

Prisoner abuse claims a headache for Bush

WASHINGTON (AP) - Photographs of American soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners pose a major problem for President Bush as the United States tries to put down an insurgency, win Arab hearts and quell growing doubts at home about the war.

The pictures triggered outrage in the Middle East, a development that lawmakers and the U.N. secretary-general called damaging to U.S. goals.

"This is the single most significant undermining act that's occurred in a decade in that region of the world in terms of our standing," said Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del. He was asked about photos showing scenes of humiliation that included Iraqi prisoners stripped naked except for hoods covering their heads and stacked in a human pyramid, one with a slur written in English on his skin.

"Everybody understands the phenomenal damage this accusation has caused in that part of the world," Biden said on "Fox News Sunday." "It seems to me this warrants, at a minimum, the president praising the people who turned them in and saying ... he's indignant, he is angry about it."

Bush spoke out forcefully Friday against the mistreatment. "I share a deep disgust that those prisoners were treated the way they were treated," he said. Over the weekend, however, he kept silent on the matter, although he made an indirect reference to it on Saturday night.

"We count ourselves lucky that this new generation of Americans is as brave and decent as any before it," Bush told the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

Aides said Sunday they knew of no plan for Bush either to issue a fresh condemnation of the abuse or to announce additional investigations or other remedial actions.

It would be difficult for Bush to take his criticism of the episodes further. Denouncing or dismissing the alleged perpetrators would be difficult because the six U.S. soldiers who face possible courts-martial have not been convicted, one aide said. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard Myers, said Sunday a court-martial has been ordered so far for only one of the six.

A senior administration official said the timing of the photos was awful for the White House. The photos were made months ago, but their publication last week came two months before the United States plans to hand some political power to Iraqis and six months before the American presidential election.

The photos hurt the U.S. efforts to win over an audience that is already deeply skeptical about U.S. intentions, this official said. Arabs and Muslims are certain to seize upon the images as proof that the American occupiers are as brutal as ousted President Saddam Hussein's government, the senior administration official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Administration and military officials took pains to draw distinctions between Saddam's treatment of prisoners and the U.S. military's.

"Under Saddam Hussein's regime, this sort of behavior, this sort of treatment at Abu Ghraib (prison) would have been celebrated," said Dan Senor, spokesman for the Coalition Provisional Authority running Iraq. In the case of the Americans' behavior, Senor promised on CNN's "Late Edition" that "whole careers will be ended."

Myers called the abuse "deplorable and appalling" but insisted the Iraqi enemies were much worse.

"They cheer every time they kill some innocent man, woman or child," he said on ABC's "This Week."

Nevertheless, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he was deeply troubled by the reports.

"When it comes to these situations we have to respect international humanitarian law," he said. "I am encouraged that the U.S. government is taking it seriously and intends to discipline those involved, and I think that is extremely important because the images' going around the world has been damaging," Annan said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Michigan Sen. Carl Levin, ranking Democrat on the
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NNPA earns multiple Unity Awards

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - NNPA News Service Editor-in-Chief George E. Curry and Washington Correspondent Hazel Trice Edney have won first-place awards in Lincoln University's "Unity in Media Awards." This is the 51st year that the Jefferson City, Mo. institution has sponsored the awards.

Curry won in the editorial writing category for a syndicated column that was published in NNPA newspapers during the first week of April 2003. In his column on the history of racism at the University of Michigan, Curry wrote, "The Supreme Court heard oral arguments Tuesday on whether two University of Michigan affirmative programs should be left intact. But the justices declined to listen to the strongest argument for continuation of the programs: The University of Michigan has a long history of racial discrimination that continues to this day."

Curry's column noted that the University of Michigan, established in 1817, did not



Washington Correspondent
Hazel Trice Edney

admit African-Americans during its first 50 years. He detailed how campus housing was segregated after Blacks were finally admitted and how the university sanctioned all-White fraternities and sororities until the 1960s.

Citing an NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund brief, Curry wrote, "The University treated foreign students in a markedly different fashion, relying on a Michigan tradition that segregation of foreign students by nationality is undesirable and that contact with American students is mutually beneficial to justify full integration of foreign students into campus life and policies giv-

ing them priority over African-American students in both admissions and housing."

Edney's news feature, "Poor Economy Turns Tables on African-Americans," appeared in NNPA newspapers in mid-January 2003.

"Leroy Venzen was on top of the world," Edney wrote. "The St. Thomas native had worked as a janitor during his first eight months after moving to Washington, D.C., in November 1995. Within three years he had landed a consulting job with Bell Atlantic, earning \$100,000 a year—five times the average per capita income. Life was good and seemed to be getting better."

She wrote, "But all of that went by the wayside when Venzen lost his job shortly after September 11, 2001... When a comparable job failed to materialize, he began serving tables at Outback Steakhouse in Bowie, Md., a suburb of Washington, D.C. Venzen now makes close to \$25,000."

Venzen told Edney, "At

times at the restaurant, I cry. At times I feel like I'm wasting my time and my talent. It's not boohoo tears. I'm a man. Soon as it comes, I just suck it up and serve the people."

Also winning Unity Awards in the category for minority audiences were: Vicki T. Lee of the Washington Afro for a series of education stories on the City College controversy; Michael C. Williams for his body of work at the St. Louis Sentinel and a team from the Dallas Examiner that won in the politics category for its stories on the firing of Police Chief Terrell Bolton. The team members were: Sharon Egiebor, Shawn Florence, Sheron Pattersib, Kevin Shay and Stephanie Ward.

Executive Editor Egiebor was also named Woman Journalist of the Year in Dallas by the Association of Women Journalists. Publisher Mollie Belt will receive the National Association of Black Journalists' community service award for the paper's work on AIDS/HIV.

Health

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chronic ailments like diabetes symptoms.

Free clinics set-up at portable sites will be held regularly in various locations throughout the area and at designated medical facilities. Little said that the available resources and donations from the community would determine how many patients will receive services and how often free medical clinics can be held.

"We are a community based organization looking for the community to support us, and we will provide any and all services that the community will support," Little said.

Early registration for

qualified applicants begins on Saturday, May 8, from 2 to 5 p.m. at St. Rose Dominican Hospital, DeLima Campus in the purchasing annex meeting room. Registration will continue throughout May and can be done online and on-site at the free clinic.

Along with the free clinic on May 22, a free health fair will be held at the Green Valley Library in Henderson from 2 to 5 p.m. There will be more than 30 booths providing screening tests, tips on disease prevention and information on many topics like diabetes, heart, smoking cessation, obesity, cholesterol levels, blood pressure, prostate health, cancer awareness and family healthcare.

Local workers interested in clinic services from the free healthcare project must meet four eligibility requirements, starting with proof of Nevada residency. Applicants must be employed, seeking work or in a job-skills training program. Household income can exceed the federal poverty level but must fall within guidelines based on family size.

In addition, a participant must have no medical insurance available otherwise through government programs like Medicaid or Medicare and must be ineligible for health coverage at work or through a spouse or parent's policy.

For more information

about eligibility requirements for free health clinics or attending the health fair, contact (702) 767-4667 or e-mail healthi-nevada@juno.com.

Currently, there are only enough resources and volunteer physicians to allow the program to provide services one day per month.

Little said that as more physicians and other providers contribute their time and medical resources, the more service hours there would be to care for uninsured patients.

Little invites interested community members to contact him at Health Projects Nevada at (702) 767-4667 about registering for services, volunteering or donating resources.

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