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Invest in Solidarity

Douglas J. Feith. *Wall Street Journal*. (Eastern edition). New York, N.Y.: Apr 18, 2005. pg. A.18

Abstract (Summary)

The Solidarity Initiative would provide \$400 million for international security assistance: half to defray costs incurred by coalition partners in Iraq and Afghanistan, and half to help partners in the war on terror generally fight terrorism in their own countries. This initiative is decidedly non-unilateralist, which may surprise some. But recognition that allies and partners are indispensable to the war effort has animated U.S. strategy since 9/11. Top U.S. officials have said so for years, though statements to this effect tended to be ignored or underplayed in favor of the thesis that the administration is run by ideologues committed to "go-it-alone-ism."

Full Text (665 words)

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The war on terrorism is a conflict in which the U.S. is at war with foes who are present in countries with whom we're not at war. A key part of U.S. strategy, therefore, is to encourage other states to govern their own territories effectively. Putting other countries in a position to fight instead of, or alongside, us is as sensible now as when FDR introduced Lend-Lease and similar measures during World War II.

That is why the State Department's Solidarity Initiative, which would help our coalition partners cover the costs of fighting terrorism at home and abroad, is so important. Now at risk in the Congressional consideration of the current supplemental appropriations bill, the Initiative would be a valuable part of a strategy that aims to put partner countries in a position to exercise the rights -- and responsibilities -- of sovereignty.

Sovereignty means not just a right to command respect for independence, but also the duty to take responsibility for what occurs on one's territory, and, in particular, to do what it takes to prevent that territory from being used as a base for attacks against others. Like the Taliban regime, a few governments give terrorists safe haven as a matter of policy. But many more do so unwillingly, sometimes unwittingly, because they lack the means to counter terrorism. Most realize that controlling their own territories is in their own interest, which is one reason why the U.S. has enjoyed fairly widespread international cooperation in the war on terror. But in many cases, that effort entails onerous costs for our partners.

As a practical matter, partner governments are best (sometimes uniquely) situated to perform the necessary surveillance on their own soil, make raids and arrests, seize weapons caches, interdict funds transfers and counter local efforts at recruitment. Our partners can often act more efficiently than we can and it can be less costly to enable them to share the burden of war than to assume the full burden ourselves.

Accordingly, building partnership capacity is a high wartime priority. We are working with allies to develop common views on the nature of the threat of terrorist extremism, including in particular the danger of terrorists obtaining WMD. We encourage our partners to fulfill the responsibilities of sovereignty by strengthening the institutions of sound governance in their territories. And when partners need our assistance, we help them to do what is necessary.

This aspect of our strategy includes: (1) training and equipping Afghan and Iraqi security forces, from mobile combat units to local police; (2) providing military and economic aid to coalition partners in Afghanistan and Iraq; (3) counterterrorist train-and-equip efforts in Pakistan, Yemen, the Philippines, and Georgia; (4) educational assistance

programs, to provide alternatives to madrassas; (5) the president's Proliferation Security Initiative to build international capacity to interdict shipments of WMD material and technology; (6) the president's Global Peace Operations Initiative, to help train, sustain and rapidly deploy regional forces for peacekeeping and "peace enforcement," especially in Africa; and (7) the establishment of the new Reconstruction and Stabilization Office at State to help countries develop tools for civil administration.

The Solidarity Initiative would provide \$400 million for international security assistance: half to defray costs incurred by coalition partners in Iraq and Afghanistan, and half to help partners in the war on terror generally fight terrorism in their own countries. This initiative is decidedly non-unilateralist, which may surprise some. But recognition that allies and partners are indispensable to the war effort has animated U.S. strategy since 9/11. Top U.S. officials have said so for years, though statements to this effect tended to be ignored or underplayed in favor of the thesis that the administration is run by ideologues committed to "go-it-alone-ism."

The U.S. cannot win the war on terrorism by military means alone -- or by itself. This is why we hope that Congress will fund the Solidarity Initiative, which reflects enlightened self-interest, both prudent and generous.

Mr. Feith is undersecretary of defense for policy.

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