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Firsthand Accounts of Torture of Iraqi Detainees by the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division

Residents of Fallujah called them "the Murderous Maniacs" because of how they treated Iraqis in detention. They were soldiers of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, stationed at Forward Operating Base Mercury (FOB Mercury) in Iraq. The soldiers considered this name a badge of honor.^[2]

One officer and two non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the 82nd Airborne who witnessed abuse, speaking on condition of anonymity, described in multiple interviews with Human Rights Watch how their battalion in 2003-2004 routinely used physical and mental torture as a means of intelligence gathering and for stress relief. One soldier raised his concerns within the army chain of command for 17 months before the Army agreed to undertake an investigation, but only after he had contacted members of Congress and considered going public with the story.

According to their accounts, the torture and other mistreatment of Iraqis in detention was systematic and was known at varying levels of command. Military Intelligence personnel, they said, directed and encouraged army personnel to subject prisoners to forced, repetitive exercise, sometimes to the point of unconsciousness, sleep deprivation for days on end, and exposure to extremes of heat and cold as part of the interrogation process. At least one interrogator beat detainees in front of other soldiers. Soldiers also incorporated daily beatings of detainees in preparation for interrogations. Civilians believed to be from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) conducted interrogations out of sight, but not earshot, of soldiers, who heard what they believed were abusive interrogations.

All three soldiers expressed confusion on the proper application of the Geneva Conventions on the laws of armed conflict in the treatment of prisoners. All had served in Afghanistan prior to Iraq and said that contradictory statements by U.S. officials regarding the applicability of the Geneva Conventions in Afghanistan and Iraq (see Conclusion) contributed to their confusion, and ultimately to how they treated prisoners. Although none were still in Iraq when we interviewed them, the NCOs said they believed the practices continue.

The soldiers came forward because of what they described as deep frustration with the military chain of command's failure to view the abuses as symptomatic of broader failures of leadership and respond accordingly. All three are active duty soldiers who wish to continue their military careers. A fax letter, e-mail, and repeated phone calls to the 82nd Airborne Division regarding the major allegations in the report received no response.

When the Abu Ghraib scandal broke in April 2004, senior officials in the Bush administration claimed that severe prisoner abuse was committed only by a few, rogue, poorly trained reserve personnel at a single facility in Iraq. But since then, hundreds of other cases of abuse from Iraq and Afghanistan have come to light, described in U.S. government documents, reports of the International Committee of the Red Cross, media reports, legal documents filed by detainees, and from detainee accounts provided to human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch.^[3] And while the military has launched investigations and prosecutions of lower-ranking personnel for detainee abuse, in most cases the military has used closed administrative hearings to hand down light administrative punishments like pay reductions and reprimands, instead of criminal prosecutions before courts-martial. The military has made no effort to conduct a broader

criminal investigation focusing on how military command might have been involved in reported abuse, and the administration continues to insist that reported abuse had nothing to do with the administration's decisions on the applicability of the Geneva Conventions or with any approved interrogation techniques.

These soldiers' firsthand accounts provide further evidence contradicting claims that abuse of detainees by U.S. forces was isolated or spontaneous. The accounts here suggest that the mistreatment of prisoners by the U.S. military is even more widespread than has been acknowledged to date, including among troops belonging to some of the best trained, most decorated, and highly respected units in the U.S. Army. They describe in vivid terms abusive interrogation techniques ordered by Military Intelligence personnel and known to superior officers.

Most important, they demonstrate that U.S. troops on the battlefield were given no clear guidance on how to treat detainees. When the administration sent these soldiers to war in Afghanistan, it threw out the rules they were trained to uphold (embodied in the Geneva Conventions and the U.S. Army Field Manual on Intelligence Interrogation). Instead, President Bush said only that detainees be treated "humanely," not as a requirement of the law but as policy. And no steps were taken to define what humane was supposed to mean in practice.^[4] Once in Iraq, their commanders demanded that they extract intelligence from detainees without telling them what was allowed and what was forbidden. Yet when abuses inevitably followed, the administration blamed only low-ranking soldiers instead of taking responsibility.

These soldiers' accounts show how the administration's refusal to insist on adherence to a lawful, long-recognized, and well-defined standard of treatment contributed to the torture of prisoners. It also shows how that policy betrayed the soldiers in the field—sowing confusion in the ranks, exposing them to legal sanction when abuses occurred, and placing in an impossible position all those who wished to behave honorably.

* * *

The officer and NCOs interviewed by Human Rights Watch say that torture of detainees took place almost daily at FOB Mercury during their entire deployment there, from September 2003 to April 2004. While two of the soldiers also reported abuses at FOB Tiger, near the Syrian border, the most egregious incidents allegedly took place at FOB Mercury. The acts of torture and other cruel or inhuman treatment they described include severe beatings (in one incident, a soldier reportedly broke a detainee's leg with a baseball bat), blows and kicks to the face, chest, abdomen, and extremities, and repeated kicks to various parts of the detainees' body; the application of chemical substances to exposed skin and eyes; forced stress positions, such as holding heavy water jugs with arms outstretched, sometimes to the point of unconsciousness; sleep deprivation; subjecting detainees to extremes of hot and cold; the stacking of detainees into human pyramids; and, the withholding of food (beyond crackers) and water.

According to Army Field Manual 19-4 covering enemy prisoner of war operations, Military Police have responsibility for safeguarding, accounting for, and maintaining captives. The soldiers interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that established procedure was violated by having frontline soldiers guard and prepare detainees for interrogation, instead of speeding detainees to a rear area where they would be looked after by trained Military Police.

Detainees in Iraq were consistently referred to as PUCs. This term was devised in Afghanistan to take the place of the traditional designation of Prisoner of War (POW), after President Bush decided that the Geneva Conventions did not apply there. It carried over to Iraq, even though the U.S. military command and the Bush administration have continually stated that the Geneva Conventions are in effect. Although not all persons captured on a battlefield are entitled to Prisoner of War (POW) status, U.S. military doctrine interprets the Geneva Conventions as requiring that all captured persons be treated as POWs unless and until a "competent tribunal" determines otherwise.^[5]

Detainees at FOB Mercury were held in so-called "PUC tents, which were separated from the rest of the base by concertina wire. Detainees typically spent three days at the base before being released or sent to Abu Ghraib. Officers in the Military Intelligence unit and officers in charge of the guards directed the treatment of detainees. Soldiers told us that detainees who did not cooperate with interrogators were sometimes denied water and given only crackers to eat, and were often beaten. There was little done to hide the mistreatment of detainees: one of the soldiers we interviewed observed torture when he brought newly captured Iraqis to the PUC tents.

The torture of detainees reportedly was so widespread and accepted that it became a means of stress relief for soldiers. Soldiers said they felt welcome to come to the PUC tent on their off-hours to "Fuck a PUC" or "Smoke a PUC." "Fucking a PUC" referred to beating a detainee, while "Smoking a PUC" referred to forced physical exertion sometimes to the point of unconsciousness. The soldiers said that when a detainee had a visible injury such as a broken limb due to "fucking" or "smoking," an army physician's assistant would be called to administer an analgesic and fill out the proper paperwork. They said those responsible would state that the detainee was injured during the process of capture and the physician's assistant would sign off on this. Broken bones occurred "every other week" at FOB Mercury.

"Smoking" was not limited to stress relief but was central to the interrogation system employed by the 82nd Airborne Division at FOB Mercury. Officers and NCOs from the Military Intelligence unit would direct guards to "smoke" the detainees prior to an interrogation, and would direct that certain detainees were not to receive sleep, water, or food beyond crackers. Directed "smoking" would last for the 12-24 hours prior to an interrogation. As one soldier put it: "[the military intelligence officer] said he wanted the PUCs so fatigued, so smoked, so demoralized that they want to cooperate."

The soldiers believed that about half of the detainees at Camp Mercury were released because they were not involved in the insurgency, but they left with the physical and mental scars of torture. "If he's a good guy, you know, now he's a bad guy because of the way we treated him," one sergeant told Human Rights Watch.

The soldiers with whom Human Rights Watch spoke had served as guards in Afghanistan and had observed interrogations at FOB Tiger in Iraq, and said that civilian interrogators at those locations had also used coercive methods against prisoners. These interrogators were always referred to by the U.S. military abbreviation OGA, which stands for "Other Government Agencies." It was assumed that such persons were with the CIA, but because OGA also includes other civilian agencies, the soldiers with whom Human Rights Watch spoke said they could not be sure.

Soldiers generally had less direct access to OGA interrogations, in part because OGA personnel often took detainees to an isolated building and were generally more careful about being seen. But the soldiers who had watched OGA interrogations in Afghanistan said that soldiers applied in Iraq some of the techniques they learned from the OGA, including forced stress positions, sleep deprivation, and exposure. At FOB Tiger, the officer said, he heard the sounds of physical violence coming from rooms where OGA interrogations were being held, but without being present in the room could not know whether the sounds were real or simulated. The soldiers said that civilian interrogators sometimes removed prisoners from detention facilities and took the paperwork that indicated a detainee was being held, apparently "disappearing" that detainee.^[6]

The officer who spoke to Human Rights Watch made persistent efforts to raise concerns he had with superior officers up the chain of command and to obtain clearer rules on the proper treatment of prisoners. When he raised the issue with superiors, he was consistently told to keep his mouth shut, turn a blind eye, or consider his career. When he sought clearer procedures from general officers, he was told merely to use his judgment.

Altogether this officer said he spent 17 months trying to clarify rules for prisoner treatment while seeking a meaningful investigation. He explained at length how he openly had brought his complaint directly up the chain-of-command, from his direct commanding officer, to the division commander, to the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) office, and finally to members of the U.S. Congress. In many cases, he was encouraged to keep his concerns quiet; his brigade commander, for example, rebuffed him when he asked for an investigation into these allegations of abuse. He believes he was not taken seriously until he began to approach members of Congress, and, indeed, just days before the publication of this report he was told that he would not be granted a pass to meet on his day off with staff members of U.S. Senators John McCain and John Warner. He said he was told that he was being naive and that he was risking his career.

Human Rights Watch welcomes reports that the Army has agreed to investigate the abuses discussed in this report. We are concerned however those investigations will only focus on low-level soldiers and officers, instead of looking as far as necessary up the chain of command. We are also concerned that military personnel who come forward to report abuses will find their careers suffer, as their commanding officers implied they would, rather than be commended for doing their duty.

If FOB Mercury is not to become one more in an expanding series of U.S. detention facilities associated with brutality and degrading treatment, further tarnishing the reputation of the U.S. armed forces, the policy failures must be faced head-on and the most senior responsible officials held accountable.

Accordingly, Human Rights Watch urges the following:

The U.S. Department of Defense should conduct a thorough investigation of the allegations made in this report at all levels of the chain of command. Such an investigation must not be limited to lower-ranking enlisted personnel and officers, but must include higher-ranking officers and civilian officials linked to policies that directed, encouraged or tolerated such abuse. Measures should be taken to ensure that soldiers who bring forward credible allegations of detainee abuse are not in any way punished for their actions.

All three accounts below consist of direct quotes from the soldiers. Each of the soldiers was interviewed more than once. For the sake of clarity and to avoid repetition, Human Rights Watch has edited and rearranged specific passages in the accounts.

Sergeant A served in Afghanistan from September 2002 to March 2003 and in Iraq from August 2003 to April 2004. Human Rights Watch spoke with him on four separate occasions in July and August 2005.

Sergeant B served in Afghanistan from September 2002 to March 2003 and in Iraq from August 2003 to April 2004. Human Rights Watch spoke with him on two separate occasions in August 2005.

C is an officer with the 82nd Airborne Division and West Point graduate who served in Afghanistan from August 2002 to February 2003 and in Iraq from September 2003 to March 2004. HRW spoke with him more than two dozen times in July, August, and September 2005. Below are excerpts from those interviews grouped by subject matter (the subject headings were supplied by Human Rights Watch).

At FOB Mercury, he was not in charge of interrogations but saw several interrogations in progress and received regular reports from NCOs on ill-treatment of detainees. He felt strongly that abuses there reflected larger policy confusion about what was permitted, and that the officer corps in particular has a duty to come forward and take responsibility.

The officer also spoke with multiple experts on the U.S. military Law of Land Warfare, his peers, and his soldiers, all of whom, he said, expressed concern that the Geneva Conventions were not being applied in Iraq. He decided to bring his concerns to the Congress since he felt they were not being adequately addressed by his chain of command. Days before this report was published his brigade commander told him to stop his inquiries; his commanding officer told him that he could not leave the base to visit with staff members of Senators McCain and Warner without approval and that approval was being denied because his commanding officer felt the officer was being naive and would do irreparable harm to his career.

The abuses alleged in this report can be traced to the Bush administration's decision to disregard the Geneva Conventions in the armed conflict in Afghanistan.

On February 7, 2002, President George W. Bush announced that the Geneva Conventions concerning the treatment of prisoners did not apply at all to al-Qaeda members or to Taliban soldiers because they did not qualify as members of the armed forces. He insisted that detainees would nonetheless be treated "humanely." Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told journalists that day: "The reality is the set of facts that exist today with the al-Qaeda and the Taliban were not necessarily the set of facts that were considered when the Geneva Conventions was fashioned."

The accounts presented in this report are further evidence that this decision by the Bush administration was to have a profound influence on the treatment of detained persons in military operations in Iraq as well as in the "global war on terror." In short, the refusal to apply the Geneva Conventions to Guantanamo Bay and Afghanistan was to undermine long-standing adherence by the U.S. armed forces to federal law and the laws of armed conflict concerning the proper treatment of prisoners.

Public statements by the Bush administration prior to the February 2002 decision set the tone for effectively rejecting the Geneva Conventions. After the first detainees arrived at Guantanamo in January 2002, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld declared them all to be unlawful combatants who "do not have any rights" under the Geneva Conventions. He said that the United States would "for the most part, treat them in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the Geneva Conventions, to the extent they are appropriate." Later that month, then White House counsel Alberto Gonzales wrote President Bush that the Geneva Conventions provisions on questioning enemy prisoners were "obsolete" and argued, among other things, that rejecting the applicability of the Geneva Conventions "[s]ubstantially reduces the threat of domestic criminal prosecution" of U.S. officials for war crimes. Then Secretary of State Colin Powell and senior military leaders privately objected to the administration's position. Secretary Powell argued that declaring the conventions inapplicable would "reverse over a century of U.S. policy and practice in supporting the Geneva Conventions and undermine the protections of the law of war for our troops, both in this specific conflict and in general."

The administration's policy opened the door for the since-discredited legal theories put forward by the Justice Department in the infamous "torture memo" of August 2002. This memo provided contorted rationalizations for the use of clearly unlawful interrogation methods. The conclusions of these memos were opposed, without success, by senior members of the Judge Advocate General's office in all four services. Air Force Major General Jack Reves wrote in a recently released memo from 2003: "[T]he use of the more extreme interrogation techniques simply is not how the U.S. armed forces have operated in recent history. We have taken the legal and moral 'high-road' in the conduct of our military operations regardless of how others may operate. Our forces are trained in this legal and moral mindset beginning the day they enter active duty."

And Army Major General Thomas Romig wrote that the Justice Department's view on the laws of war "runs contrary to the historic position taken by the United States Government concerning such laws and, in our opinion, could adversely impact [Pentagon] interests worldwide [including by] putting our service personnel at far greater risk and vitiating many of the POW/detainee safeguards the U.S. has worked hard to establish over the past five decades."

According to the 2004 Schlesinger Commission report, coercive interrogation methods approved by Defense Secretary Rumsfeld for use on prisoners at Guantanamo - including the use of guard dogs to induce fear in prisoners, stress techniques such as forced standing and shackling in painful positions, and removing their clothes for long periods - "migrated to Afghanistan and Iraq, where they were neither limited nor safeguarded," and contributed to the widespread and systematic torture and abuse at U.S. detention centers there.

Even after the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq became public, Secretary Rumsfeld continued to dismiss the applicability of the Geneva Conventions. On May 5, 2004, he told a journalist the Geneva Conventions "did not apply precisely" in Iraq but were "basic rules" for handling prisoners. Visiting Abu Ghraib on May 14, Rumsfeld remarked, "Geneva doesn't say what you do when you get up in the morning." In fact, the U.S. armed forces have devoted considerable energy over the years to making the Geneva Conventions fully operational by military personnel in the field. Various U.S. military operational handbooks and manuals, such as Field Manual 27-10 on the Law of Land Warfare and Field Manual 34-52 on Intelligence Interrogation, provide the means for implementing Geneva Conventions provisions, even where those provisions are vague.

Effectively throwing out military manuals based on the laws of armed conflict was a prescription for the abuse that followed. Field Manual 34-52 for instance, does not merely restate the requirements of the Geneva Conventions, but it provides useful advice for soldiers to apply the standards in practice. For instance, the manual states: "Experience indicates that the use of force is not necessary to gain the cooperation of sources for interrogation. Therefore, the use of force is a poor technique, as it yields unreliable results, may damage subsequent collection efforts, and can induce the source to say whatever he thinks the interrogator wants to hear."

Torture and other cruel and inhumane treatment alleged in this report do not fall into the "gray areas" in the law. Common article 3 to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which is accepted as the minimal standard of treatment for persons in custody during any armed conflict, prohibits "at any time and in any place whatsoever, violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture, [and] outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment." Further protections can be found in the fundamental guarantees under article 75 of the Protocol I of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions, which is accepted as reflecting customary laws of armed conflict.

Even if the Geneva Conventions were not applicable, various provisions of the U.S. Uniform Code of Military Justice subjects soldiers to court-martial or disciplinary measures for mistreating prisoners. Applicable UCMJ criminal provisions include article 93 (cruelty and maltreatment), article 128 (assault), and articles 118 and 119 (murder and manslaughter), as well as article 120 (rape and carnal knowledge), article 124 (maiming), and, for officers, article 133 (conduct unbecoming an officer). Superior officers who order the mistreatment of prisoners or who knew or should have known that such mistreatment was occurring and did not take appropriate measures can be prosecuted as a matter of command responsibility.

The treatment of prisoners alleged here also violates U.S. obligations under international human rights law. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment provides that "[n]o exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture." The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which also bans torture and other mistreatment, ensures that the right to be free from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment can never be suspended by a state, including during periods of public emergency.

These standards have largely been incorporated into U.S. law that is applicable to members of the armed services. The War Crimes Act of 1996 (18 U.S.C. 2441) makes it a criminal offense for U.S. military personnel and U.S. nationals to commit war crimes as specified in the Geneva Conventions. The federal anti-torture statute (18 U.S.C. 2340A), enacted in 1994, provides for the prosecution of a U.S. national or anyone present in the United States who, while outside the United States, commits or attempts to commit torture.

Human Rights Watch calls for investigations into all allegations of mistreatment of prisoners in U.S. custody. Appropriate disciplinary or criminal action should be undertaken against all those implicated in torture and other abuse, whatever their rank. As we have reported elsewhere, there is increasing evidence that high-ranking U.S. civilian and military leaders made decisions and issued policies that facilitated serious and widespread violations of the law. The circumstances strongly suggest that they either knew or should have known

that such violations took place as a result of their actions. There is also mounting information that, when presented with evidence that abuse was in fact occurring, they failed to act to stop it.

Human Rights Watch reiterates its call for the appointment of a special counsel to investigate any U.S. officials - no matter their rank or position - who participated in, ordered, or had command responsibility for war crimes or torture, or other prohibited ill-treatment against detainees in U.S. custody.

[1] "Person Under Control" or PUC (pronounced "puck") is the term used by U.S. military forces to refer to Iraqi detainees.

[2] FOB Mercury is located approximately 10 miles east of Fallujah, a center of the insurgency at the time. U.S. forces came under intense attacks in and around Fallujah, placing them under constant pressure and at high risk in daily combat. As soon as the 82nd pulled out of FOB Mercury in April 2004, the U.S. Marines that replaced the 82nd undertook a major offensive against insurgents in Fallujah.

[3] See Human Rights Watch, "Getting Away with Torture?: Command Responsibility for the U.S. Abuse of Detainees," *A Human Rights Watch Report*, April 2005, Section II (A World of Abuse), available at: hrw.org/reports/2005/us0405/4.htm#_Toc101408092. See also, International Committee of the Red Cross, "Report on the Treatment by the Coalition Forces of Prisoners of War and Other Protected Persons, February 2004, available at: <http://www.health-now.org/mediafiles/mediafile50.pdf> (describing detainee abuse in locations across Iraq, including sites in Baghdad, Al-Khaim, Tikrit, Ramadi, and at Abu Ghraib, at p 7); Douglas Jehl and Eric Schmitt, "The Conflict in Iraq: Detainees; U.S. Military Says 26 Inmate Deaths May Be Homicide," *The New York Times*, March 16, 2005 (describing cases of detainee homicide occurring in areas across Afghanistan and Iraq). On Afghanistan-related abuses, see Human Rights Watch, "Enduring Freedom: Abuses by U.S. Forces in Afghanistan," *A Human Rights Watch Report*, March 2004, available at hrw.org/reports/2004/afghanistan0304/; Human Rights Watch to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, open letter, December 13, 2004, available at: www.hrw.org/english/docs/2004/12/10/afghan9838.htm. On Iraq-related abuses, see Major General Antonio M. Taguba, "Article 15-6 Investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade," March 2004 (describing "numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses" at Abu Ghraib prison, constituting "systematic and illegal abuse of detainees," at p. 16); Major George R. Fay, "Article 15-6 Investigation of the Abu Ghraib Detention Facility and 205th Military Intelligence Brigade," (Documenting 44 allegations of war crimes at Abu Ghraib). On Guantanamo-related abuses, see also Human Rights Watch, "Guantanamo: Detainee Accounts," *A Human Rights Watch Backgrounder*, October 2004, <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/usa/gitmo1004/>. See also, Paisley Dodds, "Guantanamo Tapes Show Teams Punching, Stripping Prisoners," *Associated Press*, February 1, 2005; Neil A. Lewis, "Red Cross Finds Detainee Abuse in Guantanamo," *The New York Times*, November 30, 2004.

[4] See Timothy Flanigan, written responses to questions submitted by U.S. Senator Richard Durbin, following Flanigan's confirmation hearing to be Deputy Attorney General of the United States on July 26, 2005. Flanigan, who was Deputy White House Counsel when President Bush issued his order requiring "humane treatment" of detainees, stated: "I do not believe the term 'inhumane' treatment is susceptible to succinct definition." In a further exchange with Senator Durbin, Flanigan stated that: "I am not aware of any guidance provided by the White House specifically related to the meaning of 'inhumane treatment.'"

[5] Maj. J. Berger, Maj Derek Grims, Maj Eric Jensen (Eds.) *Operational Law Handbook*, International and Operational Law Department, Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, Charlottesville Virginia, 2004, p. 26.

[6] According to the U.N. Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (1992), enforced disappearances occur when:

[7] To allow the special prosecutor to have full authority to investigate and prosecute both federal law and Uniform Code of Military Justice violations, the Secretary of Defense should appoint a consolidated convening authority for all armed services, to cooperate with the appointed civilian special prosecutor.

[8] Iranian opposition group Mojahedin-e-Khalq, which has a base in Iraq.

[9] The 82nd Airborne Division provided support to Special Operations Forces during operations in Afghanistan in 2002 and 2003.

[10] Chem lights refer to chemical light sticks. While we do not know the exact composition of the ones allegedly used in Iraq, these lights are typically made of a hydrogen peroxide solution mixed with a phenyl oxalate ester and dye for color. Information available at <http://science.howstuffworks.com/light-stick2.htm>

[11] A GPS, or Global Positioning System receiver, provides the user with location data derived from satellites. This data may be used to target weapons, as the soldier alleges.

[12] The Rangers are "rapidly deployable airborne light infantry organized and trained to conduct highly complex joint direct action operations in coordination with or in support of other special operations units of all Services. Rangers also can execute direct action operations in support of conventional nonspecial operations missions conducted by a combatant commander and can operate as conventional light infantry when properly augmented with other elements of combined arms." Department of Defense Dictionary of Military Terms, available at <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/>

[13] SERE stands for "Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape," and is a military course of training "encompassing those basic skills necessary for world-wide survival; expedite search and rescue efforts; evade capture by hostile forces; resistance to interrogation, exploitation and indoctrination; and escape from detention by enemy forces." Available at <http://www.fasolant.navy.mil/brunssere.htm>

[14] The President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense.

[15] The Schlesinger Report, issued in August 2004, was one of seven U.S. military inquiries into detainee abuse by U.S. forces. The panel that produced the Schlesinger report was chosen by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and determined that leadership failures led to detainee abuse in Iraq.

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