

Lt. Colonel Dan

Lt. Colonel Dan Sullivan's First Person Story of the "Hollowing Out" of the Third Marine Division

I watched as almost every last infantry unit in Okinawa and other pointy-end forces throughout the theater departed to take up arms in Iraq, a completely different theater; stripping away the resources promised the theater commander in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan. Paper tiger? Hollow force? Certainly for any immediate response to a developing strategic or operational challenge in the Pacific. The entire theater was left uncovered for months at a time without a MEU, despite what the JSCP, Rumsfeld's document, promised. We had to beg, borrow, and steal a MEU bound for SW Asia to respond to the tsunami in SE Asia because ours was already on the ground in Iraq.

Units deploying from home station on rotation to Okinawa, found themselves suddenly redeploying to an entirely different theater. Individuals who were transferred to Okinawa on permanent assignment with families in tow, found themselves ordered for months at a time to Iraq to augment various staffs, leaving their wives and children twice displaced. Equipment readiness was a story in and of itself. All a shell game. As a result, it is impossible to measure the add-on cost to the effort in Iraq.

I participated in sessions for security concepts that we had no idea how we were going to execute if the plans we wrote to support them were ever ordered. We wrote some pretty imaginative plans that only Stephen King could rival. But, the Secretary has surrounded himself with sycophants who either are woefully inadequate military professionals (they accepted our plans) or who won't say the truth because that would be professional suicide.

And I haven't even talked about the way our allies and potential coalition partners view us. At the behest of a strategically challenged administration Secretary Rumsfeld has crippled the national security posture apparatus. They have thrown out the "Win-Hold-Win" doctrine and replaced it with the "we can respond to any challenge at anytime, anywhere, throwing anything at it and bully our way to success" philosophy that is working so successfully in Iraq. "Hold-Borrow-Rattle the Saber" is the new reality.

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