

Abu Ghraib, 2004: Doctrinal Confusion of American Military Police

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The Abu Ghraib prison scandal in 2004 was one of the worst and most widely talked-about cases of prisoner abuse by American forces during any war. This scandal had lasting implications for the War in Iraq and America's War on Terror as a whole. This essay examines what failures in military doctrine led to such egregious abuses and how those failures have or have not been remedied.

ABU GHRAIB CATCHES THE PUBLIC EYE

On April 28, 2004, *60 Minutes II* aired a shocking segment. They broadcasted photographs of naked, beaten, and tortured prisoners from an American-held prison in Iraq: Abu Ghraib. The most iconic photograph shows a hooded detainee standing on a box, arms outstretched, electrical wires hooked up to his fingers. In some photos, grinning American soldiers posed with the detainees, giving the thumbs-up sign. The effect was harrowing; unfortunately, the report did not end there. The segment briefed the American public on the extensive abuses and human rights violations leveled on these Iraqi detainees, 90% of whom, as the American people would later find out, were arrested by mistake (Red Cross: Iraq abuse 'tantamount to torture' 2004). Prisoners were raped, sodomized, kicked, and electrocuted. Reports came out of prisoners being held in humiliating or stress positions, having phosphoric acid poured on them, and being forced to masturbate in front of American soldiers and other detainees (Leung 2004).

The 2004 exposé of the atrocities committed at Abu Ghraib prison seriously injured the reputation of the American military and its venture in Iraq (Whitney 2004). According to General Stanley McChrystal, Abu Ghraib was "the thing that hurt [the American forces] more than anything else in the war in Iraq" (2013). General McChrystal commanded forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, served as vice director of the Joint Staff at the beginning of the Iraq War, and was head of Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) for five years. The Joint Staff advises the President, Secretary of Defense, National Security Council, and Homeland Security Council on military matters; JSOC studies and conducts special operations—one of their jobs is to ensure standardization of equipment and training of special operations forces to ensure that operations go smoothly. McChrystal's experience on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq, coupled with his experience as an adviser in military strategy lends great weight

to his thoughts on Abu Ghraib. Furthermore, along with eroding positive American sentiment for the war, the Abu Ghraib scandal did little to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Iraqis later in the course of the war. Contrarily, but unsurprisingly, the revelation inflamed the Iraqi insurgency and led to an influx of foreign fighters. The American government tried to sell the invasion of Iraq on the premise that it was a moral decision made to wrest the Iraqi people from the atrocities of Saddam Hussein's regime. That sentiment rang hollow when American soldiers were torturing Iraqis in the very same prison where Saddam Hussein had leveled similar abuses (McChrystal 2013).

Though many theories have been offered on what caused American soldiers to treat detainees in such a way—Abu Ghraib was a pressure cooker that would lead anyone to snap, the soldiers that committed the abuse were simply 'bad apples'—it is ultimately unclear what convergence of factors, conclusively, led to the prisoner abuse and torture that resulted. However, what is clear is that measures could have been taken that would have reduced the chances of such abuse. What is clear is that the Abu Ghraib scandal resulted in the indictment of seven military police (MPs) and two military intelligence (MI) soldiers (Kirk 2004). In one military investigation of the incident, forty-four allegations of abuse are listed. Military police were implicated thirty-two times, while military intelligence soldiers were implicated twenty-five times (Jones and Fay 2004). Yet the role of the military police is not to interrogate prisoners. Contrarily, MPs are supposed to take care of prisoners (Karpinski 2005a). Interrogation is a role reserved for military intelligence (Taguba 2004; Jones and Fay 2004). As such, why were military police found guilty for the bulk of the crimes committed at Abu Ghraib? What pushed MPs into interrogation roles, saddling them with jobs they were unequipped to execute?

The key argument of this essay is that poor leadership led MPs to occupy positions which they

should never have occupied. The lack of leadership high on the chain of command led to a lack of clear and pertinent doctrine for MPs regarding their relationship with MI. Soldiers were poorly trained even when doctrine did exist; their leaders, like BG Karpinski, did not point them to the correct doctrine (Jones and Fay 2004; Schlesinger et al 2004; Taguba 2004; Karpinski 2005a). I will argue that if leadership had been stronger on every level, doctrine would have been more well-defined as to the rights of detainees as well as the duties of military police and military intelligence. MPs would most likely not have committed the abuses carried out at Abu Ghraib, and soldiers who were not explicitly involved in abuse may have prevented those who were from committing abuse.

SOURCES

The main source of research available on the MP/MI operations at Abu Ghraib is in the form of investigative reports undertaken by the United States government after the scandal broke. The Jones and Fay reports investigate the 205th MI brigade. The Taguba report specifically investigates the 800th MP Brigade (to which the 372nd Military Company of the Army Reserves was attached—soldiers from both units were later charged for crimes). The Jones/Fay and Taguba Reports are official Army Regulation Article 15-6 military inquiries. Another such report, the Ryder report, is referenced within other sources but remains classified. The Schlesinger report, or the Final Report of the Independent Panel to Review DoD Detention Operations, is a more overarching investigation filed by the Department of Defense. The Schlesinger report encompasses violations committed among military intelligence and military police. Within all reports are first-hand testimonies from detainees and soldiers. Such reports, while incredibly informative, can be considered problematic because, according to some leaders, the reports were designed to look down the chain of command, not up it. As such, the reports are viewed as especially damning to lower-level officials and soldiers because they aimed to divert attention from and protect higher-ups like then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (Schlesinger and Fowler 2004; Sanchez 2009). There are also accounts from the leaders of these soldiers, specifically memoirs from Janis Karpinski, brigadier general (BG) in charge of the 800th MP Brigade, and her boss, lieutenant general (LTG) Ricardo Sanchez. BG Karpinski also was interviewed for a Frontline documentary, *The Torture Question*. While LTG Sanchez and BG Karpinski were highly-ranked military officials and can thus comment on military workings and structure with a level of authority, the

memoirs cannot always be taken as completely honest and factual testimonies of the workings of Abu Ghraib. BG Karpinski and LTG Sanchez's books often contradict their other sources of testimony or others' accounts of them, which is a natural outcome since they were both targets of federal investigations and blame after the scandal. Their testimonies were mostly helpful to demonstrate the lack of coherent and harmonious command within the prison. BG Karpinski's memoir also provides, to some degree, a perspective of the day-to-day operations of Abu Ghraib. Furthermore, former Colonel Ted Spain, the retired commander of the 18th MP Brigade who opened Abu Ghraib up for detention operations, wrote a book entitled *Breaking Iraq: The Ten Mistakes that Broke Iraq*. The text offers the on-the-ground perspective of yet another leader at Abu Ghraib who was confused about doctrine and procedure. I also attempted to limit analytical sources but found Mark Danner's *Torture and Truth*¹ particularly helpful.

EXISTING MP DOCTRINE?

The American military acknowledges that existing doctrine in 2004 was insufficient. The MP field manual was rewritten after Abu Ghraib. FM 3-19.40, the 2001 manual for MP before Abu Ghraib, spoke inadequately to what the role of MPs was. In this manual, MP are simply told that they are responsible for "provisions for captive or detainee interrogation;" insofar as clarifying a chain of command or SOPs between MP and MI, the manual states that "coordination is made between MP and MI to establish operating procedures that include accountability," but no procedures are outlined or even suggested (Department of the Army 2001). This demonstrates the doctrinal void that led to the confused chain of command at Abu Ghraib. Field manuals have changed a few times since Abu Ghraib. The current manual, FM 3-39, explicitly states that "interrogations... are executed by trained intelligence personnel. Military police are prohibited from interrogating detainees... Only trained interrogators or investigators are authorized to interrogate or interview detained or imprisoned individuals." Furthermore, it outlines the role of military police in regards to intelligence. MP "may provide intelligence information obtained through pas-

¹ Mark Danner's *Torture and Truth* contained a concentrated source for most investigative reports/inquiries (Jones/Fay, Taguba, Schlesinger) as well as interviews with detainees and soldiers. I have cited the reports individually (as opposed to "qtd. in Danner" but Danner's book provided a concentrated resource. When I cite Danner personally, it is a reference to his analysis present in the first 73 pages. Similarly, *The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib*, edited by Karen J. Greenberg and Joshua L. Dratel, provided a concentrated source for interviews, official memos, and military inquiries. The scant analysis is not quoted in this essay, but the raw materials it provided were helpful.

sive collection,” but they are repeatedly forbidden from interrogating prisoners (Department of Army 2013). The military acknowledged the doctrinal shortfalls of MP field manuals and changed them to be clearer. Their acknowledgment reinforces the claim that in 2004, doctrine was inadequate, stemming from a lack of leadership. When leaders realized how the doctrinal void played out at Abu Ghraib, they changed the doctrine. If military leaders had foreseen the consequences of such hazy instruction, the mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib may have been avoided. In this essay, I will examine the effects of this ‘doctrinal void’ as it applied to operations at Abu Ghraib and show that, even in the presence of this ‘doctrinal void,’ leaders at the prison did little to nothing to step up and guide their soldiers.

SNAFU: THE LACK OF MILITARY TRAINING AND RESOURCES AT ABU GHRAIB

Even before the ‘blurring of the lines’ and the push into the interrogation room, the scant military police were inadequately trained to carry out their explicit jobs at Abu Ghraib. Many soldiers at the prison were from the Army Reserves and had received little training. Soldiers did not adhere to Basic Army Doctrine, and they used unofficial tactics for processing detainees. Soldiers did not adequately account for detainees’ well-being in operational journals as they should have. Journals were not professionally filled out—they included “flippant” comments (Taguba 2004; 24). Roll-calls for soldiers were not performed as often as mandated and such calls were given non-standard names (“‘roll-ups... ‘call-ups’” [Taguba 2004; 24]). Soldiers even counted detainees in a non-standard way. There are many more instances of the lack of professionalism and adherence to basic military doctrine within the units at Abu Ghraib. Only two MP detention battalions (one in Afghanistan, one in Kuwait) received detention-specific training. The detention training which the 800th MP Brigade was supposed to receive was canceled for various reasons. Furthermore, the military police units received no Iraq-specific training. Leadership should have directed soldiers towards existing doctrine and ensured proper training. It is also generally acknowledged that existing doctrine at the time of deployment failed to address detention procedures and administrative responsibilities specific to Abu Ghraib’s environment and failed to clearly define the MP/MI relationship and resulting chain of command (Jones and Fay 2004; Schlesinger et al 2004). In the Taguba report, there are extensive testimonies from soldiers that explicitly claim that there were no relevant existing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for military

police (2004). The lack of adequate doctrine also shows a failure of leadership; field manuals and SOPs should have clearly addressed the chain of command.

American forces also lacked resources and were incredibly understaffed. Abu Ghraib prison lacked sufficient interrogators and interpreters because initially the prison was not designed to hold security detainees. Forces did not receive efficient equipment when they requested it (ex. food, communications, protective gear, hygienic products for detainees), and they rarely received any equipment in a timely manner (Schlesinger and Fowler 2004; Karpinski 2005b). Part of the blame for the lack of resources was laid on LTG Sanchez, who did not work to ensure their arrival. Part of the blame was also laid on BG Karpinski, who was criticized for not allocating her MPs efficiently (Sanchez 2009).

LEADERSHIP (OR LACK THEREOF) AT ABU GHRAIB: PRE-ABUSE

There was friction between the MI and MP leadership—Colonel Thomas Pappas, commander of the 205th MI Brigade, and BG Janis Karpinski, respectively. Responsibility was not obviously defined, and the leaders of each unit did not attempt to coordinate with each other. There was even an issue about the delineation of responsibility for military working dogs (Taguba 2004). This general discord was worsened when, on November 19, 2003, Combined Joint Task Force-7 (CJTF-7), the military group organizing American force operations in Iraq, issued a Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) which made the commander of the MI Brigade (COL Pappas, at the time) leader of all units at Abu Ghraib, including MP units. Such an order contradicts doctrine, because military intelligence and military police occupy separate functions and should not be run by a commander of only one unit. The FRAGO left soldiers even more perplexed as to whom they should report (Taguba 2004; 38). The Jones and Fay report holds that the FRAGO did not contribute to the abuse because abuses had begun before the FRAGO was issued. The report claims that regardless of the FRAGO, COL Pappas did not really have command of the MPs, or he would have been able to better control them in day-to-day tasks (Jones and Fay 2004). This does not exonerate the CJTF-7 FRAGO; the claim just further proves the lack of authority at Abu Ghraib. The Jones/Fay claim is especially weakened when the Taguba and Schlesinger reports explicitly state that the FRAGO exacerbated leadership tensions (2004). If an official memo from CJTF-7 does not grant the responsibilities and power it intended, then why would soldiers have any faith in their leadership? Later in

this essay, I will further contend against the argument that the FRAGO had no effect on detainee abuse. The overarching lack of leadership and hazy chain of command, which the FRAGO contributed to, did contribute to the abuse.

The 800th MP Brigade also had an unclear chain of command before the issue of the FRAGO. At the beginning of the invasion of Iraq, the brigade was under the Central Command's Combined Forces Land Component Commander (CFLCC). Once the "major combat phase" of the war was over, CFLCC went back to Fort McPherson, Georgia, and CJTF-7 was created. However, the 800th MP Brigade was still officially under CFLCC while it worked, in practice, for CJTF-7. As a result, it was unclear who BG Karpinski should report to when the unit needed resources or guidance. Combined with the fact that MI reported to CJTF-7 Director for Intelligence and the confusing FRAGO, there was no single person to whom soldiers could report (Schlesinger et al 2004; Schlesinger and Fowler 2004).

"GITMO-IZATION" FURTHER CONFUSES MP/MI RELATIONSHIP

All of these doctrinal problems were further complicated by MG Geoff Miller's visit to Abu Ghraib in August 2003. By this time, CJTF-7 realized that the soldiers at Abu Ghraib were not adequately trained to perform interrogations and elicit intelligence from the prisoners. With intelligence becoming an ever-more crucial need for the military due to a spike in soldier casualties in 2003, CJTF-7 attempted to fix the lack of training and the lack of a coherent structure for the MP/MI relationship (Schlesinger and Fowler 2004). MG Miller was sent in by the Department of Defense to examine "current theater ability to exploit internees rapidly for actionable intelligence" (Jones and Fay, 2004; 57). According to LTG Sanchez, he instructed Miller to "identify problems, train our interrogators, establish priorities [and] provide sample operating procedures;" LTG Sanchez also explains in his memoir that he gave Miller the green light to fix any problems he saw without having to ask for permission (2009; 272). His suggestions were harsh, according to Karpinski. She claims that MG Miller explained to her soldiers that they should "treat the prisoners like dogs. If [soldiers] treat them, or if they believe that they're any different than dogs, you have effectively lost control of your interrogation from the very start" (Karpinski 2005b). He then proceeded to explain what the policies were at Guantanamo Bay for dealing with prisoners (i.e. making them wear different-colored jumpsuits, leg irons, etc). MG Miller's

advice naturally stemmed from his work as commander of Guantanamo Bay, where the Geneva Conventions do not apply. While according to some reports MG Miller made sure to mention that Guantanamo prisoners' rights under Geneva differed from those held at Abu Ghraib, his GTMO background caused some confusion about the application of Geneva, which I will address later. MG Miller left behind a set of SOPs which established an MP/MI relationship similar to that at Guantanamo Bay. Instead of filling two distinct roles, military police and military intelligence were linked together. MPs were to support MI and "set the conditions" for smooth interrogations (Jones and Fay 2004; Schlesinger et al 2004; Taguba 2004; Karpinski 2005a). This model was successful at GTMO, but, as BG Karpinski claims to have pointed out and as the Schlesinger report later observed, GTMO has roughly a 1:1 ratio of MPs to generally compliant detainees, while Abu Ghraib had a ratio of 1:75 with less compliant prisoners. In addition, the Guantanamo Bay facilities are generally secure; Abu Ghraib, as shown, was not (Karpinski 2005a). MG Ryder, as noted in his report, disagreed with MG Miller's recommendation for the MP/MI structure, favoring distinct separation of duties. However, as LTG Sanchez noted, "this was an age-old doctrinal and training issue that had never been adequately resolved" (2009; 274). Furthermore, though according to my sources MG Miller did not explicitly recommend that MPs 'soften up' prisoners for interrogations, there is clear evidence that such tactics increased after Miller's visit. "Military Intelligence (MI) interrogators... actively requested that military police guards set physical and mental conditions for favorable interrogation of witnesses," states the Taguba report (2004; 294). When MPs performed as MI asked, they were lauded due to the resulting quick exploitation of intelligence. Many other soldiers testified that they were asked to "loosen [detainees] up" (SGT Javal Davis qtd. in Taguba 2004; 295) by keeping detainees awake, taking away their amenities (mattresses, clothing), and so on. According to BG Karpinski and LTG Sanchez, after Miller's visit there was increased pressure to produce intelligence. Sergeant Roger Brokaw, an interrogator at Abu Ghraib, said that there were "quotas on interrogating so many people per week" (Kirk 2005). Karpinski cites that Col. Thomas Pappas was the target of increased pressure from LTG Sanchez to produce intelligence (2005). Such pressure led to harsher tactics and the instruction for MPs to 'soften up' detainees. A telling email from an MI captain encompasses the new aggressive mindset: "The gloves are coming off gentlemen regarding these detainees, [my superior] has made it clear that we want these individu-

als broken. Casualties are mounting and we need to start gathering info to help protect our fellow soldiers from any attacks. I thank you for your hard work and your dedication. MI ALWAYS OUT FRONT!” (Danner 2003; 33)

The gloves were off; MI needed to produce results. Leaders like LTG Sanchez and Col Thomas Pappas—and furthermore, officials in the Department of Defense—failed to realize that pressuring the MI/MP units for information would be counter-productive. Increased pressure would only lead to increased anxiety to perform on the part of MI/MP units. Since these units had exhausted all viable intelligence-gathering options, they would simply turn to harsher methods. According to Col. Ted Spain, “a close examination of all the facts surrounding the abuse and torture that occurred at the prison clearly illustrate that Lt. General Sanchez, through Major General Geoff Miller, created an organization structure and chain of command that at the very least was vague and at its worst, intentionally designed to insulate military intelligence from criticism for its harsh interrogation techniques, while assigning the blame to the 800th MP Brigade” (Spain and Turchie 2013). Sanchez pressured Pappas for intelligence but did not effectively provide for a clear chain of command which would protect detainees.

MPs did not question the abuse they saw carried out by MI, because they “assumed that if [MI soldiers] were doing something out of the ordinary or outside the guidelines, someone would have said something” (SGT Javal S. Davis qtd. in Taguba 2004; 295). This is yet another testament to the sore lack of leadership at Abu Ghraib, which is highlighted in each report (Jones and Fay 2004; Schlesinger et al 2004; Taguba 2004). The Schlesinger report explicitly states that “by not communicating standards, policies, and plans to soldiers, these leaders conveyed a sense of tacit approval of abusive behaviors towards prisoners” (2004; 81). This is especially true of the Geneva Conventions, which will be addressed later in this essay. Particular blame is laid on BG Karpinski. In his report, MG Taguba said he was disturbed by BG Karpinski’s “complete unwillingness to either understand or accept that many problems inherent in the 800th MP Brigade were caused or exacerbated by poor leadership and the refusal of her command to both establish and enforce basic standards and principles among its soldiers” (2004; 315) which he observed during his interview with her. When MG Taguba asked Karpinski if she thought “proper training, supervision, and effective leadership, not just for that Battalion, but throughout the entire Brigade would have sufficed, could have prevented” the abuses, she responded, “No sir, no sir. Because it’s not typi-

cal” (Taguba 2004; 148). However, even Karpinski later personally admitted that she failed to enforce the proper level of discipline and training on her soldiers (2005). MG Ryder explained to LTG Sanchez long before the scandal broke that BG Karpinski’s unit had problems across the board and that her poor leadership was detrimental to the overall mission at Abu Ghraib. MG Geoffrey Miller had also expressed doubts to LTG Sanchez about BG Karpinski’s competency. However, neither recommended that Karpinski be relieved, since locating a replacement would be a long, drawn-out process and they believed her unit would leave soon anyway (Sanchez 2009).

The lack of clear doctrine delineating the roles for military intelligence and military police left a power vacuum of sorts. Since there was no existing doctrine, leaders had a great amount of latitude to produce SOPs. Leaders felt pressure to create procedures that would lead to the rapid exploitation of valuable intelligence to please the Department of Defense. With the soldiers at Abu Ghraib already ill-equipped to carry out their basic tasks, the introduction of new, specialized tactics left soldiers confused. Further complicating matters was that many of the tactics to which MPs were introduced were GTMO tactics which Abu Ghraib soldiers were not allowed to implement. If there had been clear, existing doctrine that adequately fit Abu Ghraib and the Iraqi theater of operations, there would have been no void for MG Geoffrey Miller and his team to fill. Most likely, MPs would have stayed in their distinct role as processors and caretakers. This assumption stems from the fact that higher-level officials, like the MGs that filed each report, tended to disagree with the merging of MP/MI roles. The lack of cohesion, or at least strong decision-making, was a failure on the part of leadership. Cohesive thought among leaders about MP/MI roles would have led to a clear definition of roles, thus keeping MPs out of MI roles and perhaps preventing the abuses at Abu Ghraib. Also, in forming doctrine, officials would have been aware that the forces lacked the strength to successfully implement such a relationship between MP/MI. Abu Ghraib-specific doctrine would have kept MPs out of interrogations, but military leaders failed to create such doctrine.

MPs followed orders; they received directions from MI and followed them. MPs were unaware of MI doctrine (or lack thereof), and thus the ‘blurring of the lines’ and the descent into abuse began. Had leaders such as BG Karpinski stepped up and taken strong control of their command by clearly delineating roles and carefully educating their soldiers on their duties, there is evidence that MPs would not have contributed to the abuse

of prisoners. Soldiers who knew their duties refused to participate despite heavy pressure from MI, as shown in observations from the Taguba report (2004). Returning to the subject of the FRAGO, it contributed to abuse by confusing the chain of command. Soldiers did not know to whom to report, and thus they could not report abuses.

TOP-DOWN CONFUSION

Geneva Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War offers protection to prisoners of war against violence, murder, humiliating treatment, and much more. Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib fell under GC, but the applicability was complicated due to the Bush administration's decision that certain combatants, like al-Qaeda and Taliban members, would qualify as 'unlawful combatants' and would not be entitled to full protection under Geneva. This special disregard for GC in relation to certain combatants became common practice in Operation Enduring Freedom or the War in Afghanistan. The Department of Defense claims that Operation Enduring Freedom is a subset of the War on Terror—it is a war against terrorists, hence the 'unlawful combatants' who do not receive GC protection. However, it purports, the War in Iraq operates differently, and the Geneva Conventions applied in full. The techniques authorized for use in Operation Enduring Freedom bled over into the Iraqi theater. CJTF-7 (which leaders are undisclosed in the Schlesinger report) determined that Abu Ghraib prisoners could be classified as 'unlawful combatants' as the President had outlined them. Such adoption of tactics was not intended or officially authorized by the administration, which saw a clear delineation between combatants in the two arenas. Obviously, the delineation was not so clear to American soldiers in Iraq; one soldier, interviewed for a PBS Frontline documentary, explicitly said that "everybody was looking at Guantanamo Bay and Afghanistan as a model" (Kirk 2005). Colonel Ted Spain, who opened Abu Ghraib for detainee operations before passing the prison to BG Karpinski in 2003, wrote that "all [he] received was conflicting guidance about [prisoners'] legal status" and that there was no straightforward guidance on how to classify detainees (Spain and Turchie 2013). Some sources said all prisoners were subject to the Geneva Conventions, while others said the Conventions were only applicable to combatants (Spain and Turchie 2013; Spain 2013). "It was really important to me to adhere to the Geneva Conventions," he stated in an interview, "but I really had to make it all up as I went" (Spain 2013). If the leaders at Abu Ghraib were unclear about the Geneva Conventions, then the understanding of their applicability for the average soldier was

surely unclear. The lack of leadership above that of Colonel Spain and BG Karpinski failed to clarify and convey doctrine properly.

Though his visit was surely not the only reason for confusion, MG Geoffrey Miller's visit further confused soldiers' understanding of the Geneva Conventions. Since GTMO prisoners do not receive the rights of GC, interrogation tactics employed there can be much more severe than at Abu Ghraib, where GC applied strictly. Furthermore, there was a great deal of back-and-forth on what tactics were approved. Throughout the time at Abu Ghraib, several memos authorizing harsher tactics were circulated and then rescinded due to pressure from military lawyers. In September 2003, LTG Sanchez signed a memo clearing the use of 29 harsh interrogation techniques, 12 of which were in clear violation of Geneva. Techniques included using dogs to exploit "Arab fear of dogs?," keeping prisoners in solitary confinement, and stress positions. The memo was rescinded the following month, but such an incident is indicative of the general haziness of approved tactics and the applicability of the Geneva Conventions (Danner 2004).

Additionally, the lack of leadership (and thus doctrine) contributed to soldiers' ignorance of the Geneva Conventions. BG Karpinski and LTG Sanchez were both aware of the provisions of GC. In LTG Sanchez's memoir, he writes that he explicitly conveyed to soldiers and MG Miller that all operations at Abu Ghraib must be in compliance with GC; a statement which contradicts his Sept 2003 memos which violated them (2009). In BG Karpinski's memoir, she states that her soldiers were all very well-trained in the Geneva Conventions, but only as they applied to Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW), who receive GC provisions. She chalks up the violations to the haziness stemming from the upper levels (like LTG Sanchez) of which prisoners count as EPW and which do not. What she leaves out is that BG Karpinski herself contributed to that haziness on the issue. She wrote a letter to Red Cross officials explaining that certain high-value prisoners at Abu Ghraib would not receive full protection under GC. In the Taguba report, BG Karpinski's failure to convey the Geneva Conventions to her soldiers is noted several times. There is overwhelming evidence that leaders at Abu Ghraib were ultimately silent on the issue. MG Taguba recommended that thirteen officers be relieved from their posts. For ten of those officers (including BG Karpinski and COL Thomas Pappas), one listed violation is that they failed to ensure that their soldiers were aware of the GC protections for prisoners.

Once again, the MPs at Abu Ghraib followed the

orders they were given. If they had been given clearer direction, the outcome of Abu Ghraib may have been radically different. In what seems to be one of the more genuine sections of BG Karpinski's memoir, she writes:

While it's true that the 372nd MP Company was a patchwork outfit suffering like many Reserve units from the ills of cross-leveling, sloppy training, and spotty leadership, the soldiers had demonstrated one consistent trait throughout their seven months of service in Iraq: They did as they were told. They had orders to confine Iraqi criminals under established procedures [at another facility], and they did so, with never a hint of abuse. For the rest of my days I will believe that, at Abu Ghraib, these soldiers also were following orders when they humiliated and abused detainees; (2005)

Though BG Karpinski's quote is hefty, it strongly supports the assertion that a lack of leadership and doctrine caused the abuse by summing up the failures at each level. Karpinski's sentiment also encompasses a sentiment present in most military inquiries and analytical sources: it was not the inherent evil of the American military soldiers that led to the abuses at Abu Ghraib. Failure trickled down from the top; if the soldiers had been given just orders from strong leaders, they would have followed them.

CONCLUSION

In this essay, I have argued that a failure of leadership led to the abuses at Abu Ghraib. Leadership failed to clarify doctrine and standards of operation for MPs in the Iraqi theater and, specifically, at the high-volume Abu Ghraib prison. As a result, military police occupied roles they were untrained and unprepared to occupy. The doctrinal void was filled, though inappropriately, when MG Geoffrey Miller from GTMO arrived to revise policies at the prison. Miller was sent by the Department of Defense due to fresh governmental pressure to glean valuable intelligence. His visit confused soldiers further on the applicability of the Geneva Conventions. There was also an overwhelming lack of strong leadership on the ground at Abu Ghraib that deepened already inherent problems. Such problems included weak resources and weak training (to do even the jobs that were doctrinally specified). Admittedly, the failure of leadership regarding doctrine and the Geneva Conventions was in many ways a top-down problem. White House officials were passing memos back and forth authorizing new and harsher torture methods for Guantanamo Bay and Afghanistan, not Abu Ghraib, Iraq.

There is evidence that if soldiers had known their duties, there is a good chance they would have followed them. Even if there were a small, sadistic group leading others, the majority of soldiers would have had some grounds to file complaints about those 'bad seeds.' However, they had no reason to assume they were diverging from doctrine. Though MPs should not have played the role in interrogations that they did, if they had known the rights afforded to the detainees under the Geneva Conventions, they could have acted accordingly to protect them. All of these points lend weight to a claim that American soldiers are not inherently evil or lazy. Contrarily, they will follow orders when clear orders are provided.

These findings naturally extend to other questions. For one thing, military inquiries were criticized for not looking up the chain of command. Why were only lower-level soldiers the ones to receive harsh punishments, when it is clear that many problems stemmed from the failure of leaders far above the soldiers working in interrogations at Abu Ghraib? If higher-level administrators are not punished for their indiscretions and contribution to lower-level confusion, such confusion may not be remedied. While doctrine has been more clearly specified on the role of military police and intelligence, has the overall quality of American military leadership today improved as a result of Abu Ghraib? If forces were redeployed today into a situation that was as new to the American military as Abu Ghraib was, would they be successful? Looking forward, this question is of critical importance. The ideological ground that the American military lost in Iraq due to the Abu Ghraib scandal was vast; in the future, the administration and the military must be prepared to lead soldiers, in any situation, in a way that prevents such abuse. These changes are imperative for the success of the American military in future ventures.

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