

RELEASE IN PART  
B6

**From:** sbwhoeop [redacted]  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 9, 2010 9:23 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** see this? Sid

B6

H: Did you see this self-damaging NYT piece planted by WH in today's paper? IMHO, near insane, WH picking open fight with military over Afghan deployment. Out of control campaign mode. Why is this leaked? The only possible effect is anger and retaliation in all the passive aggressive ways it has perfected from the military. Even in terms of public perception the story only portrays the administration as weak and unable to achieve its goals, including getting the military to follow the president's will. Also suggests a deeply frustrated WH lashing out. Why raise this implied question: If the military is attempting to subvert the president, for political purposes, inferred in the article, why is the president not acting like Truman in correcting or replacing the commanders rather than having anonymous aides, easily identifiable, leak a nasty little story that can only backfire? Lucky for now that the Republicans are too incompetent to take advantage. If they were smart they would demand hearings, bringing McChrystal forward to say that of course he's doing everything he can to serve his orders, etc. Also, if the Republicans were compos mentis they would demand firing of Geithner for his role as NY Fed president colluding with AIG. Maybe they are waiting for Barney Frank's hearings on the matter, now scheduled. Have been talking to Shaun Woodward about Peter Robinson immolation. Will write you later on its implications and the inside story of the failed coup against Gordon.

Back to writing legacy memo for Bill. Will send you copy next week, too.

Sid

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/09/world/09military.html?hpw>



January 9, 2010

## White House Aides Said to Chafe at Slow Pace of Afghan Surge

By ELISABETH BUMILLER and HELENE COOPER

WASHINGTON — Senior White House advisers are frustrated by what they say is the Pentagon's slow pace in deploying 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan and its inability to live up to an initial promise to have all of the forces in the country by next summer, senior administration officials said Friday.

Tensions over the deployment schedule have been growing in recent weeks between senior White House officials — among them Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., Gen. James L. Jones, the national security adviser, and Rahm Emanuel, the White House chief of staff — and top commanders, including Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the senior commander in Afghanistan.

A rapid deployment is central to President Obama's strategy, to have a jolt of American forces pound the Taliban enough for Afghan security forces to take over the fight. Administration officials said that part of the White House frustration stemmed from the view that the longer the American military presence in Afghanistan continued, the more of a political liability it would become for Mr. Obama. But beyond the politics, the speeded up deployment — which Mr. Obama paired with a promise to begin troop withdrawals by July 2011 — is part of Mr. Obama's so-called "bell curve" Afghanistan strategy, whereby American troops would increase their force in Afghanistan and step up attacks meant to quickly take out insurgents.

One administration official said that the White House believed that top Pentagon and military officials misled them by promising to deploy the 30,000 additional troops by the summer. General McChrystal and some of his top aides have privately expressed anger at that accusation, saying that they are being held responsible for a pace of deployments they never thought was realistic, the official said.

The officials declined to be identified because they were discussing internal administration disagreements.

Other White House officials said to be frustrated by the deployment pace include Thomas E. Donilon, the deputy national security adviser, and Denis R. McDonough, the national security chief of staff. "Gates and Mullen made a clear statement that this would be achieved by summer's end," a senior administration official said, referring to Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Mr. McDonough denied that there was any frustration with the Pentagon. "We have every confidence that our colleagues in the military are doing their absolute best to meet the commitment and the plans that the president laid out," he said Friday night.

On Dec. 1, when President Obama announced the deployment of the 30,000 additional troops, a senior administration official told reporters that the forces were part of a short-term, high-intensity effort to regain the initiative from the Taliban and that they would all be in place by May. Within days, White House and Pentagon officials had amended that to say that the bulk of the forces would be in place by the summer, but that it would take a few months after that to get all the troops in place.

Last month in Kabul, Lt. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, the deputy commander of American and NATO forces in Afghanistan, did not back away from that schedule, but he told reporters of the difficulties he faced even in getting all the forces in by fall. He said that bad weather, limited capacity to send supplies by air and attacks on ground convoys carrying equipment for troops from Pakistan and other countries presented substantial hurdles.

"There's a lot of risks in here, but we're going to try to get them in as fast as we can," he said at the time. "There's a lot of things that have to line up perfectly."

On a visit to Afghanistan last month, Admiral Mullen pressed military logisticians on how they would be able to meet the schedule. But even Admiral Mullen, who said he was "reasonably confident" that the logistics would work out, acknowledged the tall order before the military, saying, "I want a plan B because life doesn't always work out."

Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon press secretary, said Friday that the military was moving as rapidly as it could and that reports of tension with the White House amounted to a "fabricated and contrived controversy." Mr. Morrell said that "the preponderance of the forces will be there by the middle of the summer and we are moving heaven and earth to get all of them there by the end of the summer." He added that the Pentagon anticipated "that 92 percent of them will be there by the end of August and we hope to even improve upon that."

But military officials acknowledged that they were taken aback by the president's initial insistence that the troops be in place within six months. Last fall, military officials repeatedly said that it would take as long as a year to 18 months for all the troops to be in place.

Eric Schmitt contributed reporting.