

**Caddel, Jeremy D**

RELEASED IN FULL

**From:** Stryker, Sara A  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 18, 2004 10:52 AM  
**To:** Taylor, William B (SA); Wilder, Timothy E  
**Cc:** Caddel, Jeremy D  
**Subject:** Zal Khalilzad comment: US conducts "top-to-bottom" review of Afghan jails

We alerted PA and offered to comernmt, if need be, on this Reuters story, below.

As we have consistently said the investigation is a DOD matter, I don't think a comment is required from the spokesman.

Do you agree?

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Viau, Jennifer L  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 18, 2004 10:14 AM  
**To:** LW-Mahogany; SES-O\_Shift-II; LW-Afghanistan; SES-O\_Shift-II; PAPress\_Officers  
**Subject:** US conducts "top-to-bottom" review of Afghan jails

#### BC-AFGHAN-USA-ABUSES (PICTURE)

US conducts "top-to-bottom" review of Afghan jails

By Mike Collett-White

KABUL, May 18 (Reuters) - The U.S. military, stung by allegations of prisoner abuse at Afghan detention centres, is conducting a "top-to-bottom" review of its secretive network of jails, the American ambassador said on Tuesday.

The United States leads around 20,000 troops in Afghanistan hunting al Qaeda and Taliban militants. It has already said it changed procedures at its prisons following the deaths of two Afghans in U.S. custody 18 months ago. Further modifications have been made following feedback from the International Committee of the Red Cross, the only independent body allowed into its main prison for militant suspects at Bagram air base, just north of Kabul. But the latest comments by Zalmay Khalilzad in Kabul suggested the review could be far-reaching.

"We have launched investigations and are in the process of thoroughly reviewing detention facility conditions and interrogation guidelines," he told a news briefing.

Two investigations were launched last week into separate allegations. In one case, a former Afghan police officer complained he had been beaten and sexually abused during around 40 days in U.S. custody in 2003.

"We are going to investigate when allegations are made and do the right thing, and we're also doing a top-to-bottom look at detention centres, and also we are making sure that everybody understands what the guidelines are," Khalilzad added.

#### JUSTICE SEEN TO BE DONE

The U.S. military has acted swiftly in response to the latest Afghan allegations, having seen its campaign in Iraq undermined by similar abuses at a jail near Baghdad.

But many Afghans point out that an investigation into two deaths at Bagram in December 2002, both caused by repeated beatings to the victims' legs, has yet to be concluded.

"The investigation that has been launched is a welcome step," Jawed Ludin, spokesman to President Hamid Karzai, told a separate briefing.

"We also emphasise that (that investigation) should also be speedy and comprehensive and if that determines that abuses have taken place by certain people we expect that the course of justice should follow."

Khalilzad said incarceration and questioning were inevitable as the U.S. pursued its "war on terror," but added:

"While that mission is vital, it's equally important that we do this with the clear understanding that an equally important mission is to help the Afghan people stand on their own feet, to build a normal country.

"Our military must trust Afghans with respect, with due consideration."

There are no plans to change the status of detainees in Afghanistan, who the U.S. says do not come under the Geneva Convention that protects the rights of prisoners of war because they did not fight in uniform or represent a country.

John Sifton, Afghan expert at Human Rights Watch, said this week that the abuse of detainees in Afghanistan had diminished since the immediate aftermath of the Taliban's defeat late in 2001, but fresh allegations continued to come to light.

"The biggest complaint (now) is lack of legal process and the complete lawlessness of their detention, with no family visits, no legal council and being kept without being charged," he said.

(Additional reporting by Yousuf Azimy)