

US soldier's lawyer says Iraq abuse widespread

BAGHDAD, 26 June — Senior military officers were aware of widespread abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US soldiers, and lower-ranking troops should not be made scapegoats, the lawyer for an accused female soldier said on Friday.

Speaking at a hearing in Baghdad which will decide whether Specialist Sabrina Harman will face a court martial, civilian defence lawyer Frank Spinner said soldiers far more senior than Harman had been aware of the abuse at Abu Ghraib prison.

"I don't think the world wants to see someone of her rank and experience taking the fall," he told the judge. "That's not someone who should be court-martialled."

Spinner, who has de-

fended Army clients and won in several high-profile trials, told reporters he had "no doubt that Iraqi detainees have been physically abused on a wide scale that would be beyond the military's ability ever to prosecute".

"The chain of command, they know it too, and the problem is that people won't step up and admit it. To do it now would only subject them to prosecution," he said. "There's no question our Marines and soldiers were put into impossible cir-

cumstances."

The Pentagon says the abuse was only confined to a few low-ranking soldiers at Abu Ghraib. Seven have been charged. But some of their defence lawyers say it was carried out with the knowledge of senior officers and at the request of military intelligence to help soften up inmates for interrogation.

On Thursday, Harman's company commander testified that the top military intelligence officer at Abu Ghraib was present in the

cell block the day an Iraqi prisoner died during interrogation. Harman was photographed grinning beside the corpse in one of the images that sparked worldwide outrage.

Captain Donald Reese, company commander of 372nd Military Police Company, told the hearing held at a US base near Baghdad's airport he first saw the prisoner after he had died.

"I was told that when he was brought in he was combative, that they took him up to the room and during the interrogation he passed," Reese said.

He said the body "was bleeding from the head, nose, mouth". Several officers, including Colonel Thomas Pappas, Commander of the 205th Military Intelligence Brigade and the top intelligence officer at the jail, were discussing what to do.

"I heard Colonel Pappas said 'I'm not going to go down alone for this'," Reese said. He said the body was left locked in a shower room overnight and the next day was fitted with an intravenous drip and taken away. He said this was done to ensure other inmates did not get "upset" over the death.

MNA/Reuters



US soldiers from First Infantry Division search an Iraqi home, as an Iraqi child sleeps on a mat on the outskirts of Baquouba, Iraq on 25 June, 2004.—INTERNET

Italy not to send more troops to Iraq

ROME, 26 June — Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini announced on Thursday that his government has no intention to send more troops to Iraq.

Frattini told reporters that the Italian policy on Iraq remains unchanged, though the recent situation in that country is not stable.

On the security of the Italian forces in Iraq, the minister said the Italian Government has demanded they keep a close watch on surroundings.

Italy backs Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's request that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) help train Iraqi security forces and provide the war-torn country with technological and logistic assistance, Frattini said.

Italy sent 3,000 troops to Iraq after the ouster of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

In accordance with the decree approved by the Italian Cabinet at the beginning of the year, the troops' mission in Iraq will expire on 30 June, but the Italian Government on Tuesday decided to extend the mandate till the end of the year. —MNA/Xinhua

FBI questions man caught with gun, knife at S California airport

LOS ANGELES, 26 June — The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is questioning a man of Middle Eastern descent arrested in a southern California airport for attempting to bring a handgun and a knife onto a flight to Washington, DC, authorities said Friday.

The 65-year-old man was arrested late Thursday at John Wayne Airport, Orange County, after "a routine check of luggage through the X-ray machine revealed a handgun in the luggage," said Orange County Sheriffs Department spokesman Hayward Miller.

A subsequent search of the luggage revealed that there was a loaded handgun, Miller said, adding the suspect also had a knife "of unknown length and type." Miller declined to say where the knife was found.

The man, whose name was withheld pending investigation, was "detained by the Transportation Security Administration and our joint terrorism task force representatives," he added.

The suspect, who has booked a United Airlines flight to the US capital of Washington, DC, was arrested for "attempting to bring a loaded firearm into a secured area of an airport."

The man was later taken to the Santa Ana Men's Central Jail, where he was booked on a "variety of charges, including possession of firearms and bringing firearms into a secured area of an airport," Miller said.

It was unclear "at this point in the investigation" whether the suspect faced terrorism-related charges," according to Miller.

MNA/Xinhua

Bush's visit to Ireland sparks protests

SHANNON (Ireland), 26 June — US President George W Bush flew into Ireland on Friday for a summit with European Union leaders which has sparked protests and rekindled anger over American policy in Iraq and the Middle East.

Bush landed at Shannon Airport, on Ireland's west coast, and was whisked 10 miles up the road to the fairytale setting of Dromoland Castle, a 16th Century turreted mansion set in secluded woodland in County Clare.

There, he and First Lady Laura Bush — on the first US presidential trip to Ireland since the Clintons visited in 1995 — were welcomed by Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency.

The two men strolled around the lush gardens of the castle in conversation

before returning to the building under the shelter of umbrellas as a light shower fell.

The visit has sparked protests in a country where visiting US presidents, from John F Kennedy to Ronald Reagan, have traditionally been feted due to their Irish ancestry and the strong historical links between the two nations.

Some 10,000 people marched through Dublin on Friday night to voice their opposition to Bush, and a smaller protest of around 600 people was staged at Shannon, although demonstrators were kept well away from the presidential entourage.

The focus of the protests is US policy in Iraq and Ireland's own role in the war there. Ahern's government has been heavily criticized at home for allowing US jets to refuel at Shannon en route to the Middle East.

But the Irish Prime Minister says the rift between Europe and the United States, so deep 15 months ago when the US-led coalition invaded Iraq, has been bridged by the recent signing of UN Resolution 1546, which provides for UN members to support the coalition in the Gulf.

"Whatever the arguments

of last year, those arguments are dead," Ahern told Irish state television RTE shortly before Bush landed.

The Dublin march was orderly but feelings ran high.

"The Irish Government has no right to be spending our taxes on entertaining a warmonger like Bush," one of the marchers, Dubliner Sarah O'Kane, told Reuters. "It's a disgrace." —MNA/Reuters

France, Britain warn of incalculable risks of weather changes

PARIS, 26 June — Weather changes will have incalculable consequences on future generations if no steps are taken to control them, four French and British ministers warned Thursday.

In an article published in French Daily *Le Monde* in its Friday edition, Britain's Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and Secretary of State for the Environment Margaret Beckett and France's Foreign Minister Michel Barnier and Ecology Minister Serge Lepeltier warned that climate changes would have an "incalculable" cost on health, the environment and national

economies and would seriously affect future generations.

The collective will of action remains too weak before the serious challenge, they said, adding that scientists forecast a global warming from 1.4 to 5.8 degrees by 2100.

"The heat wave of summer 2003, repeated floods, the advance of deser-

tification, the melting of the ice floes and glaciers are an illustration of the first effects of climate upheaval," they said.

In front of this "major collective risk", the international community and notably industrial nations should hold down emissions of fossil-fuel gases blamed for the rising temperatures, they said. —MNA/Xinhua



Medical staff of an emergency hospital gather around Hemin, A badly injured bodyguard to a culture minister in the Northern Iraq Kurdish regional government is treated following a car bomb blast in Arbil on 26 June, 2004. The car bomb explosion killed one man and wounded 40 people on Saturday as guerillas kept up a bloody drive to derail Iraq's transition to an interim government in four days' time. —INTERNET



An Iraqi woman sits next to her two children including her daughter, Shalaa, far right, who was injured in an explosion in Baghdad, Iraq, on 22 June, 2004.



An Iraqi man climb over the rubble of a destroyed building in Ramadi, Iraq, after a militant attack on 24 June, 2004.

Images of Iraq



A bomb attack killed two Iraqis in the capital of Baghdad, on 22 June, 2004.



An Iraqi son guides his wounded father out of the scene of one of four car bomb explosions, targeting police force in Mosul, on 24 June, 2004.



An Iraqi firefighter arrives to the scene after a car bomb explosion in Iraq's northern city of Mosul, on 24 June, 2004.



Iraqis evacuate a victim from the scene of one of four car bomb explosions, targeting police force in Iraq's northern city of Mosul on 24 June, 2004.



An Iraqi man looks at the destruction of the police station in Ramadi, 110km west of Baghdad, Iraq, after a militant attack on 24 June, 2004.



An Iraqi youth collects belongings from the rubble of his house damaged in one of the five car bomb attacks that hit Mosul, 370 kms north of Baghdad, on 24 June 2004.

New and fast developments throughout Myanmar

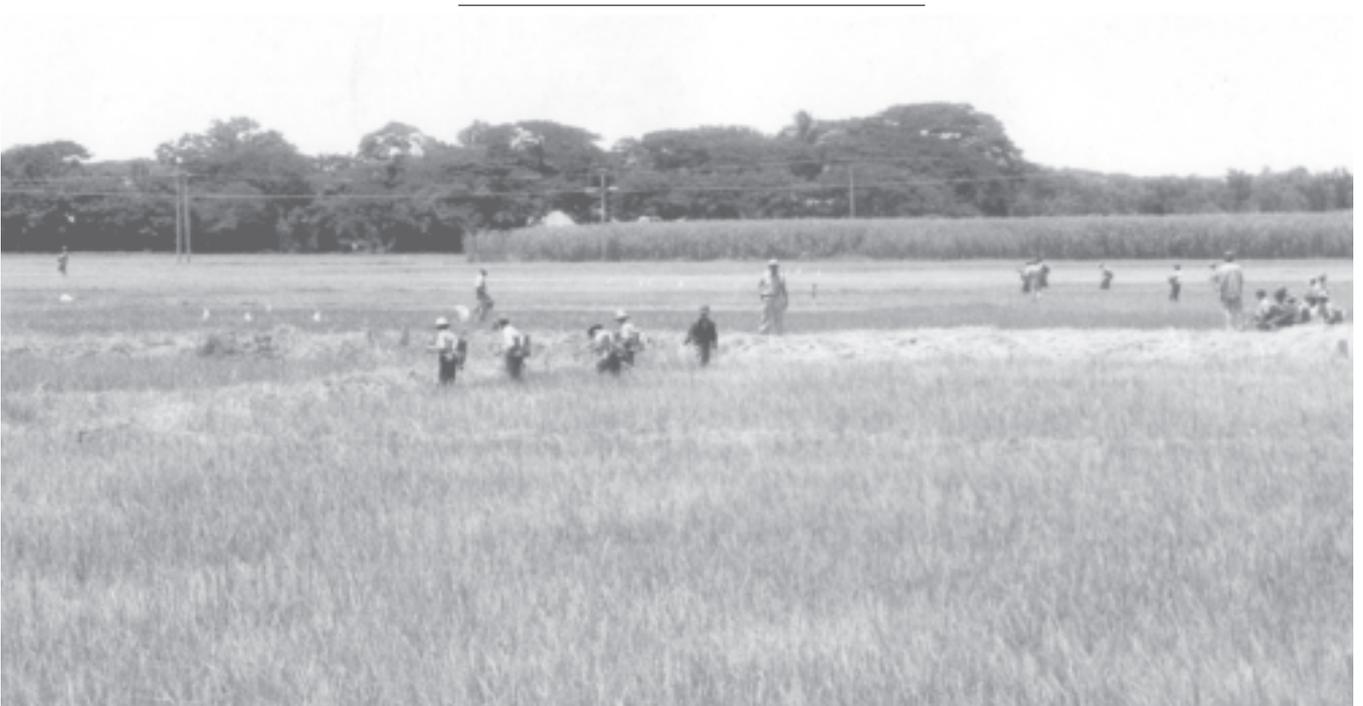
Border and rural area developments



Thaphanseik Dam in Kyunhla Township, Sagaing Division benefits 400,000 acres of monsoon paddy, 45,000 acres of cotton, 172,500 acres of summer paddy and 26,300 acres of sesame.—MYANMA ALIN



A new building of Basic Education Middle School (Branch) in Mokhamu Village, Kyaikto Township, Mon State.—MYANMA ALIN



Monsoon paddy field in Hsamalauk village in Nyaungdon Township, Ayeyawady Division.—MYANMA ALIN



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents medal and certificate of honour to outstanding student in Arts Akha national Maung Soe Paing of Kengtung Township of Shan State (East).—MNA



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents medal and certificate of honour to outstanding student in Arts Kayin national Maung Saw Tin Moe Win of Myainggyingu region of Kayin State.—MNA



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents medal and certificate of honour to outstanding student in Science Akha national Maung Kyi Lin of Kengtung Township of Shan State (East).—MNA



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents medal and certificate of honour to outstanding student in Science Khami national Maung Aung of Pauktaw Township of Rakhine State.—MNA



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents medal and certificate of honour to outstanding student in Maung Aung Thura Thein of Loikaw Township of Kayah State.—MNA



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents medal and certificate of honour to outstanding student in Engineering Kayin national Maung Saw Maukhoukda of Hpa-an Township of Kayin State.—MNA

Government has not only provided equal opprtunities...

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At present, the government is fully engaged in the very important task of developing the country all aspects so that she shall be able to take her rightful place among the nations of the world and be second to none, and so that she shall endure for as long as the world exists. In conformity with these tasks arrangements were made and carried so all the national races of our country develop uniformly and equally and that the national unity shall go from strength to strength. So plans were laid and all necessary arrangements made to fully enhance the capacity of the national races and thus provide them with opportunities to take their share of responsibility for the protection and development of the State.

In these endeavours for the progress and development of the border areas, which have lagged behind, the government has taken the initiative to provide leadership as well as moral and material support for their development and progress. So, it is of great urgency and importance that the borders of the national races and the people of the border areas give their full cooperation and work in concert with the government. What is primarily needed thus, is the development of human resources in the border areas—that is people who have the will and skills, the ability and capacity to work for the progress and development of their locality and region.

Furthermore, in the endeavour to develop a certain region, it is necessary to improve roads and communications, build and install required infrastructure for development, lay the foundations for a thriving economy and raise the health and education standard of the people of the region. The government has systematically drawn up plans and projects, which comprehensively covers all these sectors and work is now in full swing.

So far, the expenditure on projects for the development of border areas and progress of national races totals over 56,000 million kyats and US\$ 550 million in foreign exchange. Due to this, the foundations for development have been laid and the border areas are developing and flourishing with great momentum before our very eyes.

Although achievements were made in growth and development, the foundations that have been so far laid must be further maintained and enhanced for long-term sustainable development. For this, it is necessary to raise the educational standards of the people who are the native inhabitants of these regions. Now is the right time when we should encourage and support the emergence of intellectuals, professionals and technicians from among the people of the respective regions. At the meeting of the Central Committee for the Development of Border Areas and Progress of National Races held in March this year, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe laid down guide-

lines that:

“The development of some border areas can now be seen to surpass the development of even some areas within the country. The border areas are developing fast and efforts must be made to maintain and further raise this momentum. We must continue all endeavours to help the people in these regions to make life secure, raise their quality of life and eliminate poverty. In order to ensure development that is sustainable and enhanced, it is especially necessary to make arrangements for the nurturing and development of human resources”.

In accordance with these guidelines concerted efforts are being made to raise the education standard and develop human resources. As a result new basic education schools have been built and the level of existing schools raised; colleges, degree colleges and universities have been opened and “Three R” Classes have been organized as contingency measures to raise the overall standard of literacy and education in the border regions.

To further nurture human resource development especially for the youths in the various border regions, 26 Training Schools for Development of National Youths from Border Areas, 17 Vocational Schools of Domestic Science for Women and two Nationalities Youth Resource Development Degree Colleges, in Yangon and Mandalay, have been established.

According to official indicators there are now 451 primary students, 1,127 middle school students and 662 high school students, that is, altogether 2,240 students, now attending 26 Training Schools for Development of National Youths from Border Areas. Of these students, those who show promise and have passed the matriculation examinations will be able to continue their studies in higher education in the Nationalities Youth Resources Development Degree Colleges.

For the all-round development of girls in the border regions, 17 Vocational Schools of Domestic Science for Women have been opened in cities near the borders with neighbouring countries. In addition, commodity production entrepreneurs have been set up to provide for their livelihood. With regard to the Nationalities Youth Resources Development Degree Colleges it will be seen that the 141 students who graduated last year, have now been appointed to suitable posts by the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs; the Home Ministry; the Ministry of Electric Power, the Information Ministry; the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and the Construction Ministry and that they are now performing their assigned tasks to promote development of the border areas.

The present intake graduating in the academic year 2003-2004 from the Yangon Nationalities Youth Resources

Development Degree College consist of 38 graduates with arts and science degrees and 23 diplomas in engineering. From the Mandalay Nationalities Youth Resources Development Degree College, 34 students have now obtained arts and science degrees and 20 have obtained engineering diplomas. That is a total of an additional 115 graduates this year to those in previous years.

Moreover, the students of the previous graduating classes of the Nationalities Youth Resources Development Degree Colleges who passed with distinctions in the arts and science and engineering diploma courses, are now attending the B. Tech Engineering courses and Master of Arts and Master of Science (Qualifying) courses in the Yangon and Mandalay degree colleges.

Among those graduated today, 24 are eligible to attend the Master of Arts and Master of Science (Qualifying) courses and 27 are eligible to go on to B. Tech courses. Therefore, before very long, the youths of the national races from the border areas will be qualified to obtain not only Master’s degrees but doctorate degrees as well. These are indeed good signs for the future. These developments show that the border areas, which for many long years had lost their opportunities for pursuit of education have today regained their birthright. Furthermore they have now within their grasp, in a short period, excellent prospects for higher education and thus become qualified and educated intellectuals, professionals and technicians. It can clearly be seen that foundations have been laid for equal opportunities for education for the youths of the border areas.

The intellectuals, professionals and technicians who have benefited from the Educational Plans and Programmes of Border Area Development, (including today’s graduates), are fully aware that they face no employment difficulties; for the government has not only provided equal opportunities for education but also created job and career opportunities for them. I would like the graduates of today to clearly understand that the national race youths who have graduated from the Nationalities Youth Resources Development Degree Colleges have now all returned to their native regions in supervisory and administrative positions in the various educational, administrative, agricultural and construction sectors to lead and participate in the ongoing development activities in their regions. It is indeed necessary to understand that they were provided with these golden opportunities as an integral part of their graduation.

That is why I would like to urge today’s graduates to avail themselves of these opportunities and find new ways and means to promote the welfare and development of his or her village or region; to establish good and friendly relations with the local people, find out their needs and fulfil them to the best of your ability. The development of the border areas will mean a higher standard of living and a better quality of life for the people.

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