

## Bush Voices 'Disgust' at Abuse of Iraqi Prisoners

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**W**ASHINGTON, April 30 — President Bush said Friday that he was deeply disgusted by reports that Iraqi detainees were abused by American military police, and he vowed that any soldier found to be at fault would be punished.

Mr. Bush spoke in the White House Rose Garden on a day that photographs circulated around the globe showing American soldiers smiling, laughing and holding their thumbs up as naked Iraqi detainees were forced into sexually abusive and humiliating positions.

The photographs drew particular anger in the Arab world just as the American military in Iraq was seeking to pacify a rising insurgency and gain the trust of a larger percentage of the local population ahead of passing sovereignty to a new government in Baghdad on June 30.

"I shared a deep disgust that those prisoners were treated the way they were treated," Mr. Bush said. "Their treatment does not reflect the nature of the American people." He added that the actions of a handful of soldiers should not taint the tens of thousands who serve honorably in Iraq. Mr. Bush emphasized that the investigation into the case was moving ahead. "I think they'll be taken care of," he said.

The American military in Iraq announced on March 20 that six members of an Army Reserve military police unit assigned to Abu Ghraib prison west of Baghdad faced charges of assault, cruelty, indecent acts and maltreatment of detainees.

Inquiries are also under way into whether any commanders should be held responsible for the actions of their subordinates, as well as a far-reaching administrative review of policies and procedures at all of the prisons controlled by occupation forces in Iraq. A defense lawyer for one of the soldiers facing charges has indicated that he plans to claim that the military police were following instructions to break down the resistance of the detainees. But senior military commanders have said that there is no excuse for the behavior. They are withholding further comment because the matter is under investigation.

The military is considering action against Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, the senior officer at the prison when the abuse occurred against 20 detainees in November and December. Pentagon officials said Friday that no final action had been determined. General Karpinski and other officers who are the subjects of the inquiry are now in a stage of the military legal process where they are allowed to write responses to the investigators' findings. General Karpinski has left Baghdad, part of the scheduled rotation of troops for Iraq. The acts of sexual humiliation and other abuses were documented in photographs first broadcast this week by the CBS News program "60 Minutes II." In one photograph, naked Iraqi men are stacked in a human pyramid, one with a slur in English written on his skin. In another, a prisoner stands on a box, with his head covered and wires attached to his body. The program said the detainee was told that he



CBS News

A prisoner at a Baghdad prison was shown on the CBS News program "60 Minutes," standing on a box attached to wires.

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would be electrocuted if he fell. Other photographs show male prisoners simulating having sex.


The images received heavy coverage over two satellite networks that strongly influence public opinion in the Arab world, Al Jazeera, which broadcasts from Qatar, and Al Arabiya, based in Dubai.

Al-Jazeera, which opened its news bulletins with the story for part of the day, described the conduct of the American soldiers as "unethical and inhuman." Speaking to Nabil Khoury, a spokesman for the State Department in London, the Jazeera anchorwoman spoke of criticism leveled at Jazeera by the Bush administration, which has accused the network of broadcasting deliberately inflammatory material. She asked if CBS News would face similar censure. Mr. Khoury demurred, saying the prison incident was regrettable and would be thoroughly investigated, while acknowledging that it would not help the image of Americans in the Arab world.




The photos were carried by newspapers in France, Italy and Britain, and on television in Turkey. While some newspapers reported on the photographs in fairly straightforward fashion, La Repubblica, a left-leaning Italian daily, used one of the photos to illustrate a package that included a front-page editorial critical of the American-led war. "The parallel worlds of political fiction and real war, of optimistic propaganda and terrifying news, continue to travel without crossing in the imaginary universe of George Bush," the editors wrote. "But there is nothing imaginary, unfortunately, in the little world of prison horrors that one of his generals created in the cruelest depths of Saddam's Iraq."

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In Britain, The Guardian ran a front-page photo that showed an Iraqi man in a black hood and robe standing on a box, arms outstretched. The headline, which ran the full width of the newspaper, read, "U.S. military in torture scandal." The Times of London ran a similar front-page photo, under the headline, "Scandal over humiliation of Iraqi prisoner." Inside, it published several more photos, including one of a female soldier, apparently an American, pointing and grinning at the genitalia of a naked Iraqi. (In the photo, the genitalia were blurred.)

Reuters reported that Britain began an investigation on Friday into allegations that British troops had abused Iraqi prisoners.

In the United States, there was little consensus among news organizations on whether to reproduce the photos. While The Daily News of New York, The Baltimore Sun, Newsday and The Washington Post each published at least one photo on Thursday or Friday, other newspapers, including The New York Post and USA Today, did not. "If there's a handful of U. S. soldiers who've mistreated prisoners," said Col Allan, The New York Post's editor in chief, "I don't think that should be allowed to reflect poorly on the 140,000 men and women over there who are risking their lives and doing a good job."

Bill Keller, the executive editor of The New York Times, said the newspaper's news desk had initially held off on publishing the photos, only because it "could not, in the time available, ascertain their authenticity."

The Daily News of New York published one of the photos, of a hooded man with his hands attached to electrical wires, on page 22 on Thursday. "If we want to be more than mere propaganda sheets," said the newspaper's editorial director, Martin Dunn, "then surely there is a duty to show them."

For The Baltimore Sun, which published photos on Thursday and Friday, the story hit close to home: several of the reservists involved are believed to be from a police company based in Cumberland, Md.

"Without the photos it's hard for the reader, if they hadn't seen the show, to understand what happened or what was going on," said Jim Preston, assistant managing editor for photography for The Sun.

As outrage swirled around the globe, much of the military's official response on Friday was a repeat of steps already taken, and previously announced. In Baghdad, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, deputy director of operations for the coalition military, said a new senior officer, Maj. Gen. Geoffrey D. Miller, was improving conditions at detention facilities. The assignment of General



CBS News

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Miller as deputy commander for detainee operations in Iraq was announced by the Pentagon on March 22, two days after the initial charges in the case were disclosed. Military investigators are also looking at whether any of the civilian interrogators should be held accountable for the abuse at Abu Ghraib.




Senator John Kerry, Mr. Bush's Democratic challenger, issued a statement Friday saying: "I am disturbed and troubled by the evidence of shameful mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners. We must learn the facts and take the appropriate action.

"As Americans, we must stand tall for the rule of law and freedom everywhere," Mr. Kerry added. "But we cannot let the actions of a few overshadow the tremendous good work that thousands of soldiers are doing every day in Iraq and all over the world."

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