

THURSDAY, JULY 28, 2005

Bush's Idea Of Good Iraqisby Michael in New York on [7/28/2005 08:45:00 PM](#)

A sad story in the LA Times [links a National Guard company from that state to some potentially criminal activity](#).

Members of three of four active companies in the battalion are being investigated for their alleged role in mistreating Iraqi prisoners and engaging in inappropriate financial agreements with local shopkeepers, according to military officials.

The most egregious case of detainee abuse reported so far occurred after a June insurgent attack, when soldiers allegedly tortured Iraqi detainees with an electric stun gun. At least one instance of abuse was recorded on video, military sources said.

As many as 17 soldiers are under investigation for mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners and at least six others have been charged with dereliction of duty. Lt. Col. Patrick Frey, the battalion commander, has been suspended pending the investigation.

Imagine that: suspending someone from duty while they're under the cloud of a serious investigation.

Now, every soldier is responsible for their own actions and should be held accountable. But I also blame Bush for repeatedly making clear that insurgents and terrorists don't deserve the same basic dignity as "real" people. Bush is the one who has rewarded virtually every top official connected with the prisoner abuse scandals. How can he pretend that he also disapproves of torture?

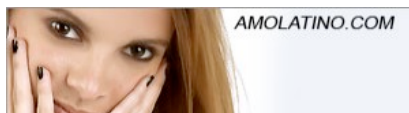
But what really struck me about this story was the infamous Wolf Brigade, an Iraqi unit that worked with that California Guard unit.

The [Wolf] brigade is both loved and feared in Iraq for its attacks on alleged insurgent hide-outs and the dramatic televised confessions those offensives produced.

But Sunni human rights advocates charged that the brigade elicited the confessions by beating their captives. A woman interviewed by The Times this year said brigade officers whipped her sister with telephone wires to force her to confess to terrorist acts and to accuse her male associates of raping her and of having homosexual relations.

The detainee, Khalida Mashhandani, was later released after it was determined that her confessions had been coerced.

Despite its controversial reputation, the Wolf Brigade is regarded by U.S. military officials as the gold standard for Iraqi security forces.

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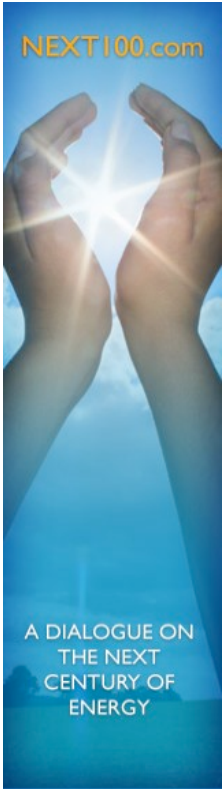
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