

CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS URGE PRESIDENT TO REFOCUS ON WAR ON TERROR

Recent editorials and news reports call attention to the resurgence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda

The New York Times: “At a crucial moment, the Bush administration diverted America’s military strength, political attention and foreign aid dollars from a necessary, winnable war in Afghanistan to an unnecessary, and by now unwinnable, war in Iraq. Al Qaeda took full advantage of these blunders to survive and rebuild. Now it seems to be back in business.” [2/25/07]

Newsday: “Distracted by the chaotic implosion of Iraq, the United States has lost its focus on the war on global terrorism and risks getting blind-sided by the growing resurgence of its true enemy, the al-Qaida terror network.” [2/25/07]

The Boston Globe: “Recent descriptions by intelligence officials of Al Qaeda's renewed control of terrorist networks and training camps in the tribal areas of Pakistan contrast with previous administration depictions of isolated leaders reduced to acting as little more than a source of ideological inspiration. The new picture seems to belie the triumphalist tone of President Bush, who said a few days before last November's congressional elections: ‘Absolutely, we're winning. Al Qaeda is on the run.’” [2/21/07]

Associated Press: “Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, said in an interview that Taliban attacks surged by 200% in December, and a U.S. military intelligence officer said that since the peace deal went into effect Sept. 5 the number of attacks in the border area has grown by 300%.” [1/16/07]

Chicago Tribune: “A suicide bombing within earshot of Vice President Dick Cheney at the gate of Bagram Air Base underscored concerns Tuesday about the resurgence of Taliban militants and other Islamic radicals in Afghanistan--the very reason for Cheney's visit.” [2/28/07]

Washington Post: “We know now that allowing al-Qaeda a safe haven can have terrible consequences for U.S. homeland security. And yet the Bush administration appears to be letting the threat develop again. For several months U.S. intelligence officials and independent observers have been telling journalists...that al-Qaeda has established several camps in the Pakistani territory of North Waziristan, along the Afghan border.” [2/21/07]

New York Times: “The new director of national intelligence told members of Congress on Tuesday that senior leaders of Al Qaeda were steadily rebuilding the network’s bases inside Pakistan and that future attacks against the United States could be planned from Pakistan’s remote western mountains.” [2/28/07]

San Diego Tribune: “U.S. officials and analysts said a variety of factors in Pakistan had come together to allow "core al-Qaeda" -- a reference to bin Laden and his immediate circle -- to regain some of their strength. The emergence of a relative haven in North Waziristan and the surrounding area has helped senior operatives communicate more effectively with the outside world via courier and the Internet.” [2/19/07]

New York Times: “As Mr. Scheuer, the former C.I.A. official, reiterated last week: "Al Qaeda is in Afghanistan and Pakistan. If you want to address the threat to America, that's where it is." It's typical of Mr. Bush's self-righteousness, however, that he would rather punt on that threat than own up to a mistake.” [Frank Rich, 2/25/07]

Prepared by the Office of Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, 2/28/07