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TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "CBS NEWS' FACE THE NATION. "***

CBS News

FACE THE NATION

Sunday, May 2, 2004

GUESTS: Representative RANDY CUNNINGHAM, (R-CA)

Former Senator MAX CLELAND, (D-GA)

**THOMAS FRIEDMAN
The New York Times**

**General RICHARD MYERS
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff**

MODERATOR: BOB SCHIEFFER - CBS News

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**FACE THE NATION - CBS NEWS
202-457-4481**

BOB SCHIEFFER, host:

Today on FACE THE NATION, an American hostage in Iraq escapes, and the probe into military abuses widens. Thomas Hamill escaped his captors in Iraq today and was returned safely to US forces. In the meantime, the probe of prisoner abuse by American forces in Iraq has widened. How far does this thing go? How many Americans were involved and how will they be dealt with? These are the questions for General Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Then we'll talk with two Vietnam vets, former Senator Max Cleland of Georgia and Congressman Randy Cunningham, Republican of California. In our FACE THE NATION 50th anniversary Flashback, we'll hear once more from Mohammad Ali. Then I'll have a final word on dealing with the prison abuse story in the traditional American way.

But first the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Richard Myers, on FACE THE NATION.

Announcer: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now from CBS News in Washington, Bob Schieffer.

SCHIEFFER: And we begin with General Myers who is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He joins us in the studio. Thank you very much for coming, General. First, do you have any detail about the escape of Thomas Hamill, this civilian who got away from the Iraqis?

General RICHARD MYERS (Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff): Not much. First reports are that he saw American forces through a window or a door and made his escape. We know no more detail than that.

SCHIEFFER: But he's apparently in good shape?

Gen. MYERS: Apparently in good shape and the hunt continues for those that are still held hos--hostage. We've got forces that focus just on that issue alone.

SCHIEFFER: Let's talk a little bit about these horrendous, these just appalling pictures that we saw of this abuse of these Iraqi prisoners by--by American soldiers. "60 Minutes II" broadcast the pictures and now we're told that there was an Army investigation, a 53-page report that Sy Hersh of The New Yorker has obtained, which says that the situation was even worse. What--how could this have happened and what are you going to do about it?

Gen. MYERS: First of all, it is appalling. The pictures we've seen--the actions that we saw on those photographs, that is appalling behavior, not accep--not acceptable behavior by any standards. It's important to realize that it was--it was American soldiers that turned these people in and that as soon as we found out about it, we took very quick action to investigate that situation and then back here through the deputy secretary of Defense, secretary of Defense, put a team, an Army team forward, to look at, theaterwide, our detainee operations. We have lots of detainees in Afghanistan, in Iraq. And look at those operations and to make sure we didn't have a systemic problem or other issues that would come up.

This report apparently is the product of that. It's working its way to me. I haven't seen it. I don't want to comment on that reporting. We just have to see how that works out. But this is not acceptable behavior. You--you--all you have to do is look at the photographs and know that's not how we do business. We don't torture people. We want intelligence, information but--but we have to stay inside international norms and international law. We do that. We try our best to do that. And we regulate ourselves. And we'll continue to do that.

SCHIEFFER: May I just ask you a question that I'm sure a lot of people out there are--are--are saying right now to themselves?

Gen. MYERS: You bet.

SCHIEFFER: You're the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This investigation was carried out--When?--back in December, the report was completed in February. Why would you not have seen the report?

Gen. MYERS: It's just working its way up--up the chain. The--but the action we took, as soon as we heard about this, we were deeply involved in that. I was personally involved in that, making sure that we looked systemwide. And not only that, you know, we manage the various individual services--the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines run detention centers back here. And we need the services to look at those detention centers as well. I'll see this report. I'm sure it just hasn't come to me yet.

SCHIEFFER: What will be done with these people, General? I mean, we--we--we know about the enlisted people. Their names are listed in the report. The report does suggest that higher-ups may have known about this. Do you have information at this point to tell you how far up the chain of command people were aware of what was going on?

Gen. MYERS: I do not at this point. I know about the six individuals. I think one going to court-martial, already, been referred to a court-martial. Article 32 investigations, which is basically the--the basic investigation to see the facts. As those investigations are complete, as other folks are perhaps implicated in--about knowing about it or condoning it or so forth, those will be thoroughly checked out. It will--you know, we will--we'll do what--what the American people would expect, I think, in this case. And that is--and what the Iraqi people expect, is to bring these people for these alleged behavior--bring them to justice, and we're going to do that.

SCHIEFFER: Now the woman, the general, who was in charge of this prison--and apparently she has been relieved of command and sent back home. She suggests that perhaps military intelligence officers were encouraging these guards to treat these people in this way.

Gen. MYERS: Well, we had a--besides looking at how we treat detainees by those folks responsible for the detainees, the day-to-day caring and feeding of the detainees, we're also looking at that aspect of it. And the Army, I think, as--their deputy intelligence chief is--is doing that as we speak, again theaterwide, to see if there is undue pressure and--and how--how those procedures are working.

SCHIEFFER: How big a deal is this, General?

Gen. MYERS: Well, to--to those of us in the armed forces, it's a big deal where a handful of people can sully the reputation of hundreds of thousands of people that are over there trying to give a--a better--a better life to 50 million people. It's a big deal because we take this very seriously. Our--our code of conduct, our ethics, our values, I think it's known in society, are--are very solid, among the highest standards of any organization, any group. It doesn't mean that you're not going to have folks that deviate from time to time. We've got to take swift action in those cases. So I think that's what we owe the Iraqi people. That's what we owe the American people.

I would say on the other hand there are a lot of Iraqis that have daily contact with our forces,

and they get to know the character and the compassion of our forces. And so they--they probably understand this is an aberration, not that it won't be used against the United States of America. It certainly will. But I people that--that know us and deal with us day in and day out know that's an aberration. I would only say, as bad as this is, if you look at our adversaries and the way they celebrate the deaths of innocent men, women and children, after 9/11, after Riyadh, after Madrid, in Iraq after the Baghdad bombings and so forth--they celebrate death of innocent, men and children. There's two different--and they don't police themselves.

SCHIEFFER: Yeah. Let me just ask you...

Gen. MYERS: We don't celebrate this. We...

SCHIEFFER: These--Amnesty International this morning called for an independent investigation of this. Would you be agreeable to that?

Gen. MYERS: That'd be up to the secretary of Defense. He'd have--they'd have to review the request.

SCHIEFFER: What--what--what do you just think about that?

Gen. MYERS: Well, I--I'd have to--that's the first I've heard of it, and I'd have to think about it before I--before I answered.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Let's turn to Fallujah. I--it seems that there may be some sort of change in strategy here, in the sense that, if the reports coming from Iraq are correct, we are now putting Iraqi forces commanded by an Iraqi general between US forces and the insurgents there in Fallujah. What's going on in Fallujah?

Gen. MYERS: Let me--let me try to--to--to clear this up, 'cause there's--it's--there's been a lot of inaccurate reporting through to--through this morning, matter of fact--the morning papers. First of all, the Marines have not withdrawn from Fallujah. They are not withdrawing from Fallujah. Second, the objectives--the end objectives in Fallujah remain the same. The--the foreign fighters, the extremists and the terrorists are going to have to be dealt with. The heavy weapons are going to have to come out of that city. The Marines are going to have to have freedom of movement in that city without being shot at. It's got to go back to--to more normalcy.

The folks that perpetrated the crimes against the Blackwater Security Group are going to have to be identified and hopefully brought to justice. And we need some intelligence from these folks that have been in there. Those are the objectives. How we get there is what we're trying to work out. And if we can do this in partnership with Iraqis, then that is--that's an example that we want in the rest of the country. So we're working that very, very hard.

It has been mentioned that there's this one General Sala, who is th--their--the commander of these--actually, now it's 600 Iraqi forces. That is not true yet. There are a couple of generals whose names are being vetted with the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Iraqi minister of defense, and as--un--until that process is finished, we don't know who is going to lead these forces. Certainly, we're not going to put...

SCHIEFFER: Well, do you think this general can be trusted? I guess that'd be the question I'd have.

Gen. MYERS: Well, that's what they're determining in Baghdad right now. And there are

people that--that know his record, know what he's done in the previous Saddam Hussein regime, and they're going to have to find an appropriate role, if a role at all, for him. There are other generals--another general that they're looking at as well at this point. And we'll let Baghdad do that process. Obviously, it's not going to be in anybody's best interest to put somebody who was connected to the former reg--regime and atrocities--to put him in charge out there. That's not--that's not the kind of partnership we're looking for. But we are looking for a partnership where Iraqis with, in this case, US Marines, work the situation in Fallujah. Could the Marines do it by themselves? Certainly. Have we disadvantaged the Marines by not going faster? No. The good news is, if there's good news in this, that the--the fighters and the extremists in Fallujah keep attacking the Marines, and they--they pay the price.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just go back to one more question about this situation in the prison. You said earlier that you do not believe this is a systemic problem. How can you be sure of that, General?

Gen. MYERS: Well, I'm not sure, but--and I--I mean, I'm not sure. I--I--that's the look--what I s--what I think I said is one of the looks we wanted to do right after we found out about this situation was to direct, and I think it was the Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, we put together a letter for him and working with the Army to look, theaterwide in the Middle East, or specifically Afghanistan and Iraq where we have detainee operations to make sure it's not systemic. If we find out it is, then we--we've got to take action there.

SCHIEFFER: So this could be more than a handful of people when we finally get...

Gen. MYERS: Theoretically I guess. But I--you know, we don't know that yet. I've got to--I've still got to read this report that's coming forward.

SCHIEFFER: All right. General, thank you very much.

Gen. MYERS: Thank you, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: And now we turn to another aspect of all this, how it is playing in the current presidential campaign. To talk about that, joining us from San Diego, California, Congressman Randy Cunningham. He was our first air ace in Vietnam, flew 300 missions there. He was a Navy pilot. With us here in the studio today is former Senator Max Cleland who, as you know, was a triple amputee in Vietnam.

Congressman Cunningham, let me start with you because it seems to me that's what happ--what is--seems to be happening here, we have a war going on in Iraq, but somehow the--kind of the attack operations in both of these campaigns seem to be trying to refight the Vietnam War. Let me just tell you about some of the rhetoric this week, much of it coming from the Hill. At one point Senator Lautenberg, who is a Democrat, called Vice President Cheney 'a chicken hawk,' and a House Republican called John Kerry 'Hanoi John.' I think you, Congressman, said, 'We don't need Jane Fonda as commander in chief.' What is going on here?

Representative RANDY CUNNINGHAM (Republican, California): Well, it's not about Vietnam. It's about Senator Kerry's voting record that bothers me since that time, and his rhetoric during that time and even today the enemy uses that as propaganda. If you look even after the World Trade Center, the first bombing of it, he voted to cut intelligence \$6 billion. I mean, that was irresponsible. Max, my good friend, on the other side here, Georgia's building the F-22. Our F-14s, 15s, 16s and 18s are deficient compared to the SU-30 and SU-37 which are Russian fighters, and he voted against those. That'd mean our kids would die and it's just wrong. He votes against veterans' COLAs, against military COLAs,

and he votes against our--our defense and intel services. And that, to me, is irresponsible and I don't want somebody in there that's going to vote like Jane Fonda as commander in chief. We need, in a time of war...

SCHIEFFER: Well, yes...

Rep. CUNNINGHAM: ...somebody that's strong, somebody that can take care of our troops and look after them.

SCHIEFFER: Well, yes, but I mean, when you call somebody who won a Silver Star Jane Fonda, you're almost challenging their patriotism, aren't you? I mean, irresponsibility may be one thing, but to accuse somebody of being Jane Fonda, as it were, they...

Rep. CUNNINGHAM: No.

SCHIEFFER: ...is that fair?

Rep. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, it is, Bob, because he would vote just like Jane Fonda votes. He's anti-defense, he's anti-military liberal, and you don't want somebody like that that would vote like Jane Fonda or Tom Hayden or Ramsey Clark or--or Ted Kennedy, people like that, that would depreciate our military and our intelligence services in a time of war.

SCHIEFFER: All right, well, let's see--let's see what Senator Cleland would say in response to that.

Former Senator MAX CLELAND (Democrat, Georgia): Well--well, first of all, I have the utmost respect for my friend and fellow Vietnam veteran Randy Cunningham. He risked his life just like so many of us, including John Kerry, in the Vietnam War. It really is unbelievable to me how any allegation could be taken seriously for the man who was wounded three times and still carries shrapnel in his body like John Kerry, who won the Bronze Star with V Device for valor for saving a fellow officer out of the drink in the Mekong Delta and winning the Silver Star for heroism in saving his boat and his crew, and all of his crew came back alive, it seems un--unbelievable to me that that person would go to the United States Senate and serve for 20 years and be un-American or--or unpatriotic or not supporting of veterans. Matter of fact, John Kerry has supported \$4.4 trillion worth of armaments.

But the key is here not Vietnam, but Iraq. We are bogged down in an unwinnable situation because the president did put enough forces in there to win, and we have no strategy to get out. John Kerry understands the lesson of the Vietnam War. One, you don't go to war by yourself. You go with as many friends and allies as possible to help you secure not only the war but the peace afterwards, and you get them in on the take-off, not just the crash landing as President Bush is trying to do now.

And finally you don't go to war because you want to, as John Kerry says, you go to war because you have to. This was a war of choice by George Bush, and we are now paying the price. One year ago, he said, 'Major combat over, mission accomplished, bring 'em on.' And since he said that, some 722 Americans have died, and more are dying each day. Now that is not a stay the course real--realistic stay-the-course message for me.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Mr. CLELAND: I think we need to change course and change presidents as well.

SCHIEFFER: Congressman Cunningham says it is fair to call John Kerry 'Jane Fonda.' Do

you think it is fair to call Dick Cheney a 'chicken hawk.'

Mr. CLELAND: Well, for those people who did not go to war and then plan a war for other people to go to like the people in the White House, President Bush, Dick Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, who never served--Dick Cheney got five deferments. You know, John Kerry volunteered for Vietnam, as did I. President Bush spent that time guarding the shores of Texas and then didn't even show up for his final physical in the--in the Guard and got out eight months early. When you start comparing leadership qualities and people who served under fire and understand the lessons they've learned over the period of time since the Vietnam War, it seems to me John Kerry comes out head and shoulders above anybody in the White House today.

SCHIEFFER: Let me ask both of you what you think about what is going on in Iraq right now. Congressman Cunningham, do you believe we are at a turning point there? There does seem to be some kind of a shift in strategy where we're putting these Iraqi troops between our troops and the insurgents in--in Fallujah. Do you think that's a good idea? Do you think these people can be trusted?

Rep. CUNNINGHAM: I-I think they have to. We're trying to build a force that we can turn over Iraq back to them and--and we sure don't want it going back to Sa--Saddam Hussein type or a Ba'ath Party. And let me--let me comment on what my friend Max said also. You know, President Bush served honorably in the Guard. H--two of his friends were killed in the Guard when he was flying there. If you look at--Dean Martin's son was killed up just north of me here when he flew in the Guard and reserves. And I think it's wrong to blast our Guard and reserve folks. When I served in the Navy, I was responsible for a lot of exercises in Southeast Asia. It was our Guard and reserve that we're--that served us there. And if you take a look, George W. Bush didn't go. His sister's squadron went. It just so happened that he was flying F-102s, which in my opinion couldn't shoot down a Goodyear blimp, but the airplane that he was flying wasn't an airplane that they wanted in Vietnam and that's why he wasn't called up.

Mr. CLELAND: Well, we're not attacking the Guard and reserve. God knows. Within three months, President Bush's forces there will be 50 percent Guard and reserve because he did not have a plan after the take-down of Saddam Hussein to either secure the countryside with enough troops and the original plan called for 400,000 to 500,000 troops as Bob Woodward book says...

Rep. CUNNINGHAM: Max. Max, look up...

Mr. CLELAND: ...and--and we don't have a strategy to win.

Rep. CUNNINGHAM: Look at..

Mr. CLELAND: The only exit strategy is to get the NATO troops in on the ground under the auspices of the UN.

Rep. CUNNINGHAM: Max, look at...

SCHIEFFER: I'll give you 20 seconds here, Congressman, to respond.

Rep. CUNNINGHAM: OK. Look at Bud Day's--look at Bud Day's book. He was tortured for 24 hours. His torture--name--a guy named Bug showed him or asked him how he liked his treatment. He said it was terrible. He said, 'Well, look, even your own Americans are calling you war criminals,' and he showed him pictures and statements of John Kerry from 1971.

SCHIEFFER: Gentlemen, the clock has run out. I'm sorry. Thanks to both of you for this. Maybe we can continue it at another time.

Back in a moment with another FACE THE NATION 50th anniversary Flashback.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Twenty-eight years ago today, FACE THE NATION hosted its first heavyweight boxing champion of the world. The greatest of all time had come under fire and eventually stripped of his title after being convicted of draft evasion. Our questioners asked him about that in our 50th anniversary Flashback.

By 1976 he had regained his heavyweight title. Still known for his stinging jab and biting tongue...

Mr. MUHAMMAD ALI: (From vintage footage) I am the king of the world.

SCHIEFFER: ...our questioners wanted to know if the draft fight was predetermined.

(Excerpt from FACE THE NATION)

Unidentified Man: Mr. Ali, you're obviously a very bright man and yet we're told that at one time that you flunked the draft exam because of the mental test. Did you throw that? Did you throw that--was that one fight you--you threw? Was it fixed?

Mr. ALI: The reason I'm laughing is because it was true. I did fail it. Today I'm not a good reader. I don't--I don't spell good at all. If you gave me a test today, I might fail it because we only have--we have two minutes to do the test. I have--I told them after the--after that, they said, 'Muhammad, you failed the test.' I said, 'I told you I was the greatest not the smartest.'

(End of excerpt)

SCHIEFFER: And that he was, losing only five bouts in his long professional career. Today, Ali continues to be not only a boxing legend but one of the most recognized people in the world.

Unidentified Boy: It's really him. It's him.

SCHIEFFER: Our FACE THE NATION 50th anniversary Flashback.

And I'll be back in a moment with a final word.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally today, I was appalled, as I am certain most Americans were, by those pictures of American prison guards abusing Iraqi prisoners of war. And now reporter Seymour Hersh of The New Yorker has uncovered an Army investigator's report which shows the situation was even worse. The prison guards were apparently encouraged by military intelligence officers, and at least some of their superiors knew what was going on.

By their actions, these depraved, misguided or at the very least very stupid people have put their military comrades in greater danger and done irreparable harm to America. Across the Middle East people are asking, 'Are the Americans no better than Saddam?'

Well, this may be an odd time to say it, but we are. What has happened is a horrible crime, but our reaction shows just how different we are. Saddam would have found this amusing. We are repulsed, and the people who did this will be brought to justice. That's a given in our country. It was, after all, an American MP who first reported the abuses and set off the investigation. Saddam would have had him shot. We honor him for his courage.

And just in case someone down the line did have the idea of covering it all up, America's free press brought it to light. That is a very American thing, and guarantees the problem will be corrected. Saddam would have never let those pictures come to light.

The old Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius once said that 'The measure of a man is the worth of the things he cares about.' So, too, are nations judged. Yes, it was embarrassing and harmful, in the short run, for all of this to become public. But only by making what happened and our reaction to it public can we have any credibility when we say that what America cares about is fair play and a world where the weak cannot be abused by the strong.

That's it for us. We'll see you next week right here on FACE THE NATION.