



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: September 9, 2004

Contact: Carrie Sloan or Harald Stavenas (202) 225-2539

Opening Statement of Chairman Hunter *Hearing on the Report by Generals Kern, Fay, and Jones*

WASHINGTON, DC—This morning we heard from Secretaries Schlesinger and Brown on the results of their independent review of DOD detainee operations. This afternoon, we are fortunate to have as our witnesses, three general officers with decades of military service who have lent their experience to yet another exhaustive examination of what went wrong with military detainee operations in Iraq. They are:

General Paul J. Kern
Procedure 15 Appointing Authority

Lieutenant General Anthony R. Jones
Additional Procedure 15 Investigating Officer

Major General George R. Fay
Investigating Officer

On January 19, 2004, within days of viewing evidence of the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez ordered a formal administrative investigation of operations at the prison. Most of us are now familiar with the resulting report by Major General Antonio Taguba.

When General Sanchez reviewed those findings, he also requested another inquiry into military intelligence activities at the prison. Major General Fay was appointed on March 31, but General Kern replaced General Sanchez as the appointing officer on June 16 and appointed Lieutenant General Jones as the investigating officer in order to continue the investigation up the chain of command. I believe this step is further proof that the military is committed to getting to the truth of these issues and letting the chips fall where they may.

As we move forward, these are important facts to remember. The military started the investigations. The military first reported them to the public. The military took aggressive steps to identify any systemic problems that contributed to abuse. The Department of Defense took immediate steps to correct problems as it discovered them. And today, the Department is revising its doctrine, training, and policies in order to ensure that detainees are treated in a manner consistent with our values and our obligations. That's the image of the military that must replace the faces of a few individuals photographed disgracing their uniforms, in violation of their orders, their training, our policies, and our values.

If you read the reports by Generals Fay, Jones, and Kern carefully enough, you'll see a Department wrestling mightily with the challenges of honoring our values while developing intelligence methods capable of saving American lives. The continual review of interrogation techniques for use at Guantanamo Bay during the winter of 2002-2003 suggests a Department that is determined to get it right, even if it means continually revising its policies. The sheer quantity of criminal investigations and the speed with which they were initiated further demonstrates the Department's commitment to ensuring that justice is done when the rules are broken.

With this second hearing, we are going to spend considerable time today focusing on what went wrong and why. These incidents are of importance and deserve our attention.

However, I believe it is even more important that this issue not overshadow the honorable service being performed by the hundreds of thousands of Americans that have and continue to selflessly serve in Iraq and Afghanistan in the fight against global terrorism. Their efforts to bring freedom and democracy to these troubled parts of the world deserve our continued attention, commitment and support. I trust that all my colleagues will join me in turning our attention to these pressing matters in the days ahead as we work together to ensure that our men and women in harms way have the necessary support and resources to successfully carry out their difficult mission.

###

<http://armedservices.house.gov/>