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counterpunch

edited by alexander cockburn and jeffrey st.clair

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**Cockburn / St. Clair's
Scorching New History of
a Decade of War
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May 10, 2004

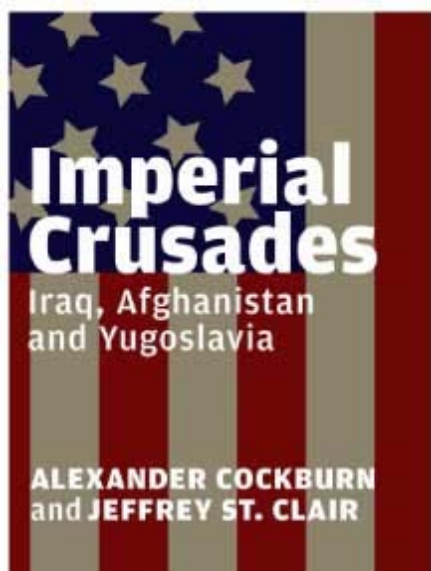
The Israeli Torture Template

Rape, Feces and Urine-Dipped Cloth Sacks

By WAYNE MADSEN

With mounting evidence that a shadowy group of former Israeli Defense Force and General Security Service (Shin Bet) Arabic-speaking interrogators were hired by the Pentagon under a classified "carve out" sub-contract to brutally interrogate Iraqi prisoners at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison, one only needs to examine the record of abuse of Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners in Israel to understand what Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld meant, when referring to new, yet to be released photos and videos, he said, "if these images are released to the public, obviously its going to make matters worse."

According to a political appointee within the Bush administration and U.S. intelligence sources, the interrogators at Abu Ghraib included a number of Arabic-speaking Israelis who also helped U.S. interrogators develop the "R21" (Resistance to Interrogation) techniques. Many of the torture methods were developed by the Israelis over many years of interrogating Arab prisoners on the occupied West Bank and in Israel itself.



**Imperial Crusades:
Iraq, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia
by Alexander Cockburn
and Jeffrey St. Clair**

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Clues about worse photos and videos of abuse may be found in Israeli files about similar abuse of Palestinian and other Arab prisoners. In March 2000, a lawyer for a Lebanese prisoner kidnapped in 1994 by the Israelis in Lebanon claimed that his client had been subjected to torture, including rape. The type of compensation offered by Rumsfeld in his testimony has its roots in cases of Israeli torture of Arabs. In the case of the Lebanese man, said to have been raped by his Israeli captors, his lawyer demanded compensation of \$1.47 million. The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel documented the types of torture meted out on Arab prisoners. Many of the tactics coincide with those contained in the Taguba report: beatings and prolonged periods handcuffed to furniture. In an article in the December 1998 issue of *The Progressive*, Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb reported on the treatment given to a 23-year old Palestinian held on "administrative detention." The prisoner was "cuffed behind a chair 17 hours a day for 120 days . . . [he] had his head covered with a sack, which was often dipped in urine or feces. Guards played loud music right next to his ears and frequently taunted him with threats of physical and sexual violence." If additional photos and videos document such practices, the Bush administration and the American people have, indeed, "seen nothing yet."

Although it is still largely undocumented if any of the contractor named in the report of General Antonio Taguba were associated with the Israeli military or intelligence services, it is noteworthy that one, John Israel, who was identified in the report as being employed by both CACI International of Arlington, Virginia, and Titan, Inc., of San Diego, may not have even been a U.S. citizen. The Taguba report states that Israel did not have a security clearance, a requirement for employment as an interrogator for CACI. According to CACI's web site, "a Top Secret Clearance (TS) that is current and US citizenship" are required for CACI interrogators working in Iraq. In addition, CACI requires that its interrogators "have at least two years experience as a military policeman or similar type of law enforcement/intelligence agency whereby the individual utilized interviewing techniques."

Speculation that "John Israel" may be an intelligence cover name has fueled speculation whether this individual could have been one of a number of Israeli interrogators hired under a classified contract. Because U.S. citizenship and documentation thereof are requirements for a U.S. security clearance, Israeli citizens would not be permitted to hold a Top Secret clearance. However, dual U.S.-Israeli citizens could have satisfied Pentagon requirements that interrogators hold U.S. citizenship and a Top Secret clearance. Although the Taguba report refers twice to Israel as an employee of Titan, the company claims he is one of their sub-contractors. CACI stated that one of the men listed in the report "is not and never has been a CACI employee" without providing more detail. A U.S. intelligence source revealed that in the world of intelligence "carve out" subcontracts such confusion is often the case with "plausible deniability" being a foremost concern.

In fact, the Taguba report does reference the presence of non-U.S. and non-Iraqi interrogators at Abu Ghraib. The report states, "In general, US civilian contract personnel (Titan Corporation, CACI, etc), third country nationals, and local

Carolyn Baker

[Why I Won't Vote in 2004](#)

Prince

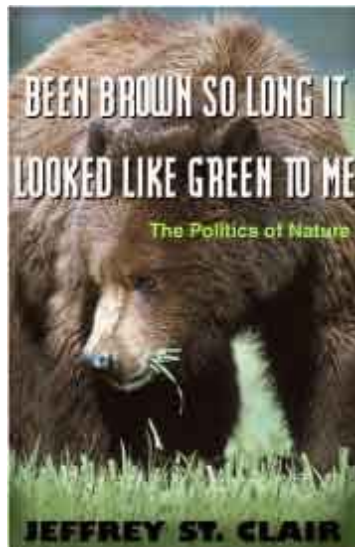
["Ain't No Sense in Voting"](#)

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Poets' Basement

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**Been Brown So Long,
It Looked Like Green to Me:
The Politics of Nature
by Jeffrey St. Clair**

May 7, 2004

Human Rights Watch

[10 Prisons; 9,000 Prisoners: US Detention Facilities in Iraq](#)

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[From Terrell Unit in Texas to Abu Ghraib: Doesn't It Ring a \(Prison\) Bell?](#)

Mike Whitney

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contractors do not appear to be properly supervised within the detention facility at Abu Ghraib."

The Pentagon is clearly concerned about the outing of the Taguba report and its references to CACI, Titan, and third country nationals, which could permanently damage U.S. relations with Arab and Islamic nations. The Pentagon's angst may explain why the Taguba report is classified Secret No Foreign Dissemination.

The leak of the Taguba report was so radioactive, Daniel R. Dunn, the Information Assurance Officer for Douglas Feith's Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Policy (Policy Automation Services Security Team), sent a May 6, 2004, For Official Use Only Urgent E-mail to Pentagon staffers stating, "THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT IS CLASSIFIED; DO NOT GO TO FOX NEWS TO READ OR OBTAIN A COPY." Considering Feith's close ties to the Israelis, such a reaction by his top computer security officer, a Certified Information System Security Professional (CISSP), is understandable, although considering the fact that CISSPs are to act on behalf of the public good, it is also regrettable..

The reference to "third country nationals" in a report that restricts its dissemination to U.S. coalition partners (Great Britain, Poland, Italy, etc.) is another indication of the possible involvement of Israelis in the interrogation of Iraqi prisoners. Knowledge that the U.S. may have been using Israeli interrogators could have severely fractured the Bush administration's tenuous "coalition of the willing" in Iraq. General Taguba's findings were transmitted to the Coalition Forces Land Component Command on March 9, 2004, just six days before the Spanish general election, one that the opposition anti-Iraq war Socialists won. The Spanish ultimately withdrew their forces from Iraq.

During his testimony before the Senate Armed Service Committee, Rumsfeld was pressed upon by Senator John McCain about the role of the private contractors in the interrogations and abuse. McCain asked Rumsfeld four pertinent questions, ". . . who was in charge? What agency or private contractor was in charge of the interrogations? Did they have authority over the guards? And what were the instructions that they gave to the guards?"

When Rumsfeld had problems answering McCain's question, Lt. Gen. Lance Smith, the Deputy Commander of the U.S. Central Command, said there were 37 contract interrogators used in Abu Ghraib. The two named contractors, CACI and Titan, have close ties to the Israeli military and technology communities. Last January 14, after Provost Marshal General of the Army, Major General Donald Ryder, had already uncovered abuse at Abu Ghraib, CACI's President and CEO, Dr. J.P. (Jack) London was receiving the Jerusalem Fund of Aish HaTorah's Albert Einstein Technology award at the Jerusalem City Hall, with right-wing Likud politician Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz and ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski in attendance. Oddly, CACI waited until February 2 to publicly announce the award in a press release. CACI has also received grants from U.S.-Israeli bi-national foundations.

Norman Solomon

[This War, Racism and Media Denial](#)

M. Shahid Alam

[A Comic Apology](#)

May 6, 2004

Jeffrey St. Clair

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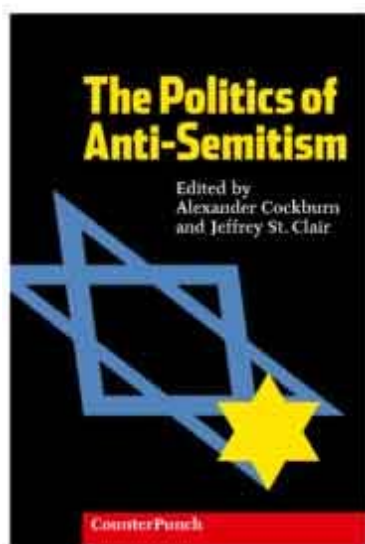
[On the Brink of Defeat in Iraq](#)

Titan also has had close connections to Israeli interests. After his stint as CIA Director, James Woolsey served as a Titan director. Woolsey is an architect of America's Iraq policy and the chief proponent of and lobbyist for Ahmad Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress. An adviser to the neo-conservative Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, Jewish Institute of National Security Affairs, Project for the New American Century, Center for Security Policy, Freedom House, and Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, Woolsey is close to Stephen Cambone, the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, a key person in the chain of command who would have not only known about the torture tactics used by U.S. and Israeli interrogators in Iraq but who would have also approved them. Cambone was associated with the Project for the New American Century and is viewed as a member of Rumsfeld's neo-conservative "cabal" within the Pentagon.

Another person considered by Pentagon insiders to have been knowledgeable about the treatment of Iraqi prisoners is U.S. Army Col. Steven Bucci, a Green Beret and Rumsfeld's military assistant and chief traffic cop for the information flow to the Defense Secretary. According to Pentagon insiders, Bucci was involved in the direction of a special covert operations unit composed of former U.S. special operations personnel who answered to the Pentagon rather than the CIA's Special Activities Division, the agency's own paramilitary group. The Pentagon group included Arabic linguists and former members of the Green Berets and Delta Force who operated covertly in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. Titan also uses linguists trained in the languages (Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Pashto, Urdu, and Tajik) of those same countries. It is not known if a link exists between Rumsfeld's covert operations unit and Titan's covert operations linguists.

Another Titan employee named in the Taguba report is Adel L. Nakhla. Nakhla is a name common among Egypt's Coptic Christian community, however, it is not known if Adel Nakhla is either an Egyptian-American or a national of Egypt. A CACI employee identified in the report, Steven Stephanowicz, is referred to as "Stefanowicz" in a number of articles on the prison abuse. Stefanowicz is the spelling used by Joe Ryan, another CACI employee assigned with Stefanowicz to Abu Ghraib. Ryan is a radio personality on KSTP, a conservative radio station in Minneapolis, who maintained a daily log of his activities in Iraq on the radio's web site before it was taken down. Ryan indicated that Stefanowicz (or Stephanowicz) continued to hold his interrogation job in Iraq even though General Taguba recommended he lose his security clearance and be terminated for the abuses at Abu Ghraib.

In an even more bizarre twist, the *Philadelphia Daily News* identified a former expatriate public relations specialist for the government of South Australia in Adelaide named Steve Stefanowicz as possibly being the same person identified in the Taguba report. In 2000, Stefanowicz, who grew up in the Philadelphia and Allentown areas, left for Australia. On September 16, 2001, he was quoted by the *Sunday Mail* of Adelaide on the 9/11 attacks. He said of the attacks, "It was one of the most incredible and most devastating things I have ever seen. I have been in constant contact with my family and friends



The Politics of Anti-Semitism
 Edited by Alexander Cockburn
 and Jeffrey St. Clair

May 5, 2004

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Lee Ballinger
[Cinco de Mayo and Unity](#)

Gilbert Achcar
[Bush's Cakewalk into the Iraq Quagmire](#)

Website of the Day
[Operation Phoenix & Iraq](#)

in the US and the mood was very solemn and quiet. But this is progressing into anger." Stefanowicz returned to the United States and volunteered for the Navy in a reserve status. His mother told the Allentown *Morning Call* in April 2002 that Stefanowicz was stationed somewhere in the Middle East but did not know where because of what Stefanowicz said was "security concerns." His mother told the *Philadelphia Daily News* that her son was in Iraq but she knew nothing about his current status.

Wayne Madsen is a Washington, DC-based investigative journalist and columnist. He served in the National Security Agency (NSA) during the Reagan administration and wrote the introduction to [Forbidden Truth](#). He is the co-author, with John Stanton, of "[America's Nightmare: The Presidency of George Bush II](#)." His forthcoming book is titled: "Jaded Tasks: Big Oil, Black Ops, and Brass Plates."

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