

THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

Jury deliberates in case against accused Iraqi agent

A jury began deliberating Tuesday afternoon in the case of an Indiana truck driver accused of conspiring to sell U.S. intelligence secrets to Saddam Hussein's government in the months before the American invasion.

Shaaban Hafiz Ahmad Ali Shaaban, 53, is accused of offering to sell the names of U.S. covert operatives in Iraq to Saddam Hussein's government in the months before the 2003 invasion. He was indicted in March on several counts, including conspiracy, acting as a foreign agent and violating sanctions against Iraq. If convicted, he faces up to 65 years in prison and more than \$1.5 million in fines.

Shaaban, who represented himself during his trial with the help of two standby public defenders, repeated during his closing arguments his contention that the government has mistaken him for a now-dead identical twin.

In his closing arguments, Assistant U.S. Attorney Tim Morrison reminded jurors that several witnesses, including Shaaban's brother, had testified that no such twin existed.

Report: European governments aware of secret U.S. torture

The head of a European investigation into reported CIA secret prisons in Europe said Tuesday that evidence pointed to the existence of a system of outsourcing torture by the United States, and it was likely European governments knew of it. But Swiss Sen. Dick Marty said there was no tangible proof so far of the existence of clandestine centers in Romania or Poland as alleged by the New York-based Human Rights Watch, and complained of a lack of cooperation by EU governments. His interim report, based partly on results of national investigations and recent press reports, did not break new ground and largely repeated his previous claims that U.S. policies in the war on terror contravene international law on human rights. "There is a great deal of coherent, convergent evidence pointing to the existence of a system of 'relocation' or 'outsourcing' of torture," Marty said in the report to the Council of Europe, the human rights watchdog on whose behalf he is investigating.

Seven insurgents escape from Afghanistan prison

Seven Taliban rebels have escaped from Afghanistan's main high-security prison, officials said Tuesday. The men broke out of Policharki Prison on the outskirts of the capital of Kabul on Sunday while relatives were visiting them, and 10 prison guards suspected of aiding the escape have been arrested, said Gen. Abdul Salam Bakshi. "We've launched a manhunt for these Taliban members, but there's no sign of them so far," said Bakshi.

The breakout comes as authorities are refurbishing part of the prison to improve security ahead of the return of Afghan terror suspects being held in U.S. military custody at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The U.S. and Afghan governments said in August that Afghans held at Guantanamo and elsewhere would be sent back to Afghanistan, but didn't say when.

Study: U.S. Army near breaking point

Report pushes for troop reduction

By ROBERT BURNS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Stretched by frequent troop rotations to Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army has become a "thin green line" that could snap unless relief comes soon, according to a study for the Pentagon.

Andrew Krepinevich, a retired Army officer who wrote the report under a Pentagon contract, concluded that the Army cannot

LESSENING TROOP STRESS

To reduce strain on its soldiers, the Army is pursuing several new paths. Some of the plans include:

- The number of active-duty combat brigades would grow over the next few years from 33 to 42, with the stated goal of allowing soldiers to spend two years at their home station for every year they are deployed to a war front.
- In the short term, the Army is adding more troops to its active-duty ranks, although that is intended to be temporary. It

sustain the pace of troop deployments to Iraq long enough to break the back of the insurgency. He also suggested that the Pentagon's decision, announced in December, to begin reducing the

wants to make some internal adjustments, resulting in a larger combat force while keeping the overall Army at about 482,000.

- The most immediate form of relief for the Army would be a substantial reduction in troop levels in Iraq. If the numbers could be cut from the current 136,000 to 100,000 or lower by the end of the year, as many expect, that would provide significant relief. The only announced plan is to cut to about 130,000 by March.

force in Iraq this year was driven in part by a realization that the Army was overextended.

As evidence, Krepinevich points to the Army's 2005 recruiting slump, missing its recruiting goal

for the first time since 1999, and its decision to offer bigger enlistment bonuses and other incentives.

"You really begin to wonder just how much stress and strain there is on the Army, how much longer it can continue," he said. He added that the Army is still a highly effective fighting force and is implementing a plan that will expand the number of combat brigades available for rotations to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The 136-page report represents a more sobering picture of the Army's condition than military officials offer in public. While not released publicly, a copy of the report was provided in response to an Associated Press inquiry.

Col. Lewis Boone, spokesman for Army Forces Command, which is responsible for providing troops to war commanders, said it would be a very extreme characterization to call the Army broken. He said his organization has been able to fulfill every request for troops it has received from field commanders.

George Joulwan, a retired four-star Army general and former NATO commander, agrees the Army is stretched thin.

"Whether they're broken or not, I think I would say if we don't change the way we're doing business, they're in danger of being fractured and broken, and I would agree with that," Joulwan told CNN last month.

Two German engineers taken hostage in Iraq



British troops sit on top of a tank in Basra, southeast of Baghdad, Iraq, on Tuesday. Shiite Muslims are asking for the release of Iraqi policemen, who were arrested Tuesday in connection with militia-linked assassinations by British troops.

Shiites demand release of Iraqi police arrested by British troops

By PAUL GARWOOD
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq

Armed men wearing military fatigues seized two German engineers from a car in northern Iraq on Tuesday in the latest brazen kidnapping to push a foreign government into another desperate race to free its nationals.

The German government confirmed that two young German males from Leipzig were kidnapped Tuesday and said a special crisis team was sent to Iraq to deal with the matter. Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said Berlin was doing "everything in our power so that we not only receive information,

but the hostages will be returned to us safely."

The hostages worked at an Iraqi state-owned detergent plant, near the oil refinery in Beiji, 155 miles north of Baghdad. German media said they were employed by Cryotec Anlagenbau GmbH, a manufacturing and engineering company involved in Iraq since before the 2003 war.

Police Capt. Falah al-Janabi said gunmen using two cars and wearing military uniforms pulled the Germans out of a car while they were heading to work.

Another policeman, who declined to be identified for fear of being targeted by insurgents, said two Iraqi men, apparently co-workers, were in the same car

as the Germans when at least four militants brandishing semi-automatic weapons stopped them.

The kidnapers bundled the Germans into two cars and sped away, leaving the two Iraqis behind, the policeman said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Shiite Muslims in the southern city of Basra demanded British troops free Iraqi policemen arrested Tuesday in connection with multiple militia-linked assassinations.

In the northern city of Samarra, about 1,000 Sunni Arabs marched to condemn the execution-style killings of 31 Sunnis abducted after being rejected from a police academy.

OTHER NEWS

Efforts continued to rescue Jill Carroll, the American freelance reporter kidnapped Jan. 7 in Baghdad. Carroll's appearance last week on a silent videotape aired on Arab TV marked the only sign of her since her abduction.

The U.S. military said four American military personnel were killed in separate incidents Monday, two soldiers in a Baghdad roadside bombing and two Marines in a vehicle accident west of the capital.

Saddam trial postponed again as debate over judges continue

By HAMZA HENDAWI
AND QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq

Judges in the trial of Saddam Hussein tried to remove a newly appointed chief judge Tuesday, a dispute that forced a postponement of the proceedings and deepened the turmoil in what was supposed to be a landmark in Iraq's political progress.

Since its Oct. 19 start, the trial has been defined by delays, chaotic outbursts by Saddam, the assassination of two defense

lawyers and a judge's decision last month to step down after learning that one of the defendants may have been responsible for his brother's execution.

After the trial's most recent session on Dec. 22, the confusion worsened.

The chief judge resigned, complaining about criticism by politicians that he was not doing enough to rein in Saddam. Saeed al-Hammash, the member of the five-judge panel initially named to replace him, was removed, and a new chief judge, Raouf Rasheed Abdel-Rahman, was brought in.

After a nearly five-hour delay Tuesday, court official Raid Juhi told reporters the

hearing had been put off until Sunday because several witnesses and complainants were performing the hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia and could not appear in court.

But two judges involved in the case told The Associated Press the real reason for the delay was disagreement over who should replace chief judge Rizqar Mohammed Amin, a Kurd who had shown patience and composure in dealing with repeated attempts by Saddam and others to delay the proceedings.

According to one judge, some judges wanted al-Hammash reinstated while others supported Abdel-Rahman's appointment.

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