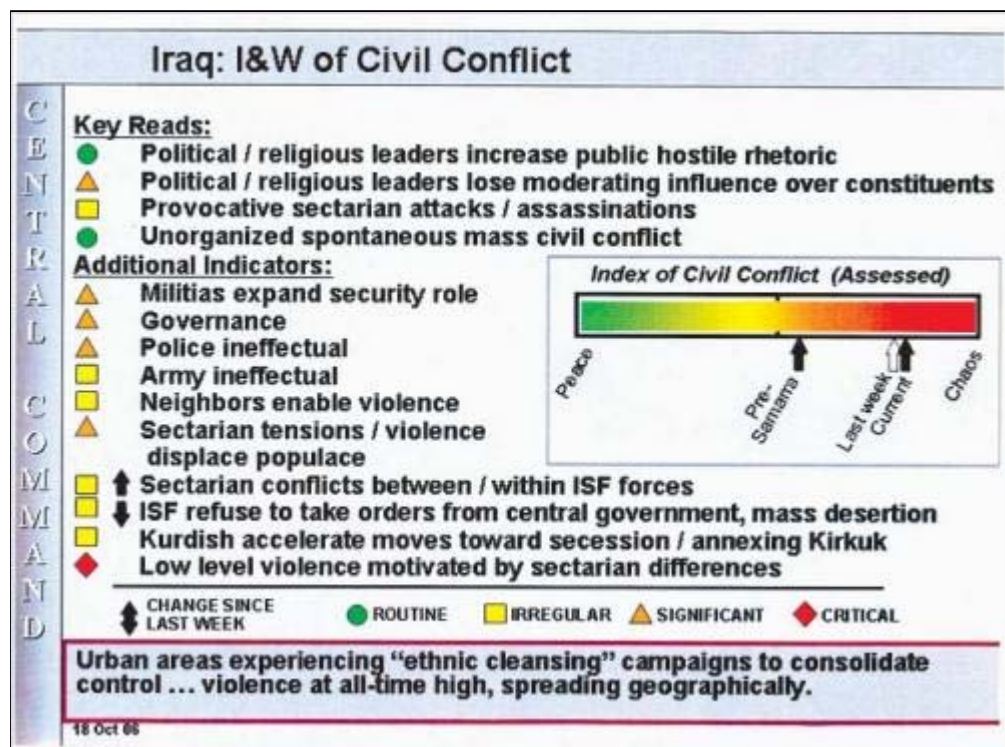
Posted By: [Anna Badkhen \(Email\)](#) | Nov 01 at 11:31 AM

Listed Under: [Iraq](#), [Middle East](#), [Religious Extremism](#), [War on Terror](#) | [Permalink](#) | Comments (0) : [Post Comment](#)

Code red for chaos -- and resistance

[Military Charts Movement of Conflict in Iraq Toward Chaos](#)

A classified briefing prepared two weeks ago by the [US Central Command](#), obtained by the New York Times, "portrays Iraq as edging toward chaos, in a chart that the military is using as a barometer of [civil conflict](#)."



U.S. Central Command

'Iraq: Indications and Warnings of Civil Conflict'

['My Country Needs Me'](#)

Featured in a Wall Street Journal op-ed, Mithal al-Alusi, a Sunni Arab won a [seat](#) in parliament last December running "on a platform of religious pluralism, human rights, free markets and a free press."

Not only does Mr. [al-Alusi](#) champion values many in the West hope will define the new Iraq, he has risked his life -- and lost more than his life -- for the cause. In September 2004 he attended a counterterrorism conference in Herzliya, Israel; after which insurgents [threatened](#) his family. The following February assassins opened fire on Mr. al-Alusi's car as it approached his Baghdad home. He wasn't in the vehicle, but his sons, 30-year-old Ayman and 22-year-old Gamal, were. Both were killed as their father watched. Still, Mr. al-Alusi was unbowed.

"Even if these terrorists try to kill me again, peace is the only solution," he told reporters minutes after the attack. "Peace with Israel is the only solution for Iraq. Peace with everybody, but no peace for the terrorists." He continued to build his Iraqi Nation Party, which his fallen sons had helped establish, and which now has 15,000 members.

So far, al-Alusi has refused to leave Iraq for the comparative safety in another country.

Posted By: [Andrew S Ross \(Email\)](#) | Nov 01 at 09:08 AM

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Building a U.S. behemoth on the backs of slaves



AP

Scheduled to open in 2007, the [new U.S. Embassy in Baghdad](#), will be by far the biggest -- approximately equal in size to Vatican City -- and most protected of its kind in the world.

Not quite as backbreaking as an earlier [wonder of the world](#), the \$592-million complex is nevertheless being built under appalling conditions, according to a report ('A U.S. Fortress Rises in Baghdad') published by [Corpwatch](#).

"Every US labor law was broken," says the project's former general foreman, who quit after 7 months on the job.

In his resignation letter to the US State Department, which awarded the contract last November to [First Kuwaiti Trading & Contracting](#), the foreman, John Owen

complained of poor sanitation, squalid living conditions and medical malpractice in the labor camps where several thousand low-paid [migrant workers](#) lived. Those workers, recruited on the global labor market from the Philippines, India, Pakistan and other poor south Asian countries, earned as little as \$10 to \$30 a day.

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Posted By: [Andrew S Ross \(Email\)](#) | Nov 01 at 04:53 AM

Listed Under: [Iraq](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) : [Post Comment](#)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2006

Score another one for petro-nationalism

In a major advance for Latin America's rising energy nationalism, Bolivian President Evo Morales has taken full control of his nation's [oil and gas industries](#).



Reuters

The move comes three days after foreign companies including Brazilian state-owned [Petrobras](#) and Spanish-Argentine [Repsol YPF](#) signed agreements to operate under state control and pay a larger share of their profits to the Bolivian government.

The French [Total SA](#) and U.S.-based [Vintage Petroleum](#) -- recently taken over by [Occidental Petroleum](#) -- signed [similar deals](#) Friday.

The agreements are also a victory for Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, Morales' [chief foreign ally](#), who risked much of his [hemispheric credibility](#) by

vocally urging Bolivia to nationalize and offering Morales at least \$200 million in aid to do so. [Read More »](#)

Posted By: [Robert Collier \(Email\)](#) | Oct 31 at 01:40 PM

Listed Under: [Latin America](#) | [Permalink](#) | Comments (0) : [Post Comment](#)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2006

Images of the injured, and the dead

Despite the [rising death and injury toll](#) of U.S. soldiers in Iraq, it is rare to see actual images of Americans hurt in battle.

A Reuters photographer, Thayer al-Sudani, took these pictures today of injured U.S. soldiers in Baghdad.

The final image is of Iraqi civilian victims found in [another town](#).



Reuters

Posted By: [Andrew S Ross \(Email\)](#) | Oct 30 at 08:37 PM

Listed Under: [Iraq](#) | [Permalink](#) | Comments (0) : [Post Comment](#)



Reuters

U.S. military medical workers carry a wounded soldier after he was evacuated to a military hospital in the fortified Green Zone in Baghdad



