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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

DENNIS MOORE
Third District, Kansas
<http://moore.house.gov>

April 20, 2010

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-0001

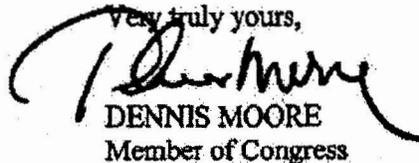
Dear Secretary Gates:

I recently received the enclosed communication from a resident of my congressional district.

I would very much appreciate receiving from your staff a response to the issues raised by my constituent. I will, of course, forward a copy of your response to my constituent.

Thank you very much for your prompt attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,


DENNIS MOORE
Member of Congress

DM: cnw

P.S. Please sign up for my e-mail newsletter to receive periodic updates on federal legislation at my Web site: <http://www.moore.house.gov>.

1727 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20518-1603
PHONE: 202-225-2885
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8417 SANTA FE DRIVE, #101
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PHONE: 913-383-2018
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KANSAS CITY, KS 66101
PHONE: 913-621-0832
FAX: 913-621-1535

901 KENTUCKY STREET, #205
LAWRENCE, KS 66044
PHONE: 785-842-8013
FAX: 785-843-3285

TDD: (hearing/speech impaired constituents)
1-800-796-3777



(b)(6)

From: noreply@constituent.com
Sent: Monday, April 05, 2010 8:29 PM
To: KS03WYR
Subject: Contact Form Submission

Prefix:

First Name: (b)(6)

Middle Initial:

Last Name: (b)(6)

Suffix:

Street Address: (b)(6)

Street Address 2:

City: Lawrence

State: KS

Zip: 66049 -

E-mail Address: (b)(6)

Telephone Number:

Message Subject: Other

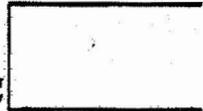
Message: What are you doing to stop this, Rep. Moore? Why isn't this kind of thing being investigated publicly by Congress? http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/05/wikileaks-exposes-video-o_n_525569.html
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/05/world/asia/05afghan.html>

The New York Times

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April 4, 2010

U.S. Admits Role in February Killing of Afghan Women

By RICHARD A. OPPEL Jr.

KABUL, Afghanistan — After initially denying involvement or any cover-up in the deaths of three Afghan women during a badly bungled American Special Operations assault in February, the American-led military command in Kabul admitted late on Sunday that its forces had, in fact, killed the women during the nighttime raid.

The admission immediately raised questions about what really happened during the Feb. 12 operation — and what falsehoods followed — including a new report that Special Operations forces dug bullets out of the bodies of the women to hide the true nature of their deaths.

A NATO official also said Sunday in an interview that an Afghan-led team of investigators had found signs of evidence tampering at the scene, including the removal of bullets from walls near where the women were killed. A senior NATO official later denied on Monday that any evidence tampering occurred.

The disclosure could not come at a worse moment for the American military: NATO officials are struggling to contain fallout from a series of tirades against the foreign military presence by the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, who has also railed against the killing of civilians by Western forces.

Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the American and NATO commander in Afghanistan, has tried hard, and with some success, to reduce civilian casualties through new rules that include restricting night raids and also bringing Special Operations forces under tighter control. But botched Special Operations attacks — which are blamed for a large proportion of the civilian

deaths caused by NATO forces — continue to infuriate Afghans and create support for the Taliban.

NATO military officials had already admitted killing two innocent civilians — a district prosecutor and local police chief — during the raid, on a home near Gardez in southeastern Afghanistan. The two men were shot to death when they came out of their home, armed with Kalashnikov rifles, to investigate.

Three women also died that night at the same home: One was a pregnant mother of 10 and another was a pregnant mother of six. NATO military officials had suggested that the women were actually stabbed to death — or had died by some other means — hours before the raid, an explanation that implied that family members or others at the home might have killed them.

Survivors of the raid called that explanation a cover-up and insisted that American forces killed the women. Relatives and family friends said the bloody raid followed a party in honor of the birth of a grandson of the owner of the house.

On Sunday night the American-led military command in Kabul issued a statement admitting that “international forces” were responsible for the deaths of the women. Officials have previously stated that American Special Operations forces and Afghan forces conducted the operation.

The statement said that “investigators could not conclusively determine how or when the women died, due to lack of forensic evidence” but that they had nonetheless “concluded that the women were accidentally killed as a result of the joint force firing at the men.”

“We deeply regret the outcome of this operation, accept responsibility for our actions that night, and know that this loss will be felt forever by the families,” said Brig. Gen. Eric Tremblay, a spokesman for the NATO command in Kabul.

The admission was an abrupt about-face. In a statement soon after the raid, NATO had claimed that its raiding party had stumbled upon the “bodies of three women who had been tied up, gagged and killed” and hidden in a room in the house. Military officials had also said later that the bodies showed signs of puncture and slashing wounds from a knife, and that the women appeared to have been killed several hours before the raid.

And in what would be a scandalous turn to the investigation, The Times of London reported Sunday night that Afghan investigators also determined that American forces not only killed the women but had also "dug bullets out of their victims' bodies in the bloody aftermath" and then "washed the wounds with alcohol before lying to their superiors about what happened."

A spokesman for the Afghan Interior Ministry, Zemary Bashary, said that he did not have any information about the Afghan investigation, which he said remained unfinished.

In an interview, a NATO official said the Afghan-led investigation team alerted American and NATO commanders that the inquiry had found signs of evidence tampering. A briefing was given by investigators to General McChrystal and other military officials in late March.

"There was evidence of tampering at the scene, walls being washed, bullets dug out of holes in the wall," the NATO official said, adding that investigators "couldn't find bullets from the wounds in the body."

The investigators, the official said, "alluded to the fact that bullets were missing but did not discuss anything specific to that. Nothing pointed conclusively to the fact that our guys were the ones who tampered with the scene."

On Monday, a senior NATO official denied that there was any effort to tamper with evidence.

"We have discovered no evidence in our investigation that any of our forces did anything to manipulate the evidence at the scene or the bodies," said the deputy chief of staff for communications for General McChrystal, Rear Adm. Gregory J. Smith.

Several bullets that were fired but had not struck either of the two men were removed from the walls, Admiral Smith said. But he said that was done "to make sure what kinds of rounds they were."

NATO officials have also rejected allegations that the killings were covered up. But it was not immediately clear on Sunday night how troops who shot the women and later examined their bodies would not have recognized that it was their bullets that killed them.

Abdul Waheed Wafa contributed reporting.

April 20, 2010



Dan Froomkin

froomkin@huffingtonpost.com

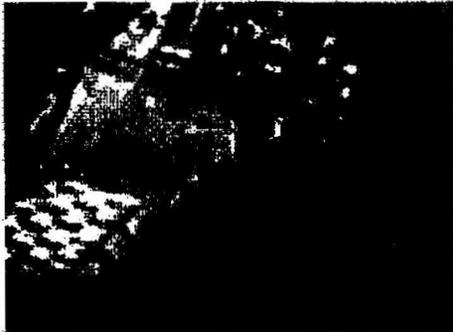
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Reporting

This is the print preview: [Back to normal view »](#)

WikiLeaks VIDEO Exposes 2007 'Collateral Murder' In Iraq

First Posted: 04- 5-10 12:54 PM | Updated: 04- 6-10 07:50 AM



Scroll down for the video

Calling it a case of "collateral murder," the WikiLeaks Web site today released harrowing video of a U.S. Army Apache helicopter in Baghdad in 2007 repeatedly opening fire on a group of men that included a Reuters photographer and his driver -- and then on a van that stopped to rescue one of the wounded men.

None of the members of the group were taking hostile action, contrary to the Pentagon's initial cover story; they were milling about on a street corner. One man was evidently carrying a gun, though that was and is hardly an uncommon occurrence in Baghdad.

Reporters working for WikiLeaks determined that the driver of the van was a good Samaritan on his way to take his small children to a tutoring session. He was killed and his two children were badly injured.

In the video, which Reuters has been asking to see since 2007, crew members can be heard celebrating their kills.

"Oh yeah, look at those dead bastards," says one crewman after multiple rounds of 30mm cannon fire left nearly a dozen bodies littering the street.

A crewman begs for permission to open fire on the van and its occupants, even though it has done nothing but stop to help the wounded: "Come on, let us shoot!"

Story continues below ↓

Two crewmen share a laugh when a Bradley fighting vehicle runs over one of the corpses.

And after soldiers on the ground find two small children shot and bleeding in the van, one crewman can be heard saying: "Well, it's their fault bringing their kids to a battle."

The helicopter crew, which was patrolling an area that had been the scene of fierce fighting that morning, said they spotted weapons on members of the first group — although the video shows one gun, at most. The crew also mistook a telephoto lens for a rocket-propelled grenade.

The shooting, which killed Reuters photographer Namir Noor-Eldeen, 22, and driver Saeed Chmagh, 40, took place on July 12, 2007, in a southeastern neighborhood of Baghdad.

The next day, the *New York Times* reported the military's official cover story:

The American military said in a statement late Thursday that 11 people had been killed: nine insurgents and two civilians. According to the statement, American troops were conducting a raid when they were hit by small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades. The American troops called in reinforcements and attack helicopters. In the ensuing fight, the statement said, the two Reuters employees and nine insurgents were killed.

"There is no question that coalition forces were clearly engaged in combat operations against a hostile force," said Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl, a spokesman for the multinational forces in Baghdad.

The video shows otherwise.

Washington Post reporter David Finkel described the incident — and the video — in great detail in his September 2009 book, "The Good Soldiers". A summary can be found [here](#).

Finkel also described a review session after Lt. Col. Ralph Kauzlarich, commander of the Army's 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment and his soldiers returned to base, which "concluded that everyone had acted appropriately." (Kauzlarich was also involved in the Army's Pat Tillman cover-up, and later told ESPN that the reluctance of Tillman's parents to accept the military's story that he was killed by enemy action, rather than friendly fire, was the unfortunate result of their lack of Christian faith.)

WikiLeaks, a small, independent Web site that invites people to post information and documents that powerful interests would prefer to keep secret, says it received the video and supporting documents from military whistleblowers.

Julian Assange, the editor of the site, said the killings either violated the the army's rules of engagement, or those rules of engagement "are very, deeply wrong."

Watch the WikiLeaks video below, or the key portions of the video as pieced together by MSNBC's Dylan Ratigan:

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Unveiling the video at the National Press Club on Monday morning, Assange said the helicopter crew approached its job as if it were a video game, not something involving human lives. Their desire was simply to kill," he said. "Their desire was to get high scores on that computer game."

Reuters released this statement from David Schlesinger, editor-in-chief of Reuters news: "The deaths of Namir Noor-Eldeen and Saeed Chmagh three years ago were tragic and emblematic of the extreme dangers that exist in covering war zones. We continue to work for journalist safety and call on all involved parties to recognise the important work that journalists do and the extreme danger that photographers and video journalists face in particular. The video released today via WikiLeaks is graphic evidence of the dangers involved in war journalism and the tragedies that can result."

An Army spokesman could not immediately be reached for comment.

Just this morning, the *New York Times* confirmed a gruesome cover-up by U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Officials who had repeatedly denied reports by Jerome Starkey in the *Times of London* have now confirmed that American Special Operations soldiers slaughtered three women in a nighttime raid in February – and actually dug bullets out of the bodies of the women as part of a cover-up. Starkey says U.S. and NATO forces are rarely held to account for the atrocities they commit.

WATCH: WikiLeaks editor Assange being interviewed by Al Jazeera English:

Just last month, WikiLeaks posted the results of a U.S. counterintelligence investigation into none other than WikiLeaks itself. The report determined that WikiLeaks "represents a potential force protection, counterintelligence, operational security (OPSEC), and information security (INFOSEC) threat to the US Army."

The report also concludes, highly suggestively: "Wikileaks.org uses trust as a center of gravity by assuring insiders, leakers, and whistleblowers who pass information to Wikileaks.org personnel or who post information to the Web site that they will remain anonymous. The identification, exposure, or termination of employment of or legal actions against current or former insiders, leakers, or whistleblowers could damage or destroy this center of gravity and deter others from using Wikileaks.org to make such information public."

Meanwhile, Assange says another video is forthcoming: This one of a bombing in Afghanistan with civilian casualties.

Dan Froomkin is senior Washington correspondent for the Huffington Post. You can send him an e-mail, bookmark his page, subscribe to RSS feed, follow him on Twitter, friend him on Facebook, and/or become a fan and get e-mail alerts when he writes.

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HUFFPOST POLITICS

THE INTERNET NEWSPAPER: NEWS BLOGS VIDEO COMMUNITY



THE JOINT STAFF

WASHINGTON, DC

24 May 2010

Reply ZIP Code:
20318-0300

The Honorable Dennis Moore
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515-1603

Dear Mr. Moore,

The Secretary of Defense has asked that I respond to your constituent's inquiry regarding the role U.S. forces had in the deaths and injuries of noncombatants during military operations conducted in Afghanistan in February 2010 and Iraq in July 2007. Your constituent referenced media reports of Afghan women killed during a military operation in Afghanistan on 12 February 2010, and an Army helicopter engagement of insurgents in Iraq resulting in unintended deaths of two Reuters employees and injuries of two children in July 2007.

In both cases referenced by your constituent, and contrary to reports in the media, the investigations found that U.S. military forces did not violate the law of armed conflict concerning noncombatants, including the women who were inadvertently killed during firefights with insurgents. At the conclusion of both investigations, Coalition forces issued public statements expressing deep regret for the loss of life and injury that occurred as a result of these incidents.

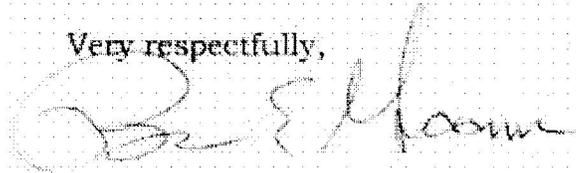
Reports of civilian noncombatant casualties caused by Coalition operations alienate the civilian population, provide legitimacy to the insurgents, and degrade our ability to conduct an effective counterinsurgency. Coalition forces take allegations seriously and investigate them thoroughly.

U.S. military forces are a committed partner with Coalition forces, the Government of Afghanistan, and the Government of Iraq. We fully accept our responsibility to conduct operations in strict compliance with the law of war and to make every effort to minimize noncombatant casualties.

I assure you that U.S. military commanders at all levels strive to reduce the loss of innocent life on the battlefield. Our Armed Forces continually seek to improve training and equipment to reduce unintended deaths.

Your concern is greatly appreciated. Your concern and support of our men and women in uniform are greatly appreciated.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "B. E. Grooms". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

B. E. GROOMS
RADM, USN
Vice Director, Joint Staff