

# UNTIDY

THE BLOGS ON RUMSFELD

SELECTED AND  
INTRODUCED BY  
Tom Sumner

 WILLIAM, JAMES & CO.

*For B.J.J. Everything for B.J.J.*  
—T.M.S.

Publisher Jim Leisy (james\_leisy@wmjasco.com)  
Cover Photo Department of Defense photo by R.D. Ward  
Proofreader Brenda Jones

Printed in the U.S.A.

For permission to quote from blogs reprinted in this book, please contact the respective bloggers, who retain all rights to their work. Names of all products herein are used for identification purposes only and are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of their respective owners. William, James & Co. makes no claim of ownership or corporate association with the products or companies that own them.

©2005 William, James & Co. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or transcribed, in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, telepathic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed as follows:

Rights and Permissions  
William, James & Co.  
8536 SW St. Helens Drive, Suite D  
Wilsonville, Oregon 97070

William, James & Co. is an imprint of Franklin, Beedle & Associates, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication  
data available from the publisher.

ISBN 1-59028-047-4

# C O N T E N T S



## Preface

x

## Part One

### The Stuff of Rumsfeld

1

## Part Two

### The Bloggers' Rumsfeld

25

#### THE ROAD TO SURFDOM

Step aside George Orwell, the master is at work ..... 26  
by Tim Dunlop

*... when it comes to contemptuous political  
misuse of language and power, Donald Rumsfeld  
is the real McCoy.*

#### LANGUAGE LOG

No foot in mouth ..... 27  
by Geoffrey K. Pullum

*It also echoes (perhaps unwittingly) the title of  
Sylvain Bromberger's collection of philosophy  
papers, On What We Know We Don't Know.*

CONTENTS

LEFT I ON THE NEWS  
 A collection of Donsense .....29  
 by Eli Stephens  
*No one can ever accuse Rumsfeld of failing a course in formal logic. Common sense, definitely. Formal logic, no.*

NATHANNEWMAN.ORG  
 Privatization of the military .....34  
 by Nathan Newman  
*. . . it's worth noting that Army Secretary White had been pushing privatization of military energy facilities when he was at Enron, and then just gaily continued to do so to the benefit of his old company even as he assumed his position heading the Army.*

MAXSPEAK  
 Taps for mercs .....37  
 by Max Sawicky  
*Soldiers or contractors, all are part of the military proletariat. They are not draftees, but clearly their decisions are the result of limited choices.*

THE ROAD TO SURFDOM  
 It'd be good to be the king .....39  
 by Tim Dunlop  
*Listen to would-be Iraqi founding father, Donald Rumsfeld, at Senate Appropriations yesterday. Senator Byrd has to remind him about all the boring stuff, you know, like accountability, the Congress, the citizens.*

CONTENTS

JUST A BUMP IN THE BELTWAY  
 Second class soldiers .....42  
 by Melanie Mattson  
*We've sent our troops into a meat grinder poorly equipped, without basics like ammunition and bullet-proof vests, with radios that don't work, bad night vision goggles, insufficiently armored transport.*

THE MAHABLOG  
 War and profit .....45  
 There's no business like war business .....47  
 Warfare 101 .....49  
 by Barbara O'Brien  
*Can we say, "This is the fault of management"? I think we can.*

TOMDISPATCH.COM  
 Donald Rumsfeld's long, hard slog of cost efficiency .....52  
 by Tom Engelhardt  
*. . . I love that "seamlessly," another fabulous example of utopian thinking in the Bush administration, and what a great idea in any case, to side-step the slow-moving Pentagon by creating another bureaucratic agency elsewhere. But we always knew that this was an administration for which proliferation was policy.*

BODY AND SOUL  
 Another torture memo .....60  
 by Jeanne d'Arc  
*In April, Rumsfeld approves torture at Guantánamo. In July, Sanchez's office is talking about needing more aggressive tactics for dealing with prisoners, and within a month, the head of Guantánamo arrives for an "investigation."*

LEAN LEFT

Rumsfeld: unindicted co-conspirator? ..... 62  
 by Kevin Raybould

*I want a real victory in the war on terrorism, not the shallow and pale facsimile of one we seem to be trying to build with creeping police state tactics and random, violent lashing out in the hopes of “remaking” a country or a region or the world with an M1-Abrams and “minimal” civilian casualties.*

FAFBLOG

Fafblog interviews: Donald Rumsfeld ..... 68  
 by Fafnir

*Was it torture? Were detainees indefinitely held for days with bags over their heads? Yes. Were testicles electrocuted? You bet. Were orifices molested, flesh ripped by dogs, and nostrils raped? Almost certainly. But torture? Hard to say.*

MAXSPEAK

More Moore ..... 70  
 by Max Sawicky

*What are the neo-cons, really? As far as I can see, they are a bunch of pseudo-intellectual blowhards with great media access and outlets, but no boots on the ground.*

HULLABALOO

Black ops ..... 75  
 by Digby

*Believing their own hype about Gitmo, these people inexorably came to believe that if they just inflicted a little more pain and humiliation in Iraq they'd get the answers they wanted.*

CROOKED TIMBER

No one left to lie to ..... 78  
 by Ted Barlow

*Hersh lays out the connection between Abu Ghraib and Rumsfeld's policies quite directly. Hersh's piece only mentions the combat restrictions as a launching point for his real subject—how Rumsfeld and the Administration loosened the restrictions intended to ensure the humane treatment of Afghan prisoners.*

FAFBLOG

Drivin with Donald ..... 82  
 by Fafnir

*One thing about Donald Rumsfeld that you have to give him credit for is he always cuts through the crap to tell it like it is in his no-nonsense style. I am reminded of this when we hit the second moose.*

TALKLEFT

Lawsuits: a chronology ..... 84  
 by Jeralyn E. Merritt

*The Center for Constitutional Rights filed a war-crimes lawsuit on behalf of detainees at Guantanamo naming Rumsfeld as a defendant. Rumsfeld isn't taking any chances—he'll skip an important conference to avoid the chance something weird will happen.*

LEAN LEFT

Why the defense of Rumsfeld? ..... 91  
 by Kevin Raybould

*If the neo-con dream of rifles bringing Republican-style democracy to the Middle East were ever possible, it is no exaggeration to say that Rumsfeld killed those dreams with his incompetence.*

CONTENTS

BODY AND SOUL

- Connecting the dots ..... 93  
by Jeanne d’Arc  
*The lack of proof, though, looks less like absence of evidence than lack of interest in asking the right questions.*

NEWS HOUNDS

- Al Qa Qaa missing explosives scandal continues ..... 95  
by Chris Herrmann  
*The failure of this administration to prioritize the securing of the known stockpiles of conventional weapons shows extreme disregard for our troops’ safety.*

CROOKED TIMBER

- Time for him to go ..... 96  
by Ted Barlow  
*I recently saw a post on a conservative blog asking whether liberal bloggers were going to accept Rumsfeld’s apology. I know the answer to this one: It Doesn’t Matter.*

FAFBLOG

- Transforming: less than meets the eye ..... 99  
by The Medium Lobster  
*Indeed, with Donald Rumsfeld’s New Military, the United States could soon be losing up to three or four wars at once across the globe, failing at its objectives at a record pace. In these new and dangerous times, we can ask no less.*

CONTENTS

THE ROAD TO SURFDOM

- Friendly fire targets Rumsfeld ..... 101  
by Tim Dunlop  
*The fact is, virtually everyone in the Bush Administration should be held responsible for the sorts of stuff-ups Rumsfeld is now being so piously chastised for by his own team.*

BAGHDAD BURNING

- Rule of Iraq assassins must end ..... 103  
by Riverbend  
*We’ve ceased worrying about the explosions in Baghdad and are now concerned with the people who have left their homes and valuables and are living off of the charity of others.*

NEWS HOUNDS

- Donald Rumsfeld: god of modern warfare ..... 109  
by Melanie Killinger-Vowell  
*Feel better now? All is well. Not to worry.*

THE RUDE PUNDIT

- Donald Rumsfeld needs a hug ..... 110  
by Rude Pundit  
*Chances are Rumsfeld will have to go home and turn on video of the first month of war, a fire in the hearth, a cognac on the side table, embracing himself, trying to keep warm in the cold, lonely end-of-year darkness.*

- Afterword: The Ear of an Aviator: Looking Ahead ..... 113  
The Bloggers (in order of appearance) ..... 117

# P R E F A C E



## About This Series

When I was a writing teacher, I struggled to get more writing from my students. More writing, I figured, was more thinking, and then more learning. But most of my students claimed to dislike writing, so I tried to think of ways to make writing fun so I'd see more of it. Turn on the spigot—more, I told myself, was better.

I can't be the only one awed by the blogging phenomenon, since most blogging is writing, that thing I always thought everyone tried to avoid. Yet I watch the number of weblogs rise (a year ago, Technorati, the weblog tracking site, tracked 2.5 million blogs; as I write this it is tracking 8.7 million) and just think back to the days of trying to coerce students to write more.

And now—amazingly—there seems to be no end to how popular writing will become.

I'm not a writing teacher anymore; my career switch has turned me into an editor, and though I still love to see that spigot as it gets turned on higher and higher, I also have an urge to give it direction. Good blogs are updated frequently, and older posts slip off into the archives, out of sight for visitors, unless they are overcome by an urge to click around

on old dates. No one will ever have time to read all this output, but the Informed Citizen Series will try to get some of the good writing done on the blogs to stick around.

## Writing and Democracy: Political Blogs

Adam Gopnik, staff writer for the *New Yorker* magazine, has also been thinking about writing, the Internet, and democracy. According to the web site for the College Board's Forum 2004 in Chicago, Gopnik participated in a panel discussion and "described how the bloggers and the massive quantity of political discussion that took place on the Internet also gave him a renewed faith in the power of writing. 'I remember 10 or 15 years ago, there was this notion that language itself, written language, was just vanishing from the world and we were going into a world of sound bites and visuals,' said Gopnik. 'But if you think about it, the Internet has proven to be above all a medium of writing.'"

Blogs can be about anything, but reading political blogs—whether they're highlighting stories major media put at the back of the newspaper or relegated to 10 seconds on the newscast, or breaking into rants and heavily opinionated commentary that would never be found in major news outlets, or sticking with a story that has fallen off the radar of other media, or just offering a clipped sentence that directs you to a news item that just might need your attention—does have a way of making you feel like more of a citizen. In an interview with Amy Goodman in March 2005, Juan Cole, former journalist and professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan, said this about the importance of his blog, *Informed Comment*:

After September 11 . . . I felt a great many ignorant opinions were being expressed in our mass media by people who really couldn't even pronounce the names correctly and had no idea what they were talking about. And it annoyed me, having spent a long time in the region and having studied it professionally. And in the old days before the rise of the Internet, it was hard to get one's voice out. People think, well, an academic has some sort of special access, but no. I think a lot of journalists were convinced that academics can't write straight, and you should keep them away from the public if at all possible. So, I couldn't get my op-eds published. And my credentials really meant nothing in the journalistic world. It was only once I started keeping the weblog and commenting on al Qaeda and the development of the war on terror and then especially the Iraq war that the journalists started reading me for information, and I often could get access through Arabic sources on the Internet or in the media to a texture and detail of information that wasn't available in the west.

Of course, not all bloggers come to blogging with the extensive background of Professor Cole, but they do come with something to say and a desire to put it in writing, and with that a desire to spread information and hold an audience. And holding the audience is the whole game; blogs that are not engaging and accurate tend to disappear.

## About This Book

I created this book to tell the story of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld through the eyes of his blogging critics. I intend the blog posts here to present a collage of critical

commentary, some of it lengthy and thoughtful, some of it quick and to the point, and some of it whimsical. I wanted two readers to come to this book: the one who already reads blogs but wants to go back and see what was missed while reading all the other good blogs (most of these posts I hadn't noticed the first time around, by the way; only by researching did I come across much of this material for the first time), and the reader who does not already read blogs but wants to take a look at what the Internet has been up to. OK, there is a third reader: the one predisposed to disliking Rumsfeld, and who wants to cover more ground in that regard.

## My Ax

I do have an ax to grind. Please note the word *critics* in the previous section. There are many biographies and favorable stories told of our Secretary of Defense. Midge Decter's *Rumsfeld: A Personal Portrait* and Jeffrey A. Krames' *The Rumsfeld Way: The Leadership Wisdom of a Battle-Hardened Maverick* are two examples of biographies that give official portraits of Rumsfeld as a True American Hero. Also, Rumsfeld's views and positions are generally given deference in press conferences and Sunday-morning news shows, not to mention bloggers not represented in this book. Many people—perhaps you or some of your friends, neighbors, or relatives—are partial to Rumsfeld and uninterested in hearing of his perceived failings. I and the other writers featured here, however, take a different position, and if you do not care to read dissent from the official story, and the basis for that dissent, then this book will certainly not be for you.

### **Acknowledgments**

Were it not for all the good bloggers featured here, there would be no book. They posted these great posts, and when I asked them to allow for their reprinting, they graciously agreed. I'd like to list them all by name, but wait—I already have: please take some time to read up on them in the “About the Bloggers” section at the back of this book, and visit their blogs when you have the chance. You will not be sorry you did. While you're at it, be sure to click on the blogrolls, those listings of other recommended blogs that appear on their sites. When you do, you'll find anywhere from dozens to hundreds of other excellent blogs, many of whose posts deserve wider readership.

I'd also like to thank publisher Jim Leisy for letting me proceed with this series and understanding it will be a long, hard slog, but I know in the end we'll have much to show for our hard work. Joel Preston Smith gave “The Stuff of Rumsfeld” the reading it needed. Barbara O'Brien showed me what form a book like this might have, and Jack Miles' and Cynthia Kirk's encouraging words about the effort have been a great contribution. Finally, thank you John Harris for showing me my first blog—and many other good ones since.

—*T.M.S., April 2005*