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US ran secret torture centers in Iraq: Report

3/7/2013



The US military organized and committed grotesque acts of torture in secret centers run by the Pentagon in Iraq under US occupation, a report says.

The *Guardian* report revealed how Washington managed “some of the worst” atrocities committed by Iraqi police units “conducted some of the worst acts of torture during the US occupation and accelerated the country’s descent into full-scale civil war.”

The findings of the 15-month investigation said the Pentagon sent James Steele, a US veteran of the ‘dirty wars’ in Central America, along with another special adviser, retired Colonel James H. Coffman, to oversee the secret detention and torture centers and to get information from prisoners.

The American officers involved in the scandalous acts were found to be directly reporting to the highest ranks of the US government, including General David Petraeus, who resigned as CIA director in November 2012.

"They worked hand in hand," said General Muntadher al-Samari, who worked with US advisors while the commando units were being set up. "I saw them inside the detention centers. They knew everything that was going on there ... the torture, the most horrible kinds of torture."

The report comes after the release of classified US military logs on WikiLeaks about hundreds of incidents where US soldiers came across tortured detainees in the Pentagon-run detention centers.

Some of the leaks also published by *Antiwar.com* revealed the discovery of "more than 1,400 detainees in squalid, cramped conditions," many of whom were illegally detained.

It said prisoners "displayed bruising, broken bones, and lash-marks, many claimed to have been hung by handcuffs from a hook in the ceiling and beaten on the soles of their feet and their buttocks," while rape and sexual abuse, primarily of young teenagers, was also widespread.

Other instances of close cooperation between the US and abusive Iraqi forces indicated a secret US military order to ignore cases of torture and abuse by Iraqi interrogators.

The report concluded that US support and condoning of such brutal measures unleashed deadly sectarian conflicts in Iraq and triggered a civil war that claimed tens of thousands of lives.