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Florida based physician to return to Iraq to run for Presidency in 2005

User Rating: ○○○○○○ / 0

Poor ○ ○ ○ ○ ● Best

MWM25ST1

Date: 5/25/2004 2:28:23 PM Eastern Standard Time

FLORIDA BASED PHYSICIAN TO RETURN TO IRAQ TO RUN FOR PRESIDENCY IN 2005

May 25, 2004

By MARK WEISENMILLER of AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TAMPA (AFP)—A Florida physician who was born and raised in Iraq, and who became an American citizen in 1978, will be moving back to his home country of Iraq on June 1 to become a Presidential candidate for that country's 2005 Presidential elections.

Dr. Rasool Sharif, 58, who is a podiatric surgeon in Naples, Florida, closed his foot and ankle practice clinic last week and will soon be returning to his native Iraq to have political strategy meetings with the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who is a Shiite cleric and "the greatest Islamic scholar of his time," according to Dr. Sharif.

Dr. Sharif had two previous meetings with the Grand Ayatollah on two separate trips back to Iraq in the past two months. "I would say that I'm conservative in my political beliefs," he offered. The graduate of Barry University in Miami told AFP that the National Alliance of a United Iraq—"which is a movement, not a political party"—is strongly urging him to run for the Presidency of Iraq.

"It (the National Alliance of a United Iraq) is a group of concerned Iraqi citizens who are doctors, lawyers, businessmen, people from all types of jobs," he explained.

Regarding U.S. foreign policy in Iraq, Dr. Sharif said that "the motive is noble, pure, and humane, but when you try to do rebuilding—not just of physical buildings, but the building of mentally getting the Iraqi people to believe you—it's going to take time."

"Ever since I made my announcement to run for the Presidency of Iraq last week, I have gotten numerous emails and letters of support and have had people calling to volunteer for my Presidential campaign. That, plus the fact that I have met thousands of Iraqis in my recent two trips back to the country, is evidence that I have support (to run for the Iraq Presidential elections, slated for January 1, 2005)," proclaimed Dr. Sharif.

His goal is to build a political base in Iraq and "to lead a party which will include as many ethnics and people from as many different religious groups as possible. The National Alliance of a United Iraq is not against anybody, but for as many Iraqi people as possible."

Only the Presidency of Iraq is good enough for Dr. Sharif. "I would not accept a Vice Presidential position," he noted.

-30

SOURCE: Telephone interview with Dr. Sharif.

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Ex-MP, Fl. Cop Calls Alleged Iraq Prison Abuse " Mind-Boggling" 

User Rating:      / 0

Poor      Best

Subj: MWM14ST1

Date: 5/14/2004 2:54:20 PM Eastern Standard

FLORIDA POLICEMAN WHO WAS MP AT IRAQ PRISON CALLS ALLEGED PRISONER ABUSE " MINDBOGGLING"

May 14, 2004

By MARK WEISENMILLER of AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TAMPA (AFP)—A Florida policeman now back at his job and who served as a prison guard at the Abu Ghraib, Iraq jail, calls the numerous allegations of the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners " mind-boggling."

Hugh Wade, 42, who is a seven year veteran of the City of St. Petersburg (Fl.) Police Department, is also a 10year U.S. Army Reservist member. As part of the 320th Military Police company, he was assigned to the Abu Ghraib jail, as a prison guard, in late November of 2003.

" Shortly after our unit got there, we heard rumors that some of our (U.S. Army) prison guards were taking pictures of naked Iraqi prisoners and also that there was some sexual abuse of the prisoners," said Wade. " At first, when I heard the rumors, I didn't pay too much attention because there's always gossip and rumors when you get many people together like that. After I saw the photographs (of the abuse of Iraqi prisoners), I just found the whole thing mind-boggling."

" Where we were, there were anywhere from 530 to 560 prisoners at one time, " explained Wade. " Multiply that by eight, as there were that many different sections of the prison, and you get the total number of prisoners at Abu Ghraib." This comes to anywhere from 4, 240 to 4, 480 Iraqi prisoners in the jail complex. There were anywhere from 115 to 145 MP's from Wade's unit guarding the 530 to 560 Iraqi prisoners.

Lifestyle conditions at Abu Ghraib were primitive. When Wade and his unit got to the prison in November, there was no hot water or hot showers " although this was being fixed, was being finished when I was discharged ( on March 14, 2004)," commented Wade.

" Our guys ( American military personnel) are doing good things over there in Iraq. When I got there, there were no schools or hospitals per say, but by the time I got left, there were many open schools and hospitals all over Iraq. But the public never sees stories about that; all they see are these pictures of alleged abuse," opined Wade.

He estimated that only five percent of his unit had some sort of law enforcement training to deal with the situation. As Wade is one of the few MP's who actually had some sort of experience in civilian life to prepare hgm to be a prison guard at Abu Gharib, it's notable that he does not believe the current popular theory that most or all of the alleged abuse charges come from a lack of proper training for the American military servicemen and servicewomen who were stationed as guards at the jail complex.

" No, lack of training isn't the answer as to why these alleged incidents occurred. After all, a

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soldier can always get proper training if he or she asks for it. The answer has to be, it **MUST BE** (Wade's emphasis) that these prison guards who are alleged to have done these things were following orders," stated Wade.

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Then who issued such orders? " They couldn't have come from no Army general or high-ranking officer. Such orders would have had to come from Military Intelligence or the CIA ( Central Intelligence Agency), who was in charge of that section of the prison (where the human rights violations of Iraqi prisoners are believed to have taken place)," offered Wade.

-30

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SOURCE: Telephone interview with Staff Sgt. Wade.

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FL.-based lawyer leads team of investigators in case of Saddam Hussein 

User Rating:      / 0

Poor      Best

Subj: MWM13ST1

FLORIDA-BASED ATTORNEY LEADING TEAM OF INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATORS IN CASE AGAINST SADDAM HUSSEIN TO LEAVE FOR IRAQ SOON

May 14, 2004

By MARK WEISENMILLER of AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TAMPA (AFP)— A Florida-based attorney who will lead a squad of investigators from various nations who will look for evidence against Saddam Hussein will soon leave for Iraq and doesn't think that photos of American soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners " will affect our job at all."

Greg Kehoe, who is a member of a Tampa law firm and a former Assistant U.S. Attorney, will be in charge of "anywhere from 50 to 60 investigators" who will search Iraq trying to find evidence that will eventually be used against Saddam Hussein when the former President of Iraq is put on trial.

" We'll start with 50 American investigators, then eventually bring in people (investigators) from Australia, Britain, and also Kuwait, as we want people who really know the Middle East," said Kehoe. He is due to leave Florida and assume his new job, where Kehoe will be based in Baghdad, in the next two weeks.

The pictures of American military personnel humiliating and torturing prisoners in the Abu Ghraib, Iraq prison, which have gotten much international attention in the past two weeks, " shouldn't really affect our job. Our job of finding evidence against Saddam, and what happened in the Abu Ghraib jail, are two separate things," commented Kehoe.

He has experience working with cases that deal in international law. From 1995 to 1999, the 49-year-old Kehoe worked for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Kehoe worked " on about 25 trials" and his most famous prosecution was that of Croatian General Tihomir Blaskic, who was found guilty of atrocities against Muslim civilians in 1993. General Blaskic was sentenced to 47 years in prison, in The Hague, Netherlands trial.

Kehoe offered no opinion as to if Saddam Hussein would be given a life prison sentence or a sentence of execution if found guilty of charges by an Iraqi tribunal. " That's up to the judges hearing the case. I really don't know what they would do. As a prosecutor, I do know that the attorneys who will act as prosecutors against Saddam will probably use recent rulings in the Serbian and Rwandan (war crimes) trial cases as part of their legal precedent in building their case," he said.

One of Kehoe and his team's first jobs will be to get accurate count of corpses, in numerous mass burial pits all over Iraq, to be used as prosecutors as evidence of genocide directly ordered by Saddam Hussein.

" All of the figures I see make the (total corpse) figure to be approximately 300,000, but we will probably never get an exact number," admitted Kehoe. " In addition, there are anywhere from 1.3 to 1.5 million Iraqi people still missing since the start of the Iran-Iraq war in the late 1980's. Where did they go? How many were killed? How many went to neighboring countries? How many left before

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the shooting started? It's our job to try to answer those questions as thoroughly as possible."

In addition to Hussein, numerous other Iraqi Baath political party leaders will face charges before the tribunal. Since no trial date for Hussein and the other Baath defendants has been set " We (the investigators) will have to work quickly and have accurate briefs ready for the prosecutors as soon as we can," said Kehoe.

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SOURCE: Telephone interview with Kehoe

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ACLU Fed. Lawsuit temporarily resolved against FL Mayor who issued anti-Satan order

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Poor ○ ○ ○ ○ ● Best

Subj: MWJAN29STI

From: Mwupi

To: [miguel.enesco@afp.com](mailto:miguel.enesco@afp.com)

ACLU-THREATENED FEDERAL LAWSUIT AGAINST FL. MAYOR WHO ISSUED ANTI-SATAN ORDER TEMPORARILY RESOLVED

January 29,2002

By MARK WEISENMILLER of AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TAMPA (AFP), January 29-The American Civil Liberties Union threatened federal lawsuit against a Florida mayor who wrote a proclamation banning Satan from the town has been temporarily resolved—for the immediate future.

At a Inglis City Council meeting on Tuesday evening, Norm Fugate, City of Inglis Attorney, suggested to the City Council that the November 5, 2001 proclamation by Mayor Carolyn Risher which banned Satan from the town officially be recognized as a personal viewpoint from Risher. The City Council passed the idea by Fugate into a resolution.

Thus, the ACLU federal lawsuit-to-be against Risher has been put on hold " but we're still going to monitor the situation," said Gary Edinger, a Gainesville-based attorney hired by the ACLU to handle the case.

" It was on Halloween night that God told me to write this proclamation," Mayor Risher told AFP. On November fifth, she sat down and actually wrote the anti-Satan order. The proclamations, which were on posts that bordered the town, will be removed, as per Tuesday evening's resolution.

Edinger said that a resident of Inglis called the ACLU to complain about the Satan-themed proclamation.

Risher explained to AFP that she is a devout Christian, who is a member of the Church of God congregation, which has a Pentecostal-theological base. " We have Jewish people who live here (Inglis) and I didn't receive a single complaint from any of them about the proclamation," boasted Risher.

Inglis' population is approximately 1,400 people and the town is about 75 miles north of Tampa. Most of the population are retirees. Risher has been Mayor of the town for the past 10 years.

Edinger also told AFP that " I have been promised that the Mayor will reimburse the town, regarding the printing costs of the proclamations, and I fully expect her to comply."

-30

SOURCES: Telephone interviews with Risher and Edinger this afternoon.

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Fl. Tourism Industry Woes Related to Decrease in Intl. Air Travel 

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Poor      Best

Subj: MWSEPT21ST1

Date: 09/21/2001 9:22:20 AM Pacific Daylight Time

From: Mwupi

To: [stringer@afp.com](mailto:stringer@afp.com)

FLORIDA TOURISM INDUSTRY WOES RELATED TO DECREASE IN INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

September 21, 2001

By MARK WEISENMILLER of AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TAMPA (AFP), September 21-Meeting with leaders of Florida's tourism market, the state's governor pledged to help them restore confidence in keeping Florida an international tourist destination.

Governor Jeb Bush met with members of Florida's tourism marketing consortium, known as VISIT Florida to discuss the massive downturn in business since the four terrorist attacks on U.S. commercial airplanes on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Tourism season, for most areas of Florida, last from September to April of the following year.

" We have more than 300,000 hotel rooms (in Florida), so it's tough to say how many cancellations (of hotel reservations and air flights) we have had due to the recent attacks," explained Tom Flannigan, VISIT Florida spokesman.

Governor Bush met with leaders of VISIT Florida at Amelia Island Plantation, itself a popular Florida tourist attraction. Flannigan told AFP that air travel by tourists accounts for 55% of Florida's tourism overall business. In hard cash terms, that percentage translates into \$71.5 million.

Tourism in Florida brings \$50 billion annually, in tourism and recreational taxable sales, into the state's economy and employs roughly 300,000 people.

At the Amelia Island Plantation meeting, Gov. Bush pledged to start flying on more commercial flights, rather than his customary method of flying on a state-owned jet, as a symbol of the safety of aviation travel in Florida skies.

-30

SOURCES: Telephone interview with Flannigan; past stories on Florida tourism by myself, article in " St. Petersburg Times."

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Chmn. of U.S. Intel. Comm. to Introduce Major Anti-Terrorist Bill in Congress



User Rating:      / 0  
Poor      Best

Subj: MWSEPT19ST1  
Date: 09/19/2001 2:11:07 PM Pacific Daylight Time  
From: Mwupi  
To: [stringer@afp.com](mailto:stringer@afp.com)

CHAIRMAN OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE TO INTRODUCE MAJOR ANTI-TERRORIST BILL IN CONGRESS

September 19, 2001

By MARK WEISENMILLER of AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TAMPA (AFP), September 19-In the wake of the September 11th attacks in America, the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence will introduce a major anti-terrorist bill next week.

U.S. Senator Bob Graham, a Democrat from Florida, will introduce the bill with the co-sponsorship of Senator Diane Feinstein, D.-Ca., explained Javier Betancourt, of Senator Graham's Communications Office.

The bill will " have a provision on electronic surveillance, specifically asking the government to make it easier to tap telephones," added Betancourt.

The main feature of the bill will be a request for the creation of a position where one person would have overall responsibility of the nation's intelligence community. This U.S. Intelligence Czar's center would be in the Executive Office of the White House, if Senator Graham's bill becomes law.

The position would be a permanent one, existing in both peace and war-time.

On Tuesday, Senator Graham told a battalion of reporters in Washington D.C. that the four terrorist takeovers of U.S. civilian aircraft were " part of a larger plan with other terrorism acts, not necessarily hijacking of airplanes."

When asked by AFP if any of these " other terrorism acts" were aimed at countries who are part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Betancourt quickly responded with " we can't say (due to the ongoing FBI probe of the attacks)."

As the chairman of the S.S.C.O.I., Senator Graham is directly responsible for making sure that the American intelligence community obeys the country's laws. The Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the FBI's counterintelligence units are three of the 11 federal departments which Senator Graham and his confederates oversee.

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SOURCES: Telephone interview with Betancourt; article in " Tampa Tribune", and p.r. sheet on Senator Graham's web site.

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FBI Investigation Makes Link To Suspected Fl. Connected Hijacker 

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Poor  Best

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"FLORIDA CONNECTION"-HIJACKER SUSPECTS ROLE IN APPARENT TERRORIST U.S. AIRLINE ATTACKS BECOMING CLEARER IN FBI INVESTIGATION

September 15, 2001

By MARK WEISENMILLER of AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TAMPA (AFP), September 15-Twelve of the 19 suspected hijackers, on the four airline flights that crashed in the U.S. on Tuesday, spent time in Florida, as per a Federal Bureau of Investigations sheet.

The twelve people--all men and all presumed ead by the FBI--lived near aviation schools throughout the state, as the " Florida Connection" to the hijacker suspects became clearer with intensive investigations by FBI agents.

Four men--all trained as pilots at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach--were on American Airlines 11, the Boeing 767, which crashed at 7.45 a.m.E.S.T. into the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

They were: Waleed M. Alshehri, Wail Alshehri, Mohammed Atta, and Abdulaziz Alomari. All had possible residences in Hollywood, Fl. and all used birth certificates that placed them under 35 years of age.

" The investigation into these four men is still going on," said Judy Orihuela, FBI Miami office spokeswoman. She also stated that " this is the biggest manhunt in FBI history," as the federal agency is also investigating if the twelve men had any confederates connected with the hijackings while they were living in Florida.

While Marwan AI-Shehri, who was on United Arilines 175, the Boeing 767 that crashed into the south Tower of the World Trade Center at 7.58 a.m., is believed to have lived in Hollywood, Fl., the other four suspects on the flight did not.

Fayez Ahmed, Ahmed Alghamdi, Hamza Alghamdi, and Mohald Alshehri had possible residences in Delray Beach. None of these four men had pilot training, but Marwan AI-Shehri did.

In a Thursday AFP story centered around the investigation, [E.-R.A.U. spokeswoman](#) Mary Van Buren confirmed that FBI agents were searching student records, for more suspects in the hijackings, for an indefinate period of time.

Finally, Saeed Alghamdi, Ahmed Alhaznawi, and Ahmed Alnami who were on the Boeing 757 United Airlines 93 flight that crashed at 10.10 a.m. in Stony Creek Township, Pa--are believed to have had apartments in Delray Beach.

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None of these three men had flight training.

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Orihuela did not tell AFP if the FBI has found any associates of the twelve in their ongoing investigation. "I just can't say because I just don't know," she admitted.

Another FBI spokeswoman, in Washington D.C. and wishing anonymity, said "They (the investigators) are working 24 hours a day and are checking all possible leads."

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SOURCES: FBI p.r. release on their web site; telephone interview with Orihuela, telephone interview with Van Buren.

NOTE TO EDITOR: the Washington FBI spokeswoman wishing to be anonymous is Ann Todd. I have used her as a source, for other stories, in the past. I may need to do so in the future, so it may be a good idea to keep her identity unmentioned in the story. Also, I'm aware that this story is long as per normal AFP standards. However, this is not a normal situation.

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FL.-CONNECTED ATTACK SUSPECTS HAD FLIGHT SIMULATOR TRAINING

September 13, 2001

By MARK WEISENMILLER of AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TAMPA (AFP), September 13-Both Middle Eastern men whose records at a South Florida aviation school were seized by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents,

in relation to the apparent terrorist attacks in the U.S. on Tuesday, had flight simulator training, a spokeswoman for the school told AFP.

Waleed Al Shehri, 25, and Ali Mohammed Aldamarki, 20, both had training on flight simulators while attending EmbryRiddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, confirmed Mary Van Buren, of the [E.-R.A.U. Communications](#) Department. FBI agents have cleared Aldamarki of any possible involvement in the series of alleged terrorist attacks on American commercial flights on September 11th, stated Van Buren. The FBI told her that Aldamarki was cleared on late Wednesday afternoon.

Al Shehri graduated from Embry-Riddle in 1997, with a Bachelor's Degree in Aeronautical Science. Aldamarki did not graduate from E.-R.A.U., as he left the university in June of 2001, reported The Daytona Beach News-Journal, in an online story.

When the FBI gave E.-R.A.U. a list of names to check if any names on said list were flight students or instructors on Wednesday afternoon, the name of Al Shehri was noted, said the local newspaper Internet website story.

The FBI list, which is believed to have included names of people on the four flight manifests of the airplanes which crashed on Tuesday, was in the form of a computer database printout, explained Van Buren.

While Aldamarki—who had his maroon Camaro sports-car impounded and searched by FBI agents on late Wednesday, in a possible search for explosives—was released, Al Shehri was listed as a passenger on American Airlines Flight 11, a nomenclature for one of the airplanes that exploded. No explosives were found in Aldamarki's automobile.

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For \$10,000, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University students take 40 hours of flight time training. They are awarded a Bachelor's Degree in Aeronautical Science if they pass a battery of tests given by instructors.

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The [E.-R.A.U. campus](#) still has FBI agents on the grounds, searching over student records--over 24 hours after the federal government agency first arrived on campus, said Van Buren.

She also told AFP that Daytona Beach policemen are on the [E.-R.A.U. campus](#) looking for Arabic-speaking men, who are, or may have been, students at E. -R. A. U.

## Returning Customers

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SOURCES: Telephone interview with Van Buren and an article in The Daytona beach News-Journal, whose facts were based on [E.R.A.U. student](#) records, as Van Buren told me.

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Florida Amusement Parks Closed due to Alleged Terrorist U.S. Attacks 

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### FLORIDA AMUSEMENT PARKS CLOSED DUE TO ALLEGED TERRORIST U.S. ATTACKS

September 11, 2001

By MARK WEISENMILLER of AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TAMPA (AFP), September 11-Amusement parks throughout Florida have been closed for unspecified time periods, due to the alleged terrorist attacks in the United States on Tuesday. Walt Disney World in Orlando--the most popular tourist attraction in the state and one of the most popular in the world--closed before noon E.S.T. on Tuesday.

" In an abundance of caution, Walt Disney World Resort has made the decision to close its theme parks, water parks, shopping, and recreational complexes. All resort hotels will remain open to serve our guests," stated the press release. Two paragraphs later, the press release read as follows: " In response to today's events in Washington D.C., New York City, and elsewhere, Walt Disney World is immediately taking steps to heighten security throughout its property."

No employees in the Publicity Department for Walt Disney World would elaborate on the details mentioned in the press release.

" The Disney Corporation sort of symbolizes, for some of the world's population, American capitalism, so I'm sure that this played in the decision to shut the park. Also there is the fact that on any given day, there are in excess of 100,000 people.," said Richard E. Foglesong, author of the recently-published book " Married To The Mouse: Walt Disney World and Orlando." In Tampa and Orlando, Busch Gardens and Sea World also closed, respectively,

at 1 [p.m. E.S.T. Employees](#) for both of the Anheiser-Busch owned entertainment parks showed visitors to the closest exits.

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SOURCES: Telephone interview with Foglesong; p.r. release faxed from Walt Disney World; telephone call made to Busch Gardens media relations department.

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