

Do troops still have support?

By Lloyd Williams
Special to Sentinel-Voice

There was a time when patriotic American citizens against the invasion of Iraq could proudly say, "I oppose the war, but I support the troops." Not anymore, now that newspapers have finally started publishing photos confirming the long-rumored reports that coalition forces have been torturing prisoners in the most shocking, sexually-depraved ways imaginable.

There's the picture of grinning Pvt. Lynndie England chomping on a cigarette while leering at the genitals of the naked Iraqi prisoner with a plastic bag over his head who she had forced to pleasure himself. "He's getting hard!" she exclaimed, according to Staff Sergeant Chip Frederick, a witness.

A second picture captured a nude POW giving oral favors to another prisoner. A third shows an unidentified female soldier beaming while dry-humping a pile of naked Iraqis. And there are many, many more sick snapshots yet to be released.

According to the Army's own internal report dated March 3rd, the long list of "sadistic, blatant and wanton criminal abuses" of Iraqi inmates includes sodomizing them with broomsticks, beating them with chairs and brooms, pouring phosphoric acid liquid on them, forcing them to remain naked for days at a time, forcing them to masturbate on videotape and arranging them in naked piles before jumping on them.

These photos and videotapes show a widespread pattern of brazen human rights violations that would lead any sane person to conclude that the U.S. occupation has degenerated into a malignancy which bears no relation to the original goals of Operation Iraqi Freedom. And sadly, no one wants to take responsibility.

Sure President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair have condemned the maltreat-

ment. Wink-wink. Yet, our British allies are so deep in denial that they've chosen to believe that the pictures have been doctored. Yeah, right.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld announced that those responsible will be brought to justice. Sure. Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, the person who was in charge of the entire Iraqi prison system, claims she had no idea any abuses had occurred and that she's sickened by the snapshots. Bull substance.

The aforementioned Sergeant Frederick, a guard who was photographed torturing and orchestrating indecent sex acts inside of Abu Gharib prison, says he had no idea that his unconventional methods of interrogation violated the Geneva Convention. Another lie.

In civilian life, Frederick worked as a corrections officer in Buckingham, Virginia, so he would have known where to draw the line. Nonetheless, he now claims that he was egged-on by MPs, military intelligence officers and CIA operatives. Pvt. England, the kinky, S&M queen, meanwhile, is already safely back stateside at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. She wasn't recalled to be court martialed for conduct unbecoming a member of the armed forces, but only for maternity leave since she somehow got knocked up while stationed at the infamous house of horrors.

America's repeated rationale for toppling Saddam Hussein was to free the Iraqi people from living under the thumb of a mercilessly brutal tyrant.

Who here, there, or anywhere else on the planet is still dumb enough to believe that we can continue sell the Iraqis on the elusive ideal of democracy, if our army behaves like debased, dehumanized creatures no better than the evil regime which it just replaced?

Attorney Lloyd Williams is a member of the NJ, NY, CT, PA & MA bars.

Curry

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\$12.4 million deal.

Clearly, Williams and Friedgen are collecting what the market will bear. That's the American way. But is it the right way?

I think teachers, not coaches, should be the highest paid workers in society. Everyone who excels in life can attribute part of that success to smart, caring, dedicated teachers - from pre-school to graduate school - who enjoy imparting knowledge to students. Where would we be without them? Increasingly, teachers are working in financially-strapped districts that don't even provide them with basic supplies. Consequently, they dig into their own wallets or purses to augment limited school supplies.

And we reward them by complaining: Today's teachers are not as good as those in the old days. Anyone worth his/her salt wouldn't go into teaching. Teachers are merely collecting a paycheck. Instead of being grateful that these dedicated people decided to enter the teaching profession, knowing they could make more money elsewhere, many of us ridicule them, take them for granted or, even worse, don't think about them at all.

The disclosure of the University of Maryland coaches' contracts proves that at the college level, at least, we place more

emphasis on what athletes do on the football field or basketball court than how students perform in the classroom. As a society, we ought to be ashamed. President Bush should worry about this disparity rather than the use of steroids in athletics. Let's get our priorities straight.

A look at the contracts reveals the extent to which the coaches are pampered.

One would think that anyone earning more than \$1 million a year could afford to purchase his own automobile. But, no, coaches need allowances for that as well. So Friedgen gets a \$12,000 annual automobile allowance while Williams gets only \$8,000. Overall, Williams can earn up to \$1,871,021 and Friedgen \$1,469,000, when you count all of the shoes and broadcast deals.

I want to make a modest proposal. No coach should make more than 50 percent of what the president of the university earns. In the case of Maryland, that would still be more than \$175,000 a year. If the governor of the state can get by on \$140,000, surely a coach can squeak by on \$175,000 a year. If nothing else, adopting my proposal would prove that we don't put athletics ahead of academics.

George E. Curry is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service.

Fund

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equality."

Shaw warned against romanticizing about the segregated past.

"We all know that segregation in public education today is as prevalent and as virulent as it ever was, although it is not sanctioned or required by law any longer," Shaw says.

"There is a nostalgia on the part of some people now concerning the days before Brown versus Board of education. There is a kind of artificial bubble that segregation created that doesn't exist anymore because people can live, for the most part, wherever they want, although there's still housing discrimination in a significant way. But, we can't go back to those days. I don't think any of us really want to go back to those days. What we want to do is create stable communities even if they are majority Af-



Ted Shaw, president and director-counsel of the LDF was speaking as part of the National Press Club's Newsmaker luncheon.

Photo credit: NNPA/Hazel Trice Edney

rican-American or majority people of color."

"Thurgood Marshall, in the aftermath of Brown, was asked how long do we think it would take to really do a mark up and to enforce the decision. He thought that by 1963, the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Procla-

mation, perhaps the job would be done," Shaw recalls. "The evidence of the success of the civil rights movement is all around us. And yet, we have many African-Americans who are untouched by all that progress, unreached by all that progress, isolated in what MLK calls a sea of poverty."

Overstreet

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bike in a Hispanic neighborhood wearing a fair amount of jewelry. He allegedly used a gun to rob eight brown males. Now here comes the astounding part! The young man ends up in the hospital with injuries from a severe beating with his jewelry missing. Oh, are you thinking it serves him right for using a gun that is discharged in an attempted robbery? Well, think again.

The gun that he supposedly used in the robbery was reported as stolen from the home of one of the Hispanic men that very morning.

What fool, regardless of color, is going to bike into the neighborhood of another racial or cultural group and attempt to rob eight men? To charge, much less convict, a

16-year-old of the crime of aggravated robbery begs for the firing of both of the prosecutor and the public defender on grounds of racism and incompetence. This is the type of injustice that is taking place in Las Vegas each and everyday.

The only way this situation has any chance of changing is if enough fair-minded citizens of all colors call for the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights, to come to town and conduct an investigation into reports of police brutality and disparity in sentencing of minorities charged and convicted of crimes.

If we don't do something, then live with the fact, in Las Vegas, like others parts of the country, justice will continue to mean "just-us."

Waters

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To break in here, perhaps a woman needs to be on the ticket.

Also, I can understand why Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico, the only Hispanic governor in the country, is being considered.

Most of the states that have increased their electoral votes since 2000 came as a result of Hispanic population growth in the West and Southwest. They are states such as California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado.

Kerry may also need to either hold down George Bush's numbers in the South or win some states outright. For that, a Black candidate might be ideal. In Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina and Maryland, Blacks are 30 percent to 50 percent of the Democratic voting base. Moreover, the Black population has grown in all of them since the 2000 elections.

Who should be the Black VP?

My list would begin with the Jesse Jackson, who is still the man. He is a proven draw on the lecture circuit and therefore, still a formidable campaigner in the South. But others to be considered are Congressman Jim

Clyburn, who played such a big role in Kerry's second-place finish in South Carolina; Congresswomen Maxine Waters, Barbara Lee and Sheila Jackson Lee all would be good for different reasons. Each woman is from California or Texas, both key states. Congressman Elijah Cummings would be great since he is the head of the Congressional Black Caucus and is in a position to coordinate the Black vote nationally with the help of his CBC colleagues.

So, now you have my list. I had to do it, because my dignity does not allow me to give Democrats a pass even though they depend on the Black vote. They have the unique ability of depending on us while ignoring us for key positions at the same time.

Unlike Democrats, Republicans pay off. They have appointed a Black to the Supreme Court Justice, to serve as Secretary of State and as National Security Advisor, some of the top posts in the land. Democrats have had trouble recently proposing Blacks for comparable posts yet, they proclaim to love us most of all.

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