

## **Criticize This**

### **Or Why SecDef Rumsfeld Needs to Switch to DeCaf**

All critics are not equal. Some carping voices would improve with a Ranger choke hold on their throat. But, some criticism, like your Grandmother's admonishments, should be acknowledged gratefully, even, if like every know-it-all-youth, you intend to ignore it. Methinks the Secretary Of Defense (SecDef) and his serving senior officer defenders are a bit too defensive about what the retired generals and military talking heads say. Maybe they should get a program and identify the players for which team they are on.

**The Team to Boo.** The internal dissidents, the 30% against the war, include many partisan Democrats, most liberals and way too many Black Americans. These citizens of the world are clueless in their cacophony of criticism. Liberals speak for the sake of wounding. The overflow of their heart is a venomous hatred for President George Bush. He is their personification of the evil they hate, precisely because he is the hope for Americans and ideas the left despises. So, it's good to let them define themselves with their free speech. The SecDef and generals can dismiss them as evenly as the CENTCOM briefers do goofy journalists at the daily war briefings.

**The Team to Cheer.** When retired four-star Army generals Schwartzkopf, Downing, McCaffrey, and Marine general Hoar, say more Army divisions from the start would be better, listen up. They acknowledge the brilliant execution of branches and sequels for a complex plan. They cheer the courage of the troops. Yet, they offer the insight that overwhelming force saves lives and wins decisively - sooner and better. These guys are not fighting the last war, out of touch, or suffering from any other cheap shot. The retired four stars, known in the Army as the 'elephants', are very careful with public pronouncements. They are consummate political animals steeped in a culture of shutting up to outsiders.

The generals know what works in Iraq today, could be a disaster in other places – right now. Some day America may fight an enemy that is well trained, led, equipped and soldiered by hard, motivated men. Americans may face a successor to the Germans, Japanese, Chinese or North Vietnamese who say “awe shucks” to shock and awe and go on to win tactical and operational victories. The Rumsfeld-Franks plan is working wonderfully – but it's not the perfect cookie cutter for the future.

**The Talking Heads.** I must digress – it's such a hoot for me to live in a small town of 12,000 and have so many people I know on national TV and radio daily. So many of the retired Army commentators are my buds, former bosses or I know them by reputation. The barracks reputation of every officer is formidable. The old Army saying is, “The higher up the flagpole you climb, the more a—shows.” Most of the guys yakking, fondly known as ‘old farts’ by their peers, were good soldiers.

Only two have agendas that I know about.

GEN. (Ret.) Wes Clark is the dark horse democrat candidate for president, as if the office of President of the United States of America were actually big enough for his ego. This officer, who would win the vote “Most Like Courtney Massengale” among the Army cult readers of Anton Meyers' Once An Eagle, comes with caution warning. He was the general who ran a ‘war’ acceptable to Bill Clinton.

COL. (Ret.) David Hackworth writes every week about how screwed up the Army is, until the Army goes to war and kicks butt. Guys who served with him in

Vietnam can tell you how Hackworth was as careerist as Wes Clark until he didn't make general.

**Criticize That.** Funny, how the hyper-sensitive Rumsfeld can dish out criticism. The Army has the intellectual high ground in the Transformation of the services for a new Era of War. I've been working on its answer as my day job since I wrote the 'Army After Next' paper in early '95. The Army has the right answer in the Future Combat Systems (FCS). Yet, SecDef Rumsfeld is having a retired Air Force general grade the Army's paper. Insults can do injury. The Army is responsible for prompt and sustained Land Warfare – by law (U.S. Code, Title 10). All the Joint services support the combined arms operations on land. But only the Army is truly the Master of Land Warfare for today and tomorrow. I hope the USAF general listens 'tight' to the FCS – for the sake of the Nation.

James Atticus Bowden

### **About the Author**

**James Atticus Bowden** is a Defense corporation futurist, a retired Infantry Officer, GOP official, graduate of the United States Military Academy, Harvard and Columbia Universities.

### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

2002-Present Columnist, [www.gopusa.com](http://www.gopusa.com)

- 2 2002-Present Columnist, [www.virginianewssource.com](http://www.virginianewssource.com)
- 3 2002-Present Columnist, *Yorktown Crier/Poquoson Post*
- 4 2001-Present. Columnist, [www.bushcountry.org](http://www.bushcountry.org)
- 5 2000-Present. Guest local columnist, *The Daily Press*
- 6 2000-Present. Op-Eds published in *The Daily Press, Roanoke Star, Fredericksburg Freelance Press, Harrisonburg Ledger, Poquoson Post.*
- 7 1992-Present. Letters to the Editor in *Atlantic Monthly, Richmond Times-Dispatch, Daily Press, Poquoson Post/Yorktown Crier.*
- 8 1992-Present. Author of numerous written pieces relative to the future of war, new concepts, threats and international relations for internal Department of Defense use.
- 9 1993. Adjunct Faculty, Government Department, College of William and Mary.
- 10 1990-92. Editor and primary author, *Army 21* study.
- 11 1989-90. Speechwriter to Commanding General, US Army Training and Doctrine Command.
- 12 1981-84. Assistant Professor, Department of Social Science, United States Military Academy.
- 13 1983. Wrote a chapter in Defense Decision - Making in Industrial Capacity and Defense Planning, Sustained Conflict and Surge Capacity in the 1980's.
- 14 1982. November, *Military Review*, "RDJTF and Military Doctrine".
- 15 1982. Editor and writer, USMA Class of 1972 Ten Yearbook.
- 16 1981. Wrote a case study on "Project Management" for the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.
- 17 1980. Contributed to Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government

- Transition Report for President-elect Reagan.
- 18 1971-72. Managing Editor and contributing writer, *The Pointer* magazine, United States Military Academy.
  - 19 1971. Editor in Chief, *The 1972 Pointer Calendar*, United States Military Academy.