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## **UK link to torture jail's rules**

Army lawyer saw document on interrogation techniques

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A British official was involved in drafting rules permitting extreme interrogation techniques at Abu Ghraib jail in Baghdad, centre of the controversy over the use of torture by US forces against Iraqi prisoners.

Last night it emerged that the government has been forced to retract claims that no British military officer had seen or been involved with the crucial document allowing guards to subject detainees to interrogation methods including the use of dogs, sleep deprivation and stress positions, in breach of the Geneva Convention.

Last year the jail achieved notoriety when photographs emerged of guards forcing prisoners to strip naked and simulate sex acts. Other photographs showed detainees being set upon with dogs and beaten.

The Armed Forces Minister, Adam Ingram, has admitted in a letter to a Plaid Cymru MP, Adam Price, that a senior British Army lawyer assigned to the coalition's legal department in Baghdad contributed to 'comments provided by his superior' when drafting the document.

It is not known if the officer supported or opposed the document, but the revelation raises serious questions about who in the Army's chain of command knew of the interrogation techniques being employed at Abu Ghraib and when.

The British officer made a weekly report to his superiors and was also under a responsibility to alert them if he felt international law governing the treatment of detainees was being flouted.

'For the government to now admit that their earlier statement was incorrect and that a senior British lawyer had some role in the drafting process is very worrying,' Price said. 'The use of techniques such as sensory deprivation are illegal under British military law. It's against the Geneva Convention, too. The alarm bells should have been ringing. I would have expected the British chain of command to have been alerted to the Americans' practices.'

The document, entitled Interrogation and Counter-Resistance Policy, was drawn up by the coalition's Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF), which was in charge of supervising the interrogation of Iraqi detainees, and borrowed heavily from techniques employed at Guantanamo Bay. Signed off on 14 September 2003, the document underwent several drafts before being approved.

The Fay Report, the result of an investigation by the US authorities into its military's use of interrogation techniques, noted that the CJTF 'copied almost verbatim' from the interrogation techniques employed at Guantanamo. In addition, officers who drew up the interrogation policy document also added a number of other techniques they thought should be employed, including the 'use of dogs, stress positions, and yelling, loud music and light control,' the Fay Report noted.

The US authorities concluded that the interrogation policies put in place by the CJTF document 'led indirectly' to abuse of prisoners.

On 12 October, by which stage a culture of abuse had emerged within Abu Ghraib, Centcom, the US army's command centre, had become so alarmed at the document's contents that it ordered it should be toned down.

The MoD has declined to reveal the name of the British officer who worked for the coalition's legal team between July 2003 and January 2004. But it is understood he was one of three deputies reporting to Colonel Marc Warren, the coalition's senior legal adviser who reported to the US military's commander, General Ricardo Sanchez. Sanchez has said he was unaware of what happened at Abu Ghraib until military investigators were passed pictures of abuse in January 2004.

In his letter to Price, Ingram expressed regret that in two written parliamentary answers last year the government wrongly stated that 'UK officers had not participated in drafting the document and that we were unaware that any had seen it.'

Price said he was now writing to the MoD to establish who in the Army's hierarchy was aware of the interrogation techniques employed at Abu Ghraib and when.

'I would expect the fact that a new interrogation policy at Abu Ghraib, based on techniques used at Guantanamo Bay, would have been something the British officer felt his superiors should have been alerted to. We need to know more about the precise chain of command involved,' Price said.