President George W. Bush
Oral History Project

Briefing Materials

John Abizaid

September 15, 2016

Prepared by Rob Martin, Senior Researcher
June 2014

Presidential Oral History Program
**JOHN ABIZAID NEWS TIMELINE**

*Prepared by Rob Martin*

*Miller Center, University of Virginia, 06/02/2014*

---

**2001**

**September**

Al-Qaeda launches terrorist attacks against the U.S. on the 11th. Lt. General John Abizaid is overseas in Ukraine at the time of the attacks. He is currently serving as director of strategic plans and policy (J-5) on the Joint Staff and later goes on to serve as director of the Joint Staff. (David Cloud and Greg Jaffe, *The Fourth Star*, New York: Crown Publishers, 2009, pp. 165-167)

On the 12th, Abizaid returns to the U.S. with a group of Pentagon personnel that includes Doug Feith, undersecretary of defense for policy, J.D. Crouch, assistant secretary of defense for international policy, Peter Rodman, assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, and William Luti, Rodman’s deputy for Near East and South Asia affairs. The group holds a long discussion on the 9/11 attacks, strategy moving forward, and whether the U.S. response should include Iraq. Abizaid is reportedly skeptical that any links exist between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. (Doug Feith, *War and Decision*, New York: Harper, 2008, pp. 5-11; Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 124-125)


At a National Security Council (NSC) meeting at Camp David on the 15th, Bush decides to focus the immediate U.S. response to 9/11 on those directly responsible for the terrorist attacks, al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Bush decides to hold off on taking action against Iraq unless definitive proof is found linking Saddam to the attacks. At Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld’s request, Feith and Rodman had prepared a strategy memo for the president to help frame the discussion. Feith later writes that he drew from his discussions with Abizaid on the flight home from Europe in drafting the memo. (George W. Bush, *Decision Points*, New York: Crown Publishers, 2010, pp. 185-189; Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003, pp. 90-91; Feith, p. 50)

On the 21st, Franks briefs the president and his national security team on the initial operational concept of his military plan for Afghanistan. Franks’ plan calls for taking an innovative approach that links Special Operations Forces (SOF) with anti-Taliban Afghan forces on the ground. Franks tells Bush that his plans could be ready within two weeks. (Dick Cheney, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir*, New York: Threshold, 2001, pp. 336-337; Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and
October

Richard Myers succeeds Hugh Shelton as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the 1st. Peter Pace begins serving as vice chairman the same day.

Also on the 1st, Myers asks Rumsfeld if Abizaid and Feith should take over responsibility from Franks for responding to foreign offers of assistance. There have reportedly been complaints amongst the allies that the U.S. has not yet responded to their offers. Rumsfeld decides to continue keeping that responsibility with Franks. (Feith, p. 90)

On the 3rd, Rumsfeld approves “Strategic Guidance” prepared by Abizaid’s J-5 providing the first formal comprehensive instructions to U.S. military commanders in the global war on terrorism. Rumsfeld orders that “campaign plans align with this guidance and address all elements contained therein.” (Feith, p. 84) Abizaid also helps Feith prepare Feith’s 9/30 “Strategic Thoughts” memo providing broader global strategy on fighting the war on terror to Bush. (Feith, pp. 81-87)

Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan begins on the 7th. The U.S. military, which had had no war plan set up for removing the Taliban or al-Qaeda from Afghanistan prior to 9/11, had to move quickly to create a plan. The task is further complicated by the assassination of the leader of the Northern Alliance just prior to the 9/11 attacks, leaving the anti-Taliban group in disarray. Reportedly, Rumsfeld is initially frustrated with delays in moving SOF into Afghanistan and also has lingering concerns about the CIA’s role in the theater of battle. Rumsfeld had initially arranged with CIA Director George Tenet for CENTCOM to have operational control over CIA activities on the ground in Afghanistan once military forces arrive. Over the next two weeks, reporters ask Franks and Rumsfeld why the operation has not progressed faster. Rumsfeld responds that they cannot expect instant victory. (George Tenet, At the Center of the Storm, New York: Harper, 2007, p. 208; Woodward, Bush at War, pp. 240, 286; Franks, pp. 283-296; Rumsfeld, pp. 374, 393-394; CBS News, 03/23/2003)

The first U.S. SOF enter Afghanistan on the 19th. (Franks, pp. 301-305)

November

On the 13th, Kabul falls as Northern Alliances forces enter the city with some anti-Taliban southern forces. The anti-Taliban forces are able to take the city with the support of U.S. airpower and SOF on the ground. Rumsfeld and Powell had helped pull together a British-led international coalition under a mandate from the UN Security Council to stabilize the city. (Feith, p. 132; NBC News, 11/09/2001)

Jalalabad surrenders on the 14th. The Deputies Committee discusses the Taliban’s ongoing losses later that day. Stephen Hadley, the deputy national security adviser, asks how the U.S. should handle a Taliban surrender and cease-fire.
Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz responds that a cease-fire would be premature since the military mission against al-Qaeda is not over. Feith suggests the U.S. protect its right to intervene if terrorists return to Afghanistan. Pace is reportedly concerned about maintaining U.S. military commanders’ freedom of action while U.S. forces are still on the ground in Afghanistan. (Feith, p. 133)

December
Rumsfeld orders Franks to begin work outlining an Iraqi battle plan on the 1st. Franks splits up the assignment between different parts of the Joint Staff’s planning apparatus to help maintain secrecy. (Condeleezza Rice, No Higher Honor, New York: Crown, 2011, p. 172)

On the 4th, Franks presents his first “Commander’s Concept” on initial military plans for Iraq in a video teleconference with Rumsfeld, Myers, Pace and Feith. They follow up on the 11th, with Franks recommending the U.S. begin to improve its force posture in the region. (Franks, pp. 329-335)

On the 5th, the UN holds a conference in Bonn, Germany to set up a governance plan for Afghanistan. The Bonn Process is ratified by the UN, and Hamid Karzai is named chairman of the interim government. DOD officials support a “smaller footprint” to avoid the U.S. from being seen as occupiers. (Feith, pp. 134, 140)

Kandahar, the Taliban’s seat of power, falls on the 9th.

On the 28th, Franks briefs Bush on Afghanistan and the revised military plans for Iraq in Crawford, Texas. Franks says he is adapting lessons from Afghanistan to revise the war plans from the first Gulf War to incorporate a lighter footprint using speed and multiple SOF on the ground to identify targets for precision airstrikes. Rumsfeld and other members of the NSC participate via videoconference. After the briefing, Bush and Franks hold a press conference. (Bob Woodward, Plan of Attack, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004, pp. 53-64; Bush, p. 234; Cheney, pp. 369-370; Franks, pp. 345-360)

2002

January
On the 31st, Rumsfeld calls for reforms to restructure the U.S. military to help it better meet terrorist threats. Pace announces that one specific reform will likely include the creation of a new Northern Command to defend the U.S. homeland and its borders. (The Washington Post, 02/01/2002)

February
On the 7th, Bush announces that Taliban and al-Qaeda detainees will be treated humanely in accord with the Geneva Conventions, but neither are entitled to POW status. However the detainees will be provided with many POW privileges. (Philippe Sands, Torture Team, New York: Palgrave, 2008, p. 33; Feith, pp. 162-165)
Franks briefs the president and the NSC on the 7th in the White House Situation Room on Afghanistan and the status of war planning for Iraq. Franks envisions a “revolution in warfare,” featuring “fast and flexible maneuver, coupled with precise, lethal firepower.” (Franks, pp. 369-372)

March
Coalition forces launch Operation Anaconda on the 7th, which is the largest battle since Tora Bora in December and the first that includes a large number of conventional U.S. ground forces participating in direct combat operations. The coalition victory destroys al-Qaeda’s last stronghold in Afghanistan. (Franks, pp. 377-381)

April
On the 17th, Rumsfeld announces the creation of the U.S. Northern Command to support the civilian authority in the event of another domestic terrorist attack. (The Washington Post, 04/18/2002)

On the 29th, the Deputies Committee teleconferences with Franks and Zalmay Khalilzad, Bush’s special envoy in Kabul, to discuss the conflict between Karzai and Pacha Khan, an Afghan warlord. Pace asks if any Afghans were requesting U.S. help. Franks assures the Deputies Committee that no coalition forces had gotten pulled into the conflict. Hadley, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, and Deputy Director of Central Intelligence John McLaughlin raise concerns about Karzai’s vulnerability but Pace and Franks argue it is too early to decide whether coalition action is prudent. The president decides in May not to intervene. Vice President Dick Cheney, Powell, Rice, and Tenet had reportedly favored intervention while Rumsfeld and Myers opposed it. In the end Karzai is able to convince Khan to stand down. (Feith, pp. 140-146; http://www.waranddecision.com)

May
Franks updates the president and the NSC at Camp David on military planning for Iraq and also provides an update at the White House on the 10th. (Cheney, p. 383; Franks, p. 385)

Pace announces that Army Lieutenant General Dan McNeil will assume responsibilities for the majority of U.S. troops in Afghanistan and that U.S. SOF have begun working with several other countries to train an Afghan national army. (National Post, 05/15/2002)

June
Bush announces his proposal to create the Department of Homeland Security on the 6th.

Myers presents Franks’ “Running Start” option to Rumsfeld. It is a plan to begin the Iraq war before all U.S. forces are in the region. Rumsfeld approves the option and Franks presents the plan to Bush. (Woodward, Plan of Attack, pp. 134-135)

The Joint Staff prepares its “Political-Military Strategic Plan for Iraq.” (Feith, p. 283)
August

On the 5th, Franks briefs the president and NSC on OPLAN 1003V, which has been developed from the early “Commander’s Concept” into a full military plan for Iraq. Franks discusses the “Generated” and “Running Start” options, as well as the “Hybrid,” which is a combination of the first two plans. Franks also discusses concerns about “Fortress Baghdad” regarding the possibility of urban warfare. (Bush, p. 235; Cheney, p. 386; Franks, pp. 385-393)

September

Powell calls Franks and tells him that he plans to raise the issue of troop levels for the operation in Iraq at the NSC meeting scheduled on the 7th. Franks’ plan, which relies more on speed than numbers, diverges from the Powell Doctrine which calls for the deployment of a massive, decisive force. Powell also has concerns about the length of the supply lines. (Karen DeYoung, Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell, New York: Knopf, 2005, p. 426; Bush, p. 251; Rumsfeld, p. 437)

Franks meets with the president and NSC on the 7th at Camp David to update them on planning for Iraq. Franks argues that military and technological changes call for a different kind of war plan than had been used in the first Gulf War. Powell argues in favor of seeking a UN resolution. Cheney and Rumsfeld reportedly oppose it as it could “trigger a long bureaucratic process that would leave Saddam even more dangerous.” (Bush, p. 237) Bush decides to seek the resolution. (Franks, pp. 393-397; Rice, p. 180; Rumsfeld, p. 438)

On the 12th, Bush speaks before the UN General Assembly on Saddam Hussein to call the international community to action. (The New York Times, 09/21/2002)

The Joint Staff completes “Joint Publication 3-06: Doctrine for Joint Urban Operations,” which incorporates lessons from Somalia, Serbia and Haiti to revise the military’s urban strategy for fighting in cities. It calls for isolating the city and relying on overwhelming combat power to capture or destroy crucial targets. (The New York Times, 10/22/2002)

Fall

Abizaid calls for the DOD to work with State Department officials on planning for the post-war reconstruction of Iraq. Abizaid reportedly continues to have reservations about the invasion and is concerned that rebuilding Iraq will be much harder than expected. Abizaid is reportedly told by senior administration officials that a separate study is not necessary and that a long-term occupation would not be needed because Iraqi exiles are ready to step in and lead the effort. (Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 123-125)

October

As the Iraq war plans are being adjusted, Rumsfeld, Feith, Wolfowitz, Pace, and Franks review a list of potential problems and disasters during a prospective war with Iraq. The list, later named the “Parade of Horribles,” is discussed by the NSC. (Feith, pp. 332-334)
On the 12th, Congress passes a resolution authorizing the use of military force against Iraq.

November

On the 8th, the UN Security Council unanimously passes Resolution 1441 giving Iraq a final opportunity to disarm. The resolution gives Iraq one month to issue a declaration of its weapons programs and to begin the verification process. (Rice, pp. 183-185; DeYoung, p. 420; The Washington Post, 01/14/2003)

On the 26th, Franks officially requests “the mother of all deployment orders” for the “Pre-N-Day” force in Iraq, which would bring 128,000 to the Gulf region by February 15th. (Rumsfeld, p. 439) Franks also requests additional deployments that would bring the total number to 210,000 troops by March 20th, 2003. (Franks, pp. 409-410)

Franks travels throughout CENTCOM’s area of responsibility at the end of the month. Jim Wilkinson, who is sent over from the White House to help Franks with media relations, joins Franks on the trip. Wilkinson goes on to serve as director of strategic communications at CENTCOM through December, 2003 and serves as Franks’ principal spokesman during Operation Iraqi Freedom. At CENTCOM’s Joint Operations Center in Qatar, Franks oversees a successful simulation of the 1003V OPLAN based on the Hybrid option for destroying Iraq’s military forces and removing Saddam from power. Franks later writes that he is pleased with simulation’s effectiveness in getting the four services to perform jointly. (Franks, pp. 411-416; http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov)

December

Franks names Abizaid as deputy commander at CENTCOM on the 28th. Abizaid will serve out of CENTCOM’s forward headquarters in Qatar preparing for the invasion of Iraq. Franks’ other deputy commander, Lt. General Michael DeLong, will continue serving out of Tampa where he will keep a particular focus on Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa. (Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 110-111; The New York Times, 12/28/2002)

2003

January

Abizaid leads the first group of U.S. military personnel to the command’s headquarters in Qatar on the 7th. CENTCOM announces that Abizaid will have forward command functioning by the end of the month. Franks is scheduled to join Abizaid in Qatar in February. (The New York Times, 01/08/2003)

Franks meets with Bush and the NSC on the 8th to discuss Iraq and the status of the deployment of U.S. military forces to the region. (CNN, 01/08/2003)

On the 20th, Bush signs National Security Presidential Directive 24 stating that the Defense Department will coordinate postwar reconstruction in Iraq and establishes the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), which is to be led by Lt. General Jay Garner. (Bush, p. 249; Rumsfeld, p. 487)
On the 23rd, King Abdullah II of Jordan tells Franks in Amman that Jordan has reliable intelligence suggesting that Saddam has chemical and biological weapons. Several days later in Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak warns Franks that Saddam has biological weapons and is prepared to use them on U.S. troops. (Bush, p. 247; Franks, pp. 418-419)

On the 30th, Rumsfeld, the JCS, and Bush review the final war plans against Iraq. (Rumsfeld, pp. 453-454)

On the 31st, Prime Minister Tony Blair meets with Bush in Washington to argue for a second UN resolution against Saddam. Cheney, Rice, Powell, and Rumsfeld are against it, but Blair states he needs it for political support at home. Bush agrees to proceed but the resolution negotiations fail by March. (Cheney, pp. 397-398)

**March**

Rumsfeld begins holding War Council meetings every morning at 7 a.m. to discuss Iraq strategy and current developments around the world. The group includes Pace, Myers, Wolfowitz, Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Steve Cambone, and other senior DOD officials. After each meeting, Rumsfeld holds a secure videoconference with Franks. *(The New York Times, 03/19/2003)*

On the 5th, Franks briefs Bush and the NSC in the White House on Iraq. Franks tells Bush that he would like 48 hours notice to make final preparations should the president decide to invade Iraq. Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Powell discuss giving Saddam a final ultimatum and decide on 48 hours. Franks returns to CENTCOM Forward in Qatar after the briefing. (Franks, pp. 428-429; Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 329-332)

On the 19th, Bush gives the order to launch the Hybrid 1003V OPLAN, Operation Iraqi Freedom. Lt. General David McKiernan serves as commander of the Coalition Forces Land Component Command. The coalition’s first task is to destroy Iraq’s visual observation posts to blind the enemy. The plan is changed last minute when new intelligence suggests that Hussein will be meeting with his sons at Dora Farms the next day. Bush decides to target the location with airstrikes. Franks also decides to target the location with airstrikes. Franks also decides to revise the war plan after receiving last minute intelligence that Saddam is planning to burn oilfields in southern Iraq after the initiation of the air campaign. The original plan had called for the near simultaneous start of the air and ground assaults but Franks decides to initiate the G-Day ground attack before A-Day to help secure the oilfields. Franks runs the war from his forward command center in Qatar. The coalition forces total to 290,000 from 23 countries, including the U.S. U.K., Australia and Europe. Franks is able to gain operational surprise not only by launching the ground attack before the air attack, but also by passing misleading intelligence to Saddam that a major portion of the coalition forces will attack from the north through Turkey. Furthermore, since Franks plan hinges on speed and momentum rather than
superior numbers, the plan does not necessitate the same large force build-up as there had been in the first Gulf War to tip off the Iraqis that the invasion was imminent. Franks’ plan calls for roughly about one-third as many troops as the first Gulf War. Franks, who is very concerned about WMDs, issues the troops chemical and biological protective suits. (Bush, pp. 250-251; Franks, pp. 432-440; Rumsfeld, pp. 460-461; ABC News, 03/13/2003; CBS News, 03/23/2003)

Pace attends a meeting with Bush at Camp David on the 22nd, where the group discusses the possibility that the war in Iraq could last longer than expected. Some Republican Guard forces were reportedly expected to negotiate a surrender with allied forces, only to reverse course and continue fighting. (The New York Times, 03/23/2003)

Abizaid sits in for Franks on a video-teleconference of the daily war update with Rumsfeld and Myers on the 26th, where they discuss post-war Iraq and the administration’s de-Baathification policy. Abizaid reportedly opposes the policy. The group also discusses insurgent attacks by Fedayeen forces, which are reportedly on the rise, and a strong sandstorm that is slowing the coalition’s war plan. Over the next several days, coalition forces are able to take advantage of the sandstorm to gain a tactical advantage in destroying hunkered down Republican Guard units. (Franks, pp. 501-504; Cloud and Jaffe, p. 110; Feith, p. 396)

Bush teleconferences with Pace and Rumsfeld’s War Council from Camp David on the 29th. The group reportedly discusses the plan to keep pushing towards Baghdad despite facing unexpectedly tough resistance south of the capital, particularly from Fedayeen militia loyal to Saddam. Cheney, Rice, Powell, Tenet and White House Chief of Staff Andy Card also participate in the teleconference. (The Washington Post, 03/30/2003; CNN, 07/04/2003)

April

On the 1st, coalition forces find new Iraqi chemical-biological protection suits and masks in Fedayeen barracks. Franks later writes that he believed a WMD was coming and would likely occur as the coalition forces closed in on Baghdad. (Franks, pp. 513-515)

On the 7th, Pace announces that hundreds of Iraqi fighters opposed to Saddam are being airlifted into southern Iraq to battle Saddam’s remaining army in the region. The forces were assembled by Ahmad Chalabi and the Iraqi National Congress from both exile volunteers and volunteers from within Iraq. Chalabi is permitted to accompany the volunteers on the mission despite Abizaid’s protests. Abizaid had reportedly wanted to put an “Iraqi face” on the coalition’s war efforts but has concerns about Chalabi’s direct participation in the mission. Some are concerned that Chalabi’s participation could politically charge the mission. (Feith, pp. 396-401; The New York Times, 04/07/2003)

On the 9th, Baghdad falls.
On the 15th, Garner opens the Nasiriyah conference to help the Iraqis begin the political process of working towards self-government. Abizaid and Franks had reportedly argued that the coalition needed to organize a visible political event to demonstrate that the new government in Iraq would be run by the Iraqi people. Abizaid’s organizing principle for the conference is “don’t cut anyone out of the process.” (Feith, p. 412) Rumsfeld reportedly argues that the conference would provide a good opportunity to begin implementation of the Iraqi Interim Authority plan. (Feith, pp. 411-418)

On the 16th, Franks issues his “Freedom Message” to the Iraqi people, which says the coalition forces have come as liberators, not conquerors, and helps transition from Baath Party rule to the Coalition Provisional Authority. (L. Paul Bremer III, *Ambassador Paul Bremer Timeline, 08/19/2012, 08/21/2012; Franks, pp. 528-529)

On the 24th, Rumsfeld tells Garner that Bush is preparing to shift from the major combat operations phase of the Iraq plan to stabilization and reconstruction in phase IV, which entails the transitioning of coalition leadership in Iraq from the military to a political ambassador. Rumsfeld says Bush’s selection will be Paul Bremer as presidential envoy to Iraq, who will head the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) overseeing reconstruction efforts. The CPA is to report to Rumsfeld. (Bob Woodward, *State of Denial*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006, pp. 180-181; Rice, p. 211)

On the 28th, Rumsfeld travels to Iraq. (Rumsfeld, p. 494; Graham, p. 435)

In late April, Franks tells Rumsfeld that he plans to retire in the summer and recommends Abizaid as his replacement. (Franks, pp. 530-532)

May

On the 1st, while in Kabul, Rumsfeld announces major combat operations in Afghanistan have ended. Smaller scale operations will continue to attack remaining Taliban and al-Qaeda members. (*The Washington Post, 05/02/2003*)

On the 1st, Bush announces the end of major combat operations in Iraq. Abizaid continues making weekly trips to Iraq as the coalition forces transition to phase IV, reconstruction. Additional countries begin contributing troops, including Poland, Italy, Ukraine, Japan, and nine others. Pace and Wolfowitz announce in June that between 20,000 and 30,000 allied troops from over a dozen countries are expected to arrive in Iraq in August to replace some U.S. forces. (Franks, pp. 523-533; Rumsfeld, p. 497; Cloud and Jaffe, p. 123; *The New York Times, 06/19/2003*)

Bush and Bremer visit Franks in Qatar on the 5th to discuss the transition to phase IV plan. (Franks, pp. 532-533)
On the 7th, Bush announces Bremer as special envoy to Iraq. The ambassador will serve as the senior coalition official in Iraq, overseeing reconstruction efforts and the transitioning to Iraqi sovereignty. He will report directly to Rumsfeld. Franks will continue to maintain command over coalition military personnel in Iraq. Franks meets with Bremer and Rumsfeld in Washington to discuss the line of authority in Iraq and how the civilian team will work with the military. Rumsfeld and Franks hold a press conference the following day. (http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov; CNN, 05/08/2003)

Abizaid participates in a video-teleconference call with Bremer, Rumsfeld and McKiernan after a newspaper reports on the 14th that coalition forces are authorized to shoot looters. Abizaid reportedly says he will review the rules of engagement and discusses how forces might be redistributed in Baghdad. (Paul Bremer, My Year in Iraq, New York: Threshold Editions, 2006, pp. 30-32)

Bremer announces de-Baathification on the 16th and the dissolution of the Iraqi army the following week. Bremer plans to create a new Iraqi army which would be trained by the CPA, not the DOD. Abizaid reportedly opposes both orders, marking up both documents with a red pen and passing along his concerns to Franks. Rumsfeld later asks Abizaid to look into reconstituting some part of the old Iraqi army but Bremer reportedly opposes the idea. Responsibility for training the new Iraqi army remains with the CPA until the spring of 2004, when it is transferred to the military. (Rumsfeld, pp. 514-518; Feith, pp. 425, 433; Cloud and Jaffe, p. 123)

Franks’ retirement is announced on the 22nd. Abizaid is nominated to succeed Franks as CENTCOM commander and earns his fourth star. Rumsfeld had reportedly also considered making Abizaid Army chief of staff. (Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 123-126; The New York Times, 06/26/2003)

June  
On the 2nd, Bremer tells Rumsfeld that he plans to move forward with the Iraqi Interim Authority plan in the next five to six weeks. Rumsfeld agrees with this timeline as he wants to move quickly to give the Iraqis a role in governance. (Rumsfeld, p. 511)

Abizaid appears before the Senate Armed Services Committee for his confirmation hearing on the 25th to replace Franks as CENTCOM commander. Abizaid goes on to win confirmation. (NPR, 06/26/2003)

Lt. General Ricardo Sanchez begins serving as commander of the Multi-National Force in Iraq.

July  
Bush travels to Qatar on the 4th where he meets with Abizaid, Bremer and Franks. (Bremer, p. 70)
On the 4th, Bremer sends Rumsfeld a draft strategic plan called “A Vision to Empower Iraqis.” Security is the top priority. He also recommends that the Iraqis write a constitution as soon possible, ratify it, and hold elections. The other goals include economic growth, transition of power, restoring basic services, improving education and housing, and building a welfare safety net. (Bremer, pp. 115-116; Rumsfeld, p. 513)

Rumsfeld oversees the change of command ceremony at CENTCOM in Tampa on the 7th as Abizaid replaces Franks as CENTCOM commander. (Franks, pp. 533-536; The Washington Post, 06/23/2003)

On the 14th, Abizaid reports in a video-teleconference call from Tampa with Rumsfeld and Bremer on foreign Islamic extremists entering Iraq from Syria into the “Sunni Triangle,” where many of Saddam’s forces had fled after the fall of Baghdad. Abizaid confirms that the jihadis are being trained in Syria and Lebanon. Abizaid and Rumsfeld discuss ways to seal off the border with Syria, including the use of Polish coalition forces. (Bremer, pp. 104-06)

In his first press conference as CENTCOM commander, Abizaid acknowledges on the 16th that the Iraqi insurgents are “conducting a classical guerilla-type campaign.” Rumsfeld had previously argued that this was not a guerilla campaign. Abizaid returns to the Middle East the next day to visit the troops in Afghanistan. (Cloud and Jaffe, p. 127; The Washington Post, 07/20/2003)

Abizaid announces on the 20th that the U.S. will create an Iraqi civil defense force as a precursor to the creation of an Iraqi national army. (The New York Times, 07/21/2003)

On the 29th, David Kay, a U.S. weapons inspector, tells Bush that he has not found any WMDs in Iraq. (Michael Isikoff and David Corn, Hubris, New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007, p. 310)

Abizaid announces on the 31st from Ethiopia that eleven East African countries have agreed to establish a U.S.-backed regional mechanism to respond to terrorist attacks and disasters. Abizaid notes that al-Qaeda is active in the region. (The New York Times, 07/31/2003)

August

After visiting Mosul, Abizaid finds that the people on the streets “don’t see us as their liberators or their friends,” and decides it would be very helpful to have Muslim forces working side by side with U.S. troops. He negotiates with the Kurds to bring in Turkish forces, but Bremer later notifies Abizaid that the deal is off. (Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 133-135)

Abizaid travels to Uzbekistan on the 13th to discuss military cooperation and regional security with Uzbek officials regarding Iraq and Afghanistan. (UzReport.com, 08/14/2003)
On the 14th, a U.S. helicopter accidently knocks over a religious banner in Sadr City, sparking protests and riots, as violence continues to rise. Bremer sends Rumsfeld a memo about the need to stop Muqtada al-Sadr, an extremist Shia cleric with ties to Iran. According to Bremer, Rumsfeld tells Bremer not to arrest him until further operational questions are answered. However, Rumsfeld states he was simply asking questions, not stopping him from arresting al-Sadr. (Terry Anderson, *Bush’s Wars*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 163; Bremer, pp. 135, 136; Rumsfeld, p. 538)

Abizaid says on the 21st that terrorism is the biggest threat to reconstruction in Iraq and that the coalition needs “to bring an Iraqi face to the security establishments” to counter that threat. The UN headquarters in Baghdad had been struck by a truck bomb two days earlier. (*The New York Times*, 08/22/2003)

On the 31st, General Geoffrey Miller, the commander at Guantánamo Bay, arrives in Baghdad with a seventeen-member team reportedly to advise Sanchez on how to obtain better intelligence. Rumsfeld is reportedly disappointed by the quality of information coming from U.S. held prisoners in Iraq. Abizaid has also recently spoken of the need for good intelligence. (Senate Armed Services Committee, *Inquiry into the Treatment of Detainees in U.S. Custody*, 11/20/2008; *The New York Times*, 08/22/2003)

*September*

During a trip to Iraq, Rumsfeld reportedly emphasizes that the building of Iraq’s own security force must go faster. However, Bremer later writes he is concerned because his experts are telling him that they would need at least a year to train the Iraqi force professionally. (Bremer, pp. 156-157, 162)

On the 8th, Bremer publishes his seven-step plan for Iraqi sovereignty in an editorial in *The Washington Post*. His plan, which had not been previously circulated with Bush’s national security team, states that the CPA will not dissolve until a constitution is ratified and elections are held. Bremer’s editorial is met with opposition from within the Bush administration, as well as Iraq. (Feith, p. 453, 460; Rice, p. 242; Rumsfeld, p. 524)

On the 10th, al-Sadr’s militia attacks a patrol of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Sadr City. According to Bremer, Bremer wants to prevent al-Sadr from entering the city, but Wolfowitz refuses to support al-Sadr’s arrest. Violence escalates during the fall and winter. (Bremer, pp. 190, 192)

Abizaid and Sanchez brief Bremer in Baghdad on security in Iraq. Abizaid recommends that Sanchez take over the training of an Iraqi police force from the CPA. Bremer disagrees, preferring the CPA to arrange for the training to be conducted by the Lebanese. (Bremer, pp. 168-169)

On the 22nd, Bremer meets with Rumsfeld in Washington where they discuss whether the CPA could be dismantled before a final constitution is adopted.
Rumsfeld calls for the CPA to be dismantled by mid-2004. Bremer continues to argue that the Iraqis are not ready. (Bremer, pp. 170-171; Feith, p. 459; Rumsfeld, p. 525)

Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the 25th, Abizaid says U.S. negotiations with foreign allies to provide additional troops have met with limited success and that he no longer expects a substantial number of foreign troops will be available to relieve U.S. soldiers in Iraq. (*The New York Times*, 09/26/2003)

Rice chairs the Iraq Stabilization Group to help the NSC coordinate Iraqi reconstruction policy. Rumsfeld, who states he was not consulted about the group’s creation, writes a memo to Bush, Cheney, and Card the following week recommending that Bremer report to Rice or State, rather than Defense. The media has been reporting that Rice’s group has assumed responsibility for Iraq. (Rumsfeld, pp. 524-527; Rice, p. 242)

**October**

On the 16th, Rumsfeld writes “the long, hard slog” memo to Pace, Myers, Wolfowitz, and Feith, asking how the U.S. should frame its progress in the war on terror. Feith takes the lead in responding to the memo. Rumsfeld runs the ensuing long-range strategic review of the war on terror through the DOD’s entire military and civilian leadership. (Feith, pp. 509-511; *The Washington Post*, 10/23/2003)

Abizaid attends a series of meetings with Bush, Rumsfeld, Meyers, Rice and Bremer at the White House at the end of the month. Abizaid reportedly re-raises the proposal of bringing back qualified Sunni officers from Saddam’s army to help strengthen the new Iraqi security forces. Bremer eventually agrees to the plan to dismantle the CPA before a final constitution is adopted. Bush approves the June 30th, 2004 timetable on the 29th. (Woodward, *State of Denial*, pp. 260-262; Rumsfeld, p. 525; Bremer, pp. 204-205; Feith, p. 460-66)

**November**

Appearing before the House Armed Services Committee on the 5th, Pace announces that the DOD has begun alerting 43,000 National Guard and Reserve troops that they could be called-up for year-long duty in Iraq. (*The New York Times*, 11/06/2003)

Abizaid meets with Bremer in Baghdad on the 7th. Bremer reportedly disagrees with Abizaid’s proposal to bring back qualified Sunni officers, fearing it could lead to civil war. Abizaid tells Bremer he will take a strong position with the Sunnis in the West, telling them to “come along with us or else.” (Bremer, pp. 221-224)

On the 15th, the CPA and the Governing Council agree to a governance plan in which a national assembly would be elected to draft a constitution. The CPA begins working with the Governing Council to draft an interim constitution, the Transitional Administrative Law, in early 2004. (Bremer, pp. 213-231)
Rumsfeld announces that Pace has been heading an on-going study, called Operational Availability, to review how technological and other changes can allow the U.S. military to revise its war plans to increase combat efficiency and achieve a faster victory. Pace says that Rumsfeld initiated the review in early 2001. (*The Washington Post*, 11/18/2003)

At an NSC meeting on the 24th, Abizaid says that he believes that 5,000 “hardcore” Baathists are now the coalition’s biggest threat in Iraq. (Bremer, p. 235)

**December**

While visiting Iraq, Rumsfeld tells Bremer that Rice is in charge of all “political matters.” Rumsfeld is skeptical of the effectiveness of this new arrangement because he believes that the NSC has not helped to resolve issues on Iraq in the past. (Bremer, p. 245; Rumsfeld, p. 528)

On the 13th, Saddam is captured. (Bush, p. 266; http://www.cfr.org)

**2004**

**January**

On the 6th, while attending a NATO meeting, European leaders tell Rumsfeld that they are willing to expand NATO operations in Afghanistan. (*The Washington Post*, 02/07/2004)

**February**

On the 6th, Bush announces the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (Silberman-Robb Commission) to look into intelligence errors in the case of Iraq’s WMD. (http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov)

**Mar.-May**

The coalition faces resistance from al-Sadr and his Mahdi army in the south and from Sunni forces in Fallujah in the west. As the crises continue, Bush agrees to Bremer’s suggestion of a differentiated policy: resolve the Fallujah crisis by negotiation and use military force (the “Anaconda strategy”) against Mahdi’s forces. There are reportedly concerns that Sunni opposition on the Governing Council to a continued coalition offensive in Fallujah could threaten the June 30th timetable for transitioning sovereign to Iraq. This period becomes the deadliest up to this point in the war. (Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 152-154; Bremer, pp. 310-354; Rumsfeld, pp. 532-535; Feith, pp. 480-486)

**April**

Rumsfeld acknowledges that the level of violence in Iraq is worse than he had expected as critics charge that Rumsfeld should have sent more troops to the country. Pace defends the level of troops sent over, stating that some flexibility had been built into the plans to allow for the total troop levels to be adjusted as needed. (*The Washington Post*, 04/16/2004)
Rumsfeld discusses with Abizaid the possibility of launching a Sunni outreach program to help foster greater cooperation with moderate Sunnis. (Rumsfeld, pp. 535-536)

60 Minutes runs a segment on prisoner abuses at the Abu Ghraib prison. Rumsfeld creates the Office of Detainee Affairs and the Geren-Maples task force to address detainee matters. Pace says that the White House has been fully briefed on the DOD’s investigation of the abuses since mid-January. (Rumsfeld, pp. 593-594; http://www.rumsfeld.com; The Washington Post, 05/07/2004)

May

On the 5th, Rumsfeld offers Bush his resignation over the Abu Ghraib controversy, but Bush does not accept it. (Rumsfeld, p. 547)

June

Rumsfeld and Abizaid launch the Joint IED Defeat Task Force to study ways of countering the threat of IEDs in Iraq. Abizaid had suggested that a Manhattan Project-style effort was needed to counter the seriousness of the threat. (Rumsfeld, p. 648)

On the 30th, the appointed interim government in Iraq headed by Prime Minister Ayad Allawi takes over sovereignty. The CPA ceases to exist. Bremer steps down as special envoy and John Negroponte begins serving as the U.S. ambassador to Iraq. (Rumsfeld, p. 539)

Rumsfeld selects General George Casey as commander of the Multi-National Force in Iraq. Abizaid had reportedly raised the idea of replacing Sanchez, a three-star general, with a four-star general to lead the coalition forces in Iraq and had recommended Casey’s selection. Abizaid and Rumsfeld begin placing greater priority on strengthening internal security in Iraq and the size of the Iraqis security forces. Negroponte also agrees to shift funds from infrastructure to the training of more Iraqi forces. General David Petraeus is selected to take over the training and equipping off the Iraqi security forces. He is directed to make sure the Iraqi forces can begin to play a greater role in fighting the insurgents. (Bradley Graham, By His Own Rules, New York: PublicAffairs, 2009, p. 481; Rumsfeld, pp. 671-674; Cloud and Jaffe, p. 165)

August

U.S. forces encircle al-Sadr’s forces around Najaf, home to one of Shiite Islam’s holiest shrines, to step up efforts to eliminate insurgent forces in Iraq prior to next January’s elections. Ali Al-Sistani, a highly respected Shiite cleric in Iraq, helps negotiate a truce in which al-Sadr’s forces agree to disarm and leave Najaf. The interim government agrees to withdraw U.S. and Iraqi forces from Najaf and not to prosecute al-Sadr’s forces, leaving al-Sadr free to participate in elections. (George W. Liebmann, The Last American Diplomat, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012, pp. 248-249; The New York Times, 08/27/2004)

October

**November**  
Bush orders U.S. troops into Fallujah on the 8\textsuperscript{th} in an attempt to re-take the city from insurgents. Casey argued that retaking the insurgent stronghold is essential to keeping security during the January elections. The last pockets of resistance in Fallujah are neutralized by December. (Scott McClellan, *What Happened*, New York: Public Affairs, 2008, p. 241; Woodward, *State of Denial*, p. 359)

Abizaid meets with Casey and Petraeus on the 14\textsuperscript{th} in Casey’s office in Al Faw Palace in Iraq, where they discuss how to best fight the insurgents. Abizaid reportedly argues that U.S. policy has been counter-productive in its attempts to encourage the Iraqis to play a bigger role in providing security in Iraq. “We are missing something philosophically,” Abizaid argues. To help put the best officers possible in the field to train the Iraqis, they discuss creating a new advisory command to train the U.S. officers who are working with the Iraqis. (Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 182-183)

**2005**

**January**  
Iraq holds elections on the 30\textsuperscript{th} to select a National Assembly to draft a national constitution. Lute says that coalition forces will play a supporting role to help the Iraqis during the elections. The Shiite party, United Iraqi Alliance, under al-Sistani, wins 48% of the vote. (Anderson, p. 188; *Department of Defense Documents*, 01/28/2005)

**March**  
On the 4\textsuperscript{th}, Casey briefs Bush on a new plan to embed more U.S. advisors with the Iraqi units to help accelerate the training of the Iraqi forces. Abizaid, who participates in the video-teleconference from Qatar, had developed the plan with Casey earlier in the year. (Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 193)

**April**  

**June**  
Abizaid and Casey meet with Bush in the White House, where Bush approves their plan to embed more U.S. advisors in the field with Iraqi units. During the meeting Bush asks Casey to stay on as commander of the Multi-National Force past August. (Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 192-193)

Khalilzad succeeds Negroponte as U.S. ambassador to Iraq on the 21\textsuperscript{st}. Khalilzad had been serving as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan since 2003. Ronald Neumann takes over as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan on the 27\textsuperscript{th}.

**July**  
Abizaid is asked to stay on as CENTCOM commander after completing his two-year term. (*The Washington Times*, 08/26/2005)

**September**  
Pace is sworn in as the 16\textsuperscript{th} chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the 30\textsuperscript{th}. Pace, who is the first Marine to serve as chairman, succeeds Myers. Pace is succeeded as deputy chairman by Admiral Edmund Giambastiani.
National Assembly and provincial council elections are held in Afghanistan on the 18th. (https://georgewbush-whitehouse.gov)

**Fall**

Testifying before Congress, Abizaid and Casey reportedly argue that the gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq is imperative to help reduce dependency and encourage the Iraqis to play a greater role in providing for their own security. Abizaid notes that the continued presence of a large number of U.S. forces in Iraq is counterproductive in fighting the “long war,” a phrase he coins, against Islamic radicalism. (*The New York Times*, 11/18/2006)

**October**

Pace provides the president with a reportedly somber briefing on Iraq’s slow progress in the development of its army and police force. (*Newsweek*, 12/19/2005)

On the 15th, the Iraqi constitution passes in a nation-wide election. It gives Iraq a weaker central government that controls foreign, fiscal, and defense policy, leaving many domestic matters in the hands of the provinces. Many Sunnis do not support the constitution. (Anderson, pp. 188-189)

On the 19th, Rice testifies before Congress that the U.S. strategy in Iraq is to clear, hold, and build. Rumsfeld later argues that it is up to the Iraqis to hold and the civilian agencies like State to help the Iraqis build. (Bob Woodward, *The War Within*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008, pp. 31-33)

**November**


**December**

On the 15th, a permanent Council of Representatives of Iraq is elected. The United Iraqi Alliance wins the majority of seats. Ibrahim al-Jaafari remains prime minister, a position he has held since April. (Anderson, p. 194; https://georgewbush-whitehouse.gov)

Cheney meets with Abizaid, Casey and Khalilzad on the 18th in the Green Zone on a one-day surprise visit to Baghdad. (https://georgewbush-whitehouse.gov)


**2006**

**January**

On the 31st, Bush says he will ask Congress for an additional $1.1 billion for reconstruction in Afghanistan. It is part of a larger 60-country commitment to the Afghanistan Compact, a five-year blueprint. Bush also says he will cut U.S. forces by 2,500, as NATO deploys more forces. (*The New York Times*, 02/01/2006)
February

On the 22nd, al-Qaeda and Sunni extremists bomb the Shiite al-Askari Golden Mosque in Samarra, unleashing waves of sectarian violence. Abizaid had reportedly hoped prior to the bombing that the U.S. could begin withdrawing troops later in the year. After the bombing, Abizaid argues that sectarian violence has replaced terrorism and Sunni insurgents as the biggest threat in Iraq. (Rumsfeld, p. 659; The Washington Post, 12/21/2006; The New York Times, 12/20/2006)

March

On the 1st, Bush meets with Karzai in Afghanistan. (USA Today, 03/02/2006)

On the 4th, Abizaid meets with Iraqi Prime Minister al-Jaaffari and President Jalal Talabani in Baghdad to discuss who would become the next Iraqi prime minister in the new government. The elections were held in December. Al-Jaaffari has been nominated by a Shiite bloc to continue on in the prime minister position. Talabani is supported by a coalition of Kurds, Sunnis and secular groups calling for an inclusive government. (The New York Times, 03/05/2006)


May

Jawad al-Maliki becomes prime minister of Iraq’s first official, non-interim government since the fall of Saddam. Questions had reportedly remained regarding al-Jaafari’s support of Shiite militias. Al-Maliki, who is also Shiite, is reportedly more moderate. (The New York Times, 03/29/2006, 05/22/2006)

June

Rumsfeld and Pace discuss possible replacements for Casey and Abizaid. Casey has served two six-month extensions in Iraq beyond his initial twelve-month tour and Abizaid had told Rumsfeld that the U.S. needed “fresh eyes” on the situation. (Rumsfeld, pp. 701-702)

Coalition forces begin a plan to stop sectarian violence in troubled Baghdad neighborhoods by increasing U.S. forces to over 15,000, with the Iraqi army taking the lead in searching homes and securing neighborhoods. The plan is ended in October amidst rising sectarian violence. (Knight Ridder Washington Bureau, 06/08/2007)

Coalition forces kill Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaeda’s operational commander in Iraq. (Woodward, The War Within, p. 3)

Bush holds a national security meeting at Camp David on the 12th. Abizaid, Casey and Khalizad participate by video teleconference and update Bush on the situation in Iraq. (Cheney, pp. 435-436)
On the 13th, Bush travels to Iraq to hold a surprise meeting with al-Maliki. *(The Globe and Mail, 06/14/2006)*

**Summer**

The NSC conducts a strategy review on Afghanistan. Taliban forces are spreading in the east and south of Afghanistan, with many insurgents using sanctuaries in Pakistan. Insurgent violence and the heroin trade are reportedly on the rise. Rumsfeld informs Cheney and Hadley that the Taliban is mounting a major offensive. Bush raises the troop levels from 8,000 to 18,000 and increase economic assistance for 2006. *(Peter Tomsen, *The Wars in Afghanistan*, New York: PublicAffairs, 2011, p. 636; Rumsfeld, pp. 688-691; *The Nation*, 10/30/2006; http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu)*

**July**

On the 22nd, Rumsfeld meets with Pace, Casey, Abizaid, Hadley, Khalilzad, and Meghan O’Sullivan, deputy national security adviser for Iraq and Afghanistan, to discuss sectarian violence in Iraq. They reportedly discuss whether al-Maliki needs additional resources and what can the U.S. do to further help stem the violence. *(Woodward, *The War Within*, pp. 73-79)*

**August**


Appearing before a Senate committee, Pace and Abizaid testify that they did not expect the level of violence in Baghdad to be as high as it is and acknowledge that a civil war is possible. Casey tells Pace and Rumsfeld later in the month that he believes more troops in Baghdad are needed to help stem the violence. *(Rumsfeld, pp. 698-699; The Washington Times, 08/04/2006)*

Bush holds a national security meeting at the White House on the 17th. Abizaid participates by video-teleconference and updates Bush on the status of the Iraqi police and security forces. Rumsfeld argues that the focus should be on turning responsibility over to the Iraqi government by accelerating training and helping the Iraqis help themselves. However, Bush stresses that, “If the bicycle teeters, we’re going to put the hand back on. We have to make damn sure we do not fail.” *(Bush, pp. 370-371)* Bush later says he wanted to send Rumsfeld a message. *(Woodward, *The War Within*, pp. 88-99)*

**September**

On the 3rd, the members of the Iraq Study Group travel to Iraq on a fact-finding tour. *(Cloud and Jaffe, p. 238)*

On the 6th, Bush acknowledges for the first time the CIA’s program of secret detention of terrorist suspects in foreign prisons and the use of harsh interrogation methods to collect intelligence. The president expresses a willingness to work with Congress to authorize new military commissions and transfers fourteen high-value CIA detainees to Guantánamo. The Military Commissions Act is passed and signed into law in October. *(The New York Times, 10/18/2006)*
On the 25th, Pace initiates a broad review of Iraq and the war on terror. “We have to give ourselves a good honest scrub about what is working and what is not working, what are the impediments to progress and what should we change.” (The New York Times, 11/11/2006) Pace brings two or three colonels and captains from each of the services back from Iraq for a 90-day assignment to participate in the review and make recommendations on how to best move forward in Iraq. The group becomes known as the Council of Colonels. Pace later meets with the Iraq Study Group, the commission created by Congress to study Iraqi policy, and works with other similar reviews being conducted within the Bush administration. One of the options Pace’s review considers is a surge, which reportedly meets with opposition from Casey, Abizaid, the Joint Chiefs, and Rumsfeld. Rice, who is conducting a review at State, also opposes a surge. (Bush, pp. 363-364, 371, 376; Cheney, pp. 440-441; Rice, p. 506; Woodward, The War Within, pp. 55-56, 160-161, 175, 264-266; Rumsfeld, pp. 713-715; The Washington Post, 11/11/2006)

**Fall**

Abizaid tells his staff that rising tensions with Iran is a primary concern and directs his staff to identify 10,000 targets in Iran should a conflict arise. (Cloud and Jaffe, p. 240)

**October**

Abizaid discusses with Casey whether al-Maliki is spurring sectarian violence by using Iraqi soldiers to launch offenses targeting Sunnis. Abizaid is reportedly frustrated that the Army is not sending better advisers to embed with Iraqi units and tells Casey that the “dynamic has to change.” However Casey is reportedly skeptical that any efforts will be effective until he sees “a greater commitment from the Iraqis to solve the sectarian situation in their capital.” (Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 244-241)

On the 20th, Abizaid briefs Rumsfeld and Pace on a military strategy review in Iraq. Casey participates from Baghdad via secure video-teleconference. Rumsfeld raises the possibility of sending more troops to Iraq, but Casey says it is not necessary. (Rumsfeld, p. 702; CNN, 10/20/2006)

Bush has a teleconference on the 21st with Cheney, Rumsfeld, Pace, Abizaid and Casey where they reportedly discuss how long before Iraqi forces can assume a larger role in securing the country. (The New York Times, 10/22/2006)

Abizaid reportedly accepts Bush’s offer to succeed Negroponte as director of National Intelligence but changes his mind in November. (Cloud and Jaffe, p. 246)

**November**

Bush announces Rumsfeld’s resignation after the mid-term congressional elections on the 8th. (http://www.cnn.com)
Abizaid meets with al-Maliki in Baghad where he pushes the Shiite Iraqi leader to begin disarming the Shiite Mahdi army. Groups have reportedly been breaking off from the Mahdi army to form death squads. (*The Washington Times*, 11/16/2006)

Abizaid testifies before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the 15th, where he advises against Democrats’ calls for a large troop withdrawal over the next six months, noting that the U.S. presence in Iraq might be the only thing preventing a large scale civil war. He also cautions against significantly increasing troop levels, which could dampen Iraqi efforts to play a bigger role in providing for their own security. Abizaid also acknowledges publicly for the first time that the Bush Administration should have initially deployed more troops to the region at the start of the war. Abizaid also recommends a temporary increase of U.S. trainers embedded within Iraqi units. (Cloud and Jaffe, p. 245; *The New York Times*, 11/16/2006, 11/18/2006; PBS, 11/15/2006)

Bush orders Hadley to merge his NSC review of Iraq with similar reviews being conducted at State and the DOD. Hadley’s deputy, Crouch, leads the larger review. The group begins meeting on the 15th and includes Crouch and O’Sullivan from the NSC staff, Lute, Cambone, Rodman, General Kevin Bergner, and John Sattler from the DOD, David Satterfield and Philip Zelikow from State, John Hannah from Cheney’s office, and David Gordon representing the director of national intelligence. There is resistance to the surge option from the military. Lute is reportedly very skeptical and argues that any increase in military forces would have to be matched with equal emphasis on the political and economic side from civilian agencies. State also has serious concerns. (Peter Baker, *Days of Fire*, New York: Doubleday, 2013, pp. 510-511; Woodward, *The War Within*, pp. 207, 230-239)

Abizaid informs Casey that the White House is considering a “surge” option in Iraq. Casey meets with his top commanders in Iraq to discuss the option. (Woodward, *The War Within*, p.231)

Crouch presents his Iraq strategy review to Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Pace, Hadley, and Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson in the White House solarium over Thanksgiving weekend. Cheney, Hadley and the NSC staff support a surge to stem the violence and help the Iraqis train their security forces to take over. State and many top military officials including Casey, Abizaid, and the Joint Chiefs still have serious reservations about the proposed surge. Bush says he will consider everyone’s arguments and make a decision in the next few weeks. Bush decides in favor of the surge. (Rice, pp. 541-542; Woodward, *The War Within*, pp. 244-248)

Bush travels to Jordan where he meets with Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki on the 29th and 30th. The two leaders discuss plans for accelerating the training of Iraqi security forces and the political reconciliation process. (http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov)
December

On the 6th, the Senate confirms Robert Gates as Defense Secretary with a vote of 95-2. (The Associated Press, 12/06/2006)

Also on the 6th, the Iraq Study Group presents its findings to Bush. Its primary recommendations include a pull-back of U.S. forces over the next fifteen months, an amnesty program for insurgent fighters, a “diplomatic offensive” toward Israel-Palestine negotiations, and high-level talks on Iraq with Iran and Syria. (Woodward, The War Within, pp. 314-315; USA Today, 12/06/2006)

Bush meets on the 7th in the Roosevelt Room with a group that includes Cheney, Pace and Rice. The NSC staff presents a compromise position between Cheney and Rice, which Pace argues against. “Either we’re in or we’re not in. Either we’re operating or we’re not operating.” (Cheney, p. 449) Pace is reportedly open to the surge option, though concerns still remain among the Joint Chiefs and commanders on the ground in Iraq. (Bush, pp. 363-364, 371, 376; Rumsfeld, pp. 713-715; Woodward, The War Within, pp. 55-56, 160-161, 175, 264-266)

Abizaid and Casey participate via video-teleconference in a White House Situation Room meeting on the proposed surge in Iraq with Bush and his top national security advisers. Casey tells Bush that he is against the surge option in the absence of political reconciliation in Iraq. Abizaid lays out the pros and cons of the surge option. While it would reduce sectarian violence and give extra time for political reconciliation to occur, it would put a strain on the military personnel and their families, limit the ability to make progress in Afghanistan, and limit options should a conflict with Iran erupt. Abizaid had also previously argued that the surge would not work without greater help from the State Department and civilian agencies, that it would strengthen a mentality of dependence on coalition forces within Iraq, and it would bolster opposition and insurgency. (Cloud and Jaffe, pp. 246-248; The Washington Post, 12/21/2006)

Bush and Cheney meet with Pace, Rumsfeld, and the Joint Chiefs at the Pentagon on the 13th to discuss the surge. Pace had met with Bush two days earlier to inform him that the Joint Chiefs are prepared to support the surge but have some reservations regarding al-Maliki’s level of commitment, the need for other U.S. agencies to play a greater role in Iraq, and whether the surge would “break the military” by putting too much strain on the troops and their families back home. Rumsfeld later writes that he and Pace work with the Joint Chiefs to help allay their concerns. (Bush, p. 376; Cheney, pp. 451-453; Rumsfeld, pp. 714-715; The New York Times, 05/16/2007)

On the 18th, Gates officially takes over as secretary of defense. (AP, 12/18/2006)

Gates and Pace travel to Iraq, where they meet with Abizaid and Casey to discuss the surge option. They brief Bush at Camp David on the 23rd upon their return. Gates also reportedly recommends General David Petraeus to replace Casey as the commander in Iraq and for Casey to serve as the Army chief of staff. Pace
tells Bush that Petraeus and General Ray Odierno, the number two commander in Iraq, would want the full amount of five brigades of troops under consideration in the surge option to be committed to Iraq. (Cheney, p. 454; The Associated Press, 12/24/2006; The Washington Post, 12/21/2006)

Abizaid announces on the 20th that he will retire in March. (The Washington Post, 12/21/2006)

On the 28th, Bush meets with Pace, Cheney, Gates, Rice, Hadley, and Crouch in Crawford, Texas ranch to discuss U.S. strategy in Iraq. (The Associated Press, 12/30/2006)

2007

January

The U.S. launches an airstrike against Islamist militias and suspected al-Qaeda terrorists in Somalia on the 8th.

On the 10th, Bush announces a surge of five brigades, or roughly 20,000 troops, to Iraq. U.S. forces in Baghdad are to number over 30,000, which will work with 30,000 Iraqi army and 21,000 policemen to secure neighborhoods. The Bush administration also launches a political surge with provisional construction teams integrating civilian, military and diplomatic workers to be embedded with local Iraqi leaders to help serve as mentors. The number of teams increase from ten to 24 from 2007 to 2008. The administration also begins a less public surge in Afghanistan over the next year. (Associate Press, 11/01/2007; http://www.cnn.com; Knight Ridder Washington Bureau, 06/08/2007)

February

U.S. General Dan McNeil replaces British General David Richards as commander of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Gates later notes that a military command problem exists in which some U.S. forces report to NATO and some to CENTCOM. All previous ISAF commanders had been from other NATO members, including Italy, Turkey, France, Canada, and Germany. (Robert Gates, Duty, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, pp. 205-206)

On the 8th, Gates meets with NATO defense ministers and asks for more troops for Afghanistan. The response from European members is tepid, with Spain, Italy, Turkey, France, and Germany all reportedly weary of sending more troops to the region. (The Associated Press, 02/08/2007)

Petraeus replaces Casey as commanding general of the Multi-National Force in Iraq on the 10th. He serves in this position through September, 2008.

On the 12th, Gates states that the U.S. will cooperate with Pakistan in an effort to secure Afghanistan. He also says that the U.S. does not plan on abandoning its
efforts in Afghanistan and is planning an increased coordinated assault in the country this spring. (*The Associated Press*, 02/12/2007)

Bush says that factions within the Iranian government are supplying Shiite militants in Iraq with roadside bombs used to kill U.S. troops. Pace had previously said that the weapons had come from Iran but the U.S. is not sure if the government was responsible. (*The New York Times*, 02/15/2007)

The first additional troops from the surge arrive in Iraq on the 15th. Bush also announces the U.S. will extend the stay of 3,200 U.S. troops in Afghanistan. (*USA Today*, 02/16/2007; *Knight Ridder Washington Bureau*, 06/08/2007)

**March**

On the 7th, Gates approves a request to send more military police to Iraq prior to a security crackdown in the country. (*The Associated Press Online*, 03/07/2007)

Abizaid completes his assignment as CENTCOM commander on the 16th. He is succeeded by Admiral William Fallon. (Woodward, *The War Within*, p. 284)

Ryan Crocker begins serving as the U.S. ambassador to Iraq on the 26th.

**April**

On the 16th, William Wood succeeds Neumann as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan. He serves in this position through 2009.

With O’Sullivan announcing on the 2nd she is stepping down as deputy national security advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan, Hadley develops a proposal to create a new deputy national security advisor position at the assistant to the president level to take her place, arguing that the job requires someone with more authority to cut through the red tape of the Washington bureaucracy. The new position would manage the implementation and execution of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, coordinate with Hadley, and report directly to Bush. The new position would have “tasking authority” to issue instructions to agencies in Washington to help ensure the forces on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq receive all the support they need. The position is later filled by Lute, who is dubbed the “war czar.” (Gates, pp. 66-67; Baker, pp. 544-545; *The Washington Post*, 04/13/2007, 05/16/2007; https://georgewbush-whitehouse.gov)

Lute says that the U.S. is in the process of assessing how far along the Iraqi security forces are in the training process. The statement comes amidst reports that the U.S. has de-prioritized training Iraqi forces and has decided to play a larger role in securing Iraq itself. (*Knight Ridder Washington Bureau*, 04/19/2007)

**May**

Abizaid retires from the U.S. military on the 1st.
JOHN ABIZAID SELECTED WRITINGS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS


BACKGROUND ON JOHN ABIZAID


WAR IN AFGHANISTAN


THE WAR IN IRAQ


Early Relationship with George W. Bush
• When did you first meet George W. Bush? What were your early impressions of him?

The Joint Staff
• Tell us about your responsibilities as Director of Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5) on the Joint Staff and as Director of the Joint Staff. What issues occupied most of your time prior to 9/11? Who did you tend to work with most closely?
• Tell us about your experiences on 9/11. How did you think the U.S. should respond to the attacks?
• Tell us about your work preparing for the war in Afghanistan. What were the biggest challenges the coalition forces faced in removing al-Qaeda and the Taliban from Afghanistan? Comment on the difficulties of placing Special Operations Forces inside Afghanistan, as well as DOD’s relationship with the CIA during the invasion of Afghanistan. Comment on the challenges the coalition faced in working with the different anti-Taliban groups inside Afghanistan, as well as securing the support of Afghanistan’s neighbors.
• Did the war in Afghanistan continue occupying much of your time in 2002? When did you first begin to work on the planning for a possible war in Iraq? Comment on the military’s thinking on Iraq in 2002. Was there much disagreement within the administration over how the U.S. should proceed? What were your primary concerns regarding a possible invasion of Iraq?

Deputy Commander at CENTCOM
• How did you come to serve as deputy CENTCOM commander? Tell us about your responsibilities as deputy commander. Comment on your relationship with Tommy Franks.
• Discuss your work setting up the forward headquarters in Qatar. What were the biggest challenges you faced in setting up the forward command?
• Tell us about your work finalizing the war plans for the invasion of Iraq. What last minute challenges did you face? Were you satisfied that the coalition had sufficient international support going into the war?
• What were the biggest dangers facing coalition forces on the ground during the major combat operations phase of the war? What were the biggest challenges you faced during the course of the war?
• Comment on the transition from Jay Garner to Paul Bremer in Iraq. How were the lines of authority between DOD, Bremer and State set up in Iraq? Did you feel they were sufficiently clear? What were the biggest challenges you faced after the end of major combat operations? Discuss Bremer’s policies regarding de-Baathification and the dissolution of the Iraqi army. Did you agree with the decision that the CPA would initially be responsible for training the new Iraqi army?
Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Central Command

- How did you come to serve as CENTCOM commander? Tell us about your responsibilities in this position. How did you attempt to balance your responsibilities in Iraq and Afghanistan with your other responsibilities under CENTCOM’s AOR?
- Comment on your relationship with Bush. How did it change after you became CENTCOM commander?
- Comment on military-civilian relations within the DOD. Tell us about your relationship with Don Rumsfeld. How did you get along with other senior DOD officials such as Paul Wolfowitz and Doug Feith? Tell us about your relationship with the other top military officials at DOD such as the chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the service chiefs.
- Comment on your relationship with other members of the president’s national security team, such as Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Stephen Hadley, George Tenet, and Dick Cheney. Discuss your relationship with Paul Bremer and the U.S. ambassadors to Afghanistan and Iraq such as John Negroponte and Zalmay Khalilzad.
- Describe the decision-making process in the Bush administration on issues regarding defense and foreign policy. Which actors had the most clout? What role did Cheney play?
- Comment on the interagency process within the Bush administration. How well did the different departments and agencies work together during times of war and reconstruction?

Your Work in Iraq as CENTCOM Commander

- Discuss your relationship with Ricardo Sanchez and George Casey. Comment on some of the biggest threats the coalition forces faced in rebuilding Iraq, such as terrorism, insurgents, IEDs, and sectarian fighting. How did you try to address those challenges?
- Comment on the importance of keeping a small U.S. footprint in Iraq and of including a Muslim presence in the coalition forces. Tell us about the debates within the administration over how much time it would take to train the Iraqi forces and how quickly the coalition should transition to Iraqi sovereignty. Were you concerned that the U.S. was reinforcing Iraq’s dependence on coalition forces by playing too great a role in providing security? How did you attempt to encourage the Iraqis to play a greater role themselves? Comment on your efforts to bring back qualified Sunni officer to the Iraqi army and to do a better job embedding U.S. military advisers within Iraqi units. Did Bremer share your views on these issues? Did Negroponte and Khalilzad? Did Bush?
- Tell us about your work preparing for elections in Iraq. What special challenges did they present in maintaining security? Tell us about your relationship with Iraqi Prime Minister Jawad al-Maliki. How was it different from your relationship with his predecessor, Ibrahim al-Jaafari? Did you feel al-Maliki was doing enough to increase Iraq’s role in providing security and in taking a stand against Shiite militia groups?
- Comment on the resistance the coalition faced from Shiite and Sunni insurgents and militia groups. Did you agree with the way Bush handled the crises in Fallujah and in the south in 2004? How did the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra in 2006 affect the level of violence in Iraq?
- Tell us about the reviews conducted by the DOD and the NSC in 2006 on Iraq. What reservations did you have regarding the surge option? Did Rumsfeld and Casey share your concerns? Has your opinion on the surge since changed in any ways?
Your Work in Afghanistan as CENTCOM Commander

- Discuss your work in Afghanistan. Tell us about your relationship with the coalition military commanders and the U.S. ambassadors to Afghanistan, Khalilzad and Ronald Neumann. Tell us about your relationship with President Hamid Karzai.
- Describe the situation on the ground in Afghanistan when you first took over as CENTCOM commander. What were some of the biggest challenges you faced? Did you feel you received adequate support from Pakistan in dealing with insurgent sanctuaries along the border and in western Pakistan? How did you attempt to deal with the rising spread of Taliban forces, insurgent violence, and the heroin trade in 2006? Tell us about the review conducted in 2006 on the situation in Afghanistan. Comment on the level of international support the coalition received in Afghanistan compared to Iraq. How did these levels change over time?
- What other important issues within your AOR arose during your time as commander?
- Comment on the transition from Rumsfeld to Robert Gates as secretary of defense.

The Bush Presidency in Retrospect

- What do you consider to be your most important accomplishments during your time in the Bush administration? What were the most challenging parts of your jobs? What were the most rewarding?
- What were Bush’s greatest assets as commander in chief?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Bush presidency with regards to national security and defense?
- Comment on Bush’s leadership in the days after the 9/11 attacks.
- What features of the Bush presidency were overlooked or misunderstood by the press?
- How should the Bush presidency be viewed in history?