

United States Department of Defense.

News Transcript

On the web: <http://www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint.cgi?http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2004/tr20040514-0753.html>

Media contact: +1 (703) 697-5131

Public contact: <http://www.dod.mil/faq/comment.html> or +1 (703) 428-0711



Presenter: Major General Miller

Friday, May 14, 2004

Major General Miller Interview in Baghdad with Pentagon Press Corps

GEN. MILLER: Did you know, [Inaudible] Duvalier and he starts [Inaudible]. They kind of [Inaudible]. My job is here is there is [Inaudible] detainee operations. And so, with U I have oversight for detention missions with interrogation and [Inaudible] systems is streamlining the Iraqi forces. And so, [Inaudible] 31 days. And so this is where we are. And so, I had the opportunity to take about a week to do the assessment on this and we spent three weeks going about implementing some updates and some changes in how that we do – [Inaudible] of this. So General Sanchez and General Abizaid made the decision to integrate all three of these functions under one simple focus and that's how we are going about what we believe will be create much better way to accomplish all three of these very complex [Inaudible].

So in the detention mission [Inaudible] into the detention mission, as you know is really the base point for [Inaudible] that we start the assessment about what should the final decisioning on a detainee that he or she comes into our control. And so it starts out with the part [Inaudible] process [Inaudible]. A point of capture at the U.N. level, where they start [Inaudible] in the initial tactical debriefing. What if you do [Inaudible] kind of material or working out there, so they're able to make a first assessment. Did they [Inaudible] whoever it was committ an act of violence against the coalition. Was it an Iraqi or an Iraqi crime where they'll be moved in to be able [Inaudible] develop intelligence or develop [Inaudible] to be able to make the decision for the leadership about the [Inaudible] and where they will be placed into the system. So it was an attack on the coalition, you know, [Inaudible] Iraq developed an additional intelligence to be able to help prevent future attacks and also validate the allegations that somebody has committed an attack direct attack or sometimes [Inaudible] in there – financing an attack [Inaudible]. And so that starts at the brigade level, goes to the division level. Our [Inaudible] keep people no more than 72 hours at the [Inaudible]. And on the [Inaudible] day after the capture, you must be at the [Inaudible] facility at Abu Ghraib. So that's how we had done the segmentation to allow the process to go smoothly and also help us keep our due process that we are working hard to get into the decision. They arrived at Abu Ghraib facility, put into our detention facility and that's separated by a level of risk.

Q: [Inaudible].

UNKNOWN: Two or three days [Inaudible].

GEN. MILLER: [Inaudible] brigade level in three days. I'm sorry, [Inaudible]. Then they go through the diversion level and that's three brigades in a division – sometimes four -- and so that's [Inaudible] first level where they're doing interrogations and what [Inaudible] interrogators are. And so we could call [Inaudible] divisions up to 14 days to be able to make their assessments to get [Inaudible] actionable intelligence, or help them to be successful in their operations to actually solve acts, firing an RPG or something – asking the information so that three other people there who were ready. And so, once you develop that kind of information it goes into operational planning.

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: That's all military -- military – military intelligence. And we do have some civilian linguists who are down there because we don't have enough military linguists to go in there.

Q: [Inaudible] 14 days. [Inaudible] by military police officers?

GEN. MILLER: They're being held by the operation units. And so it's – battalions and brigades. There may have some military police at the brigade facility, you know, because every brigade has a small number of military police That's up to the commander. We don't mandate those kind of things.

Q: Are you saying that once someone is captured, and unless you caught him [Inaudible] to send him to Abu Ghraib by fourteen working days, they'll have to be released or maybe turned over to the Iraqi courts.

GEN. MILLER: They are eager [Inaudible] to our facility or they're released back to civilian control. And so they go to the Iraqi police in the area, that [Inaudible] turned back to their home area yes.

Q: Now time is not serious enough. At least in terms of the coalition, they have to be released, right?

GEN. MILLER: That's correct. That's correct.

Q: [Inaudible] detainee?

GEN. MILLER: Yes. Yes, precisely. See, that's our normal thing. It's really EPWs, we trained to be [Inaudible] and it follows the same requirements as in prisoners of war, although they're not enemy prisoners of war, that's how you [Inaudible] and allow [Inaudible] go in there and start the development of intelligence [Inaudible], so it's not an interrogation. They don't have those kind of skills. And they want to find out what your name is and where you're from and those kind of basic

things that'll allow integrate those into operational planning.

Q: If you're in charge of the Iraqi Justice, the court system right now?

GEN. MILLER: I didn't say that No. I mean, in charge of [Inaudible].

Q: Yes. If someone is arrested for rape or murdering someone ore something, you well [Inaudible].

GEN. MILLER: There are some who [Inaudible] do the investigations from [Inaudible] Iraqi or Iraqi crime.

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: They're immediately turned over to the Iraqis and they go into the criminal court of Iraq which is civilian crime and they get turned over by 512 of the detainees into this system correctly. And [Inaudible] the majority of those [Inaudible].

Q: [Inaudible]?

GEN. MILLER: Since February.

Q: Since February.

GEN. MILLER: Since February of '04.

Q: So [Inaudible]?

GEN. MILLER: Yes, that's correct.

Q: [Inaudible] process is incurring and they're being [Inaudible] are they still held at the [Inaudible]?

GEN. MILLER: No. The Iraqis have a number of facilities. There are some held at Abu Ghraib because that's a shared facility, [Inaudible] tried to do [Inaudible] we in the military and the coalition have a part of it. Interim government of Iraq as [Inaudible] present. They have about 1,500 Iraqi prisoners they are acting to go to their justice system.

Q: [Inaudible] before?

GEN. MILLER: Totally, we have about 11,700 protected persons.

Q: [Inaudible]?

GEN. MILLER: No.

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: The coalition has about 11,700.

Q: Protected [Inaudible] process.

GEN. MILLER: No -- protected persons under the Fourth Geneva Convention. And so that includes PMOI, the Peoples Mujahedeen Organization of Iraq, that's about 3,800 people -- also called the [Inaudible], insurgents. And so they are protecting people that are not detained, but they are controlled. And we the coalition guarantees -- we guarantee their safety. [Inaudible] 7,800 who are civilian internees. And so, those are the people who -- the coalition has detained.

Q: Yet, will military people [Inaudible]?

GEN. MILLER: [Inaudible] military people. There's not an army. There are [Inaudible]. Some are former Iraqi soldiers, or former Republican Guard, yes, they are.

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: Oh, yes. And there's no longer a government. There's no longer an army. And so they are civilians.

[Cross Talk]

GEN. MILLER: [Inaudible] there are no prisoners of war held in [Inaudible] they've all been repatriated.

Q: And how many are at Abu Ghraib to date?

GEN. MILLER: There are -- it's about 3,800.

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: Yes, it could be plus or minus 50. And [Inaudible] as we've speeded up our process of assessment. And so we're releasing three or 400 each week.

Q: General, I wonder if you could -- since you live in Washington D.C. [Inaudible]. But [Inaudible]. Congress [Inaudible] returning to what they see as perhaps your role and the role of your [Inaudible] last fall having [Inaudible] -- now whether or not you said directly [Inaudible]. So the desire clearly indicated by your report which was assigned] from the highest levels of DoD knowing

somebody would be irresponsible for what happened. Could you answer those questions? [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: Okay. [Inaudible].

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: [Inaudible] walk you through that, so you'll understand the whole process. I've got [Inaudible] so many people, I don't know if you can all see this. And so – and these are unclassified, so I will unclassify them in 15 minutes [Inaudible] because they're just sensitive. This is a mission statement that the joint chiefs of staff gave me [Inaudible] to accomplish here. Were to conduct assistance to discuss current feasibility to rapidly exploit intelligence and to develop actionable intelligence and to look into the integration of intelligence and the synchronization and future of intelligence and the interrogation operations and then the detention mission -- all of those [Inaudible]. And so from that, I've got a team of 30 people over here. And so, it is a joint and interagency team that had the military and we had a lot of the intelligence community from the military.

We also brought our interagency partners from the Joint Interagency Task force for counterterrorism. For example, we brought our lawyers we brought guys to be able to get that together who work on information technology by how you move data quickly to reveal the [Inaudible]. We also brought three of the Tiger Teams from Guantanamo and are starting to teach strategic interrogation -- just how that you move into the intelligence system. We taught that out of the standard army procedures that are taught by [Inaudible] – earned at what's called "Tiger Team University." So they are standard interrogation methodologies. And we brought the detention team, the superintendent of Camp Delta, who was our command sergeant major reservist who was the superintendent of the prison of the largest prison in Indiana – about 3,200 people. And then the captain who ran one of the MP companies to deal with – who tell them this is how we did this, and that's [Inaudible].

And what we did is we brought the SOP that we have. [Inaudible] -- that's like 220 pages -- and we gave him the SOP and said, what we're going to brief you on is how that we do business from there and this is a overview to compare and contrast where you want to go where you are in theater and where you want to go. And so, I know that there's a question we're here in an advisory role. No command authorities is, no ability to direct in any change whatsoever. And so, we're very proud of what we did at Guantanamo in all these areas. And so, consequently, we layed out here and will give you these when we talk about humane detention and the Geneva Convention what we're supposed to do and what you can and can't do and how the that you deal with detainees. I'm absolutely convinced that we laid down the foundations of how that you detain people in a humane manner and it was unequivocal in its explanation.

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: [Inaudible] aware that we as Americans around the world the standards are all the same. And so we were doing that. They pulled one line out of our report about setting the conditions for a successful interrogation how the police to do that. So we use the Guantanamo model for

that. And Guantanamo we have the military police who run the detention center back and do what we call “passive intelligence collection.” And it is literally watching what people do in their cell blocks and reporting what their mental attitude is, what their morale is. Do they, I’m sorry something as common as did they eat breakfast or not. Did they fight the detainees. And so, they reported back to the interrogation team to be able to give that environmental about what can you expect when the detainee comes in the interrogations – what kind of mood.

And so, that was what they were [Inaudible]. So we looked at Guantanamo and that’s what we recommended that it is the integration between the MPs and the military intelligence working [Inaudible]. And so, we laid out in incredible detail this is how you do this. And in no way is there any authorization for military police to be actively involved in interrogation. They’re not trained to do that. They don’t do that kind of business. They just report it.

And our recommendation was they do this reporting to the interrogators. They also would transport the detainee from the place of detention [Inaudible] cell block or something of the interrogation [Inaudible] for security reasons. Turn them over to the interrogator. They wait in another area. When the interrogation is through, they pick them up and take them back. That is our definition of enabling interrogations.

Q: [Inaudible] for example, the [Inaudible] closing the [Inaudible]?

GEN. MILLER: No.

Q: [Inaudible]?

GEN. MILLER: No. And the system that we brought here, the MPs have no authorities other than to do humane detention and execute to the detention authorities that they have been given. You got to [Inaudible] that you understand [Inaudible]. These two missions must be separated. They are parallel. But in Guantanamo, there are two separate commanders and they work for the commander of the JTF, so we have that firewall between how you do that. This detention and interrogation business is a what I call “a high-leader [Inaudible] requirement.” It takes enormous leader oversight to ensure that it is done correctly, not because we have any bad people, because it is so precise and you’re dealing with human beings. And so, it takes lots of training. This is a very frustrating business and [Inaudible] to detain people. And so the leaders have to be there to make sure that things don’t wrong. And if there is honest mistakes they’re promptly corrected these. And so that’s why I call the high leader touch, you’re out there 24 hours a day, demonstrating the standards and make the corrections.

Q: Now this is a question that we’ve all asked several [Inaudible]. And I wanted to [Inaudible]. How is it that you think that what happened at Abu Ghraib, how did it get to being to the point where more than just a couple of characters were taking video pictures or [Inaudible] how did that come about?

GEN. MILLER: In my estimation it was a simple leadership failure. A failure to follow standards a failure to correct actions from that

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: That investigation is ongoing, I believe.

Q: Let me ask you something, we understand that, in fact, upgrades to be made Abu Ghraib, [Inaudible], so no plans there?

GEN. MILLER: Currently, we're planning to continue the operation of Abu Ghraib. We have about 3,800 detainees are now. We're going to reduce the number of detainees there to about 1,500 to 2,000 by about the 15th of June. It's a combination of our process – did they make determinations reporting much better. You're either going to the court system, you're in danger to be returned to Iraqi civilian society, until the Iraqi Government stands up and guarantees safety and security that will be maintained by the coalition or you are going to the release process. And so we've speeded up all three of this.

Q: [Inaudible] of your inquiry [Inaudible] closer to the very [Inaudible]. And so I'm very, very [Inaudible]. Saddam is not being captured [Inaudible] know deterrence. Did you find any [Inaudible] that, right or wrong, that the [Inaudible] intelligence in Abu Ghraib was driven by any of those three frustrations?

GEN. MILLER: When we came, the plan for the coalition had just transitioned fairly recently for major combat [Inaudible]. And so, we were just short of his transition into the reconsolidation phase from going into [Inaudible]. And so, we find [Inaudible] much of what we saw was this transition from actively [Inaudible] into the, our interrogation start up with the corps, so – from in, you can have the number of interrogators or a loss of [Inaudible] so we're trying to do this to get in there. And so this language that we – we got our Tiger Team to help start that up. And so this is how you do tactical interrogation [Inaudible] strategic interrogation from it. And so, that's where that's starting. So we were just [Inaudible] -- we were trying to get down the foundation pieces. Here's where you can think about starting from. And so the interrogation really just very immature at that time, and there's always a requirement for intelligence. Because as we know, that saves soldiers lives. And so there's an enormous [Inaudible].

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: [Inaudible]. I'll never forget my first battalion, I was in [Inaudible]. [Inaudible] intelligence 15 minutes late. It's interesting [Inaudible]. So there is always a distinction about how that you can get tactical intelligence, sometimes operational intelligence – operational intelligence. First about an enemy structure or a terrorist structure of how they recruit and how they maintain themselves. That's what I mean by operational intelligence. [Inaudible] as rapidly as possible. They had a good leadership start. If you get that sown to the war fighting and into the intelligence [Inaudible].

Q: [Inaudible] you are the commander of the [Inaudible] prison system. I thought you said you were just an advisory [Inaudible]?

GEN. MILLER: [Inaudible] this is today. When I came in September and I was just in advisory capacity.

[Cross Talk]

GEN. MILLER: [Inaudible] among other things. [Inaudible] for detainee operations. [Inaudible] detention. The interrogation mission and or in the streamlining of the Iraqi court system. And I also have oversight disposition the coalition [Inaudible].

[Inaudible]. And so, I have all the interrogation department, all of the detention facilities, in theater, the [Inaudible] facilities and the oversight for the 11 tactical facilities, division commanders on [Inaudible] lay down the standards and survey. And so that's the [Inaudible] mission, all the interrogation facilities now report to me. [Inaudible] great, great [Inaudible]. And then I [Inaudible] the coalition's [Inaudible] I have a platoon of lawyer and paralegals, investigators to help work this out. We have 18 [Inaudible] joint service – the joint service legal teams. They're out with the divisions, gathering. They [Inaudible] divisions gather evidence to be able to speed it up through the courts process. So it's one additional team for se division that will help them gather evidence and do statements. And [Inaudible] the legal process up to a sort of a more [Inaudible] decision on how you can make a referral of either a central criminal court of Iraq or the Iraqi Criminal Court or Iraqi on Iraqi [Inaudible]. Central Criminal Court of Iraqi is [Inaudible] the coalition. I did want ti [Inaudible] of Ira for its dynamic [Inaudible].

Q: [Inaudible] want to [Inaudible], 3,000 detainees [Inaudible] [Inaudible] Abu Ghraib? [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: [Inaudible] 7,000 at Abu Ghraib.

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: [Inaudible]

[Cross Talk]

GEN. MILLER: From the January time frame had approximately 7,000 at Abu Ghraib.

Q: And out of [Inaudible] and we're going on a [Inaudible] has significant intelligence come out of that operation?

GEN. MILLER: Yes.

Q: [Inaudible].

GEN. MILLER: Let me [Inaudible] a rule of thumb on that. Of all the intelligence the coalition developed, about 70 percent of that is human – human intelligence developed either through this tactical debriefing [Inaudible] units or through the interrogation process. About 15 percent comes out of the interrogations capability of the theater. So the majority of it comes out of the division level or where they are developing tactical intelligence. What did you do that help us in tomorrow's operation? Or to go on the attack or the defense or what it is. So that's where the intelligence is produced.

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: Yes.

Q: [Inaudible] bring out who they are? I mean, there's incredible strength [Inaudible], plans [Inaudible] dealing with terrorists and where people could be vying for intelligence [Inaudible].

GEN. MILLER: We'll answer the last one first. Yes, we have an ongoing interrogation operation that runs everyday. And this process of defining where the detainees fit is what we do [Inaudible] and we talk about it if they don't [Inaudible] the division level [Inaudible]. And so when they come up and the [Inaudible] come up the security internees or attacks on the coalition, suspected attacks on the coalition. And so they're either – they start the intelligence process to determine how we can prevent further attacks -- learn more about them. And so we have Iraqis and we also have foreign fighters [Inaudible].

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: Roughly. Roughly between 160 and 200.

Q: [Inaudible] Abu Ghraib?

GEN. MILLER: At Abu Ghraib

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: Correct.

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: Yeah. And in all three – in 2000, they are – we process – make that decision as quickly as possible of where – which category that they should go. And as we get closer in making that decision, if you are a high-value intelligence [Inaudible] a high [Inaudible] Abu Ghraib facility because that's where we have our highest security. If you are a low threat, and [Inaudible] to the detainee release program that you've got a [Inaudible] which is done at [Inaudible] down south, which we have similar

security, but they are a much lower threat. But those are probably 50-60 percent of those who come in who are returning the Iraqi society. And so we are going through a release process. It's averaging, the last three weeks, 3[00] to 400 each week. And so we probably have between 4,500 and 3,000 of those – or of that 6,000 that we have who are going to go into the release process and go back to Iraqi society where they've committed a minor crime or Iraqi on Iraqi crime. So they must pass into this prison. But there will not be a threat if – get back into Iraqi society. Iraqis are very concerned that the people who were released would be criminals or thugs, they'd terrorize their neighbors that they are going back into. So we are somewhat conservative on those kind of choices.

Q: [Inaudible] one question?

[Cross Talk]

Q: A couple questions for you.

[Cross Talk]

Q: [Inaudible] there's been a number of [Inaudible]. Are there any things that you acknowledge violated in the Red Cross report, would you say, that you'd say are legitimate complaints and that [Inaudible].

GEN. MILLER: You've probably read, maybe you haven't read the Red Cross reports but I'm a minor expert now in Red Cross reports. The Red Cross has here in the United States and Guantanamo very high marks for detention. Their issue comes off open-ended detention. And so [Inaudible] detention that that's what their issue is. And so they have been then given credit for main detention in Guantanamo. And their issue, and they had I can't remember the month they came out with, last September, October one or two of [Inaudible] they were talking about deteriorating on one condition because of the indefinite detention status that the newly combatant at Guantanamo were [Inaudible]. And so that was the issue [Inaudible] taught through a process they were very of food and shelter, medical care, all those things that go on there. It was – and their request was or their concern was open-ended detention.

Q: [Inaudible] isolation? When the isolation [Inaudible]?

GEN. MILLER: That was an open-ended detention piece. They had, because of military necessity, they're a very small number – less than five [Inaudible] 18 months that I was there who were at some point in time, could not receive a private visit because of the debriefing that was going on in the very high level of intelligence that those people had. But so it was five out of 1,200 – I'm not sure what that is, unless it wasn't half of a percent. And so, I would say, I've justifiably proud we worked enormously hard and we are recognized as the standards setters that are on a new process about how would you detain enemy combatants in this role, you can discuss about that was a executive decision that we've done. We've treated your detainees in the same manner that we would ask our soldiers to be treated be the same conditions. And we worked very hard That's because it's high [Inaudible]. They're

enormously talented people down there.

We found out after I asked them, what are you doing [Inaudible]. [Inaudible] soldier [Inaudible]. I know you've heard this before. When I asked you what you did in your civilian life, this was not a casual question.

So if you're a computer engineer but you as an MP, you came a computer engineer for us. And sergeant major – the sergeant major who was the camp commandant was one of the brigade sergeant majors. And [Inaudible] give you a great [Inaudible]. And so, I'm not a military policeman, by trade. And so I said sergeant major, I would like you to put together the – what do you call it – [Inaudible] and I'll be [Inaudible]. And so it's at least a few hours a day teaching you about detentions and existence. So every year I became okay and how that I understand about doing that. And I'm not in the military [Inaudible] office. And so we had [Inaudible] interrogator and they're enormously capable people.

[Inaudible] possibility to become the master of what he or she commands. That's our responsibility. So I spend three or four hours, every day studying about how I can do that job that nothing different than you do right now.

GEN. MILLER: Please don't use any of those names [Inaudible] people. When they established [Inaudible] operations [Inaudible] assessment. And so I came back [Inaudible] to Abu Ghraib and changed how we're organized. And so, the military [Inaudible] commander is exclusively charged with the intelligence and interrogation function. And in [Inaudible] commander is exclusively charged with the detention of detainees. So I think we found a [Inaudible] lieutenant colonel. I said, "You're now the garrison commander and you are in charge of [Inaudible] – all the logistics piece."

Q: And you're no longer [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: That's correct.

Q: [Inaudible]

GEN. MILLER: And they all report to me. And so, now they are separate parallel missions in the [Inaudible]. And so the interrogation intelligence and [Inaudible] mission work in parallel. And the garrison commander, his hardest job of all, has to sustain [Inaudible]. And so I said, "Now don't [Inaudible] commander – don't you let your mission collide with our mission," because we're all here fighting [Inaudible] – a great guy. [Inaudible] national guard, a solid, solid leader. And so, I believe there's [Inaudible] had a similar operation [Inaudible] operating base, where the commander put the military [Inaudible] as a senior commander on the ground as [Inaudible] commander. [Inaudible] We call this [Inaudible] control and there are two types: [Inaudible] control and the operational controls. For your operation control, you only need to [Inaudible] what to do – reorganize it [Inaudible]. You have a [Inaudible] in its missions and it's I'd like you to do, but you're not [Inaudible] to do anything. And so [Inaudible] the November 19th [Inaudible]. We've laid that out into the [Inaudible] and my brigade commander as [Inaudible] control facility. And so he was doing that job and he was being the

mayor, you know, for city services and to sustain that [Inaudible] so on. But the MPs where it was [Inaudible] for support, but not for command [Inaudible] he could say that you took his company [Inaudible]. That's not part of [Inaudible]. I'm sorry about the [Inaudible] precise. But [Inaudible] if I had [Inaudible] I'll [Inaudible] to my organization. [Inaudible] you're ready to go [Inaudible] organize it with everything else. Do you, on our [Inaudible], I can well, if he [Inaudible], Bob [Inaudible] it's really as simple as that. And so it's overall integration of the sustainment function is what General Sanchez is [Inaudible] in my words, what that order did at Abu Ghraib.

So does that explain what it is?

Q: Thank you, sir.

<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2004/tr20040514-0753.html>