

SEARCH

NYT Since 1981

[Search](#)

New Army Rules May Snarl Talks With McCain on Detainee Issue

By [ERIC SCHMITT](#)

Published: December 14, 2005

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13 - The Army has approved a new, classified set of interrogation methods that may complicate negotiations over legislation proposed by Senator [John McCain](#) to bar cruel and inhumane treatment of detainees in American custody, military officials said Tuesday.

[Sign In to E-Mail This](#)

[Printer-Friendly](#)

[Reprints](#)

[Save Article](#)



Doug Mills/The New York Times
Senator John McCain

The techniques are included in a 10-page classified addendum to a new Army field manual that was forwarded this week to Stephen A. Cambone, the under secretary of defense for intelligence policy, for final approval, they said.

The addendum provides dozens of examples and goes into exacting detail on what procedures may or may not be used, and in what circumstances. Army

interrogators have never had a set of such specific guidelines that would help teach them how to walk right up to the line between legal and illegal interrogations.

Some military officials said the new guidelines could give the impression that the Army was pushing the limits on

legal interrogation at the very moment when Mr. McCain, Republican of Arizona, is involved in intense three-way negotiations with the House and the Bush administration to prohibit the cruel treatment of prisoners.

In a high-level meeting at the Pentagon on Tuesday, some Army and other Pentagon officials raised concerns that Mr. McCain would be furious at what could appear to be a back-door effort to circumvent his intentions.

"This is a stick in McCain's eye," one official said. "It goes right up to the edge. He's not going to be comfortable with this."

Army officials said the manual required interrogators to comply with the Geneva Conventions, which give broad protections to prisoners of war against coercion, threats or harsh treatment of any kind.

But they declined to give examples of specific interrogation techniques that the addendum authorizes, or the conditions for their use, saying they wanted to prevent captives from learning how to thwart them.

The Bush administration has held that many captives in the campaign against terrorism are not entitled to the same protections as prisoners of war.

Mr. McCain's measure, which the Senate has overwhelmingly approved, would require that only interrogation techniques authorized by the new Army field manual be used on prisoners held by the military.

Mark Salter, Mr. McCain's chief of staff, said that the Army and Pentagon had not briefed his boss or other aides on the contents of the manual or its addendum.

He warned that if the interrogation techniques in the addendum were overly aggressive, they could complicate the talks Mr. McCain continued on Tuesday with Stephen J. Hadley, President Bush's national security adviser.

"This is politically obtuse and damaging," Mr. Salter said in a telephone interview. "The Pentagon hasn't done one molecule of political due diligence on this."

Larry Di Rita, the Defense Department spokesman, said Pentagon officials had not yet told Mr. Hadley about the contents of the classified addendum and any political implications it might pose to discussions with Mr. McCain. Mr. Di Rita said the Pentagon meeting on Tuesday was

simply to review the status of the field manual and related detention policies.

"The field manual is not finished," he said. "We're mindful of the negotiations going on with the White House and Congressional committees on Senator McCain's language."

The officials who described the manual, the meeting on Tuesday and its implications for the negotiations were granted anonymity so they could speak candidly about a sensitive internal debate that involves classified information.

One Army officer expressed exasperation that senior military and civilian officials were failing to articulate a coherent approach toward interrogation, saying much of the confusion centered on disparate definitions of abuse.

"Everybody's talking past each other on this," the officer said. " 'Cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment' is at the crux of the problem, but we've never defined that."

The new manual, the first revision in 13 years, will specifically prohibit practices like stripping prisoners, keeping them in stressful positions for a long time, imposing dietary restrictions, employing police dogs to intimidate prisoners and using sleep deprivation as a tool to get them to talk, Army officials said. In that regard, it imposes new restrictions on what interrogators are allowed to do.

Those practices were not included in the manual in use when most of the abuses occurred at Abu Ghraib in Iraq in the fall of 2003, but neither were they specifically banned.

Army officials said that barring any last-minute problems, they expected the manual to be issued this month.

On Capitol Hill, negotiations intensified Tuesday between Senator John W. Warner, the Virginia Republican who heads the Armed Services Committee, and his counterpart in the House, Representative Duncan Hunter, a California Republican.

The two lawmakers are working with the White House and Mr. McCain to resolve differences on his provision, the last major issue holding up passage of the annual military budget and policy bill.

Mr. Warner, who strongly supports the provision,

expressed confidence that House and Senate negotiators could approve the conference report within 48 hours.

It was unclear, however, how far the House was willing to go to back White House efforts to alter Mr. McCain's language. The speaker, [J. Dennis Hastert](#), met Tuesday with Vice President [Dick Cheney](#) but details of their talks could not be learned.

Mr. Cheney strongly opposes Mr. McCain's measure and unsuccessfully sought to have the Central Intelligence Agency exempted from its restrictions.

Also on Tuesday, Secretary of State [Condoleezza Rice](#), in a speech to the Heritage Foundation, tried to recalibrate her position on the treatment of terrorism suspects in American detention, saying the administration was willing to do anything legal to prevent a terrorist attack.

During her trip through Europe, she made several statements about the administration's policy on torture, culminating with one in Kiev Wednesday when she said the United States prohibits "cruel and inhumane and degrading treatment" of suspects, "whether they are in the United States or outside of the United States."

She reiterated that in a truncated form on Tuesday but added that "we should be prepared to do anything that is legal to prevent another terrorist attack."

The statement in Kiev, which went a long way to placating skeptical Europeans, was based on policy, not legality. So her statement Tuesday could be seen as an effort to scale back from her remarks last week. But some officials dismissed any suggestion of major policy shifts.

"Do not read this in a tortured, convoluted and contrived way," a senior State Department official said.

Joel Brinkley contributed reporting for this article.

[More Articles in Washington >](#)

Ads by Google	what's this?
Alzheimer's or Dementia?	
Learn the important differences between Alzheimer's & Dementia.	
www.JohnsHopkinsHealthAlerts.com	

RELATED ARTICLES

[Rights Group Reports Afghanistan Torture](#) (December 19, 2005)

[PRESIDENT BACKS McCAIN ON ABUSE](#) (December 16, 2005)

[THE REACH OF WAR: PRISON ABUSE: Iraqi Ministry Denies Captives Were Abused](#) (December 13, 2005)

[Rice Appears to Reassure Some Europeans on Treatment of Terror Detainees](#) (December 9, 2005)

RELATED SEARCHES

[United States Armament and Defense](#) | [Torture](#) | [McCain, John](#) | [Defense Department](#)

INSIDE NYTIMES.COM



[Charles Taylor's Rise and Fall](#)



[The Ghost in the Baghdad Museum](#)



[Making of a Toddler Supergroup](#)

Blog
[The Caucus](#)



[Digital Composer](#)



[Kate Phillips and The Times's politics staff on the latest news from Washington and around the nation.](#)

Advertisement

Most E-Mailed Articles The New York Times

[Past 24 Hours](#) | [Past 7 Days](#)

1. [Well: Attention Disorders Can Take a Toll on Marriage](#)
2. [Prone to Error: Earliest Steps to Find Cancer](#)
3. [Adventures in Very Recent Evolution](#)
4. [Many States Adopt National Standards for Their Schools](#)
5. [Recipes for Health: Spicy Quinoa, Cucumber and Tomato Salad](#)

[Go to Complete List](#)

ADVERTISEMENTS

visited on 8/10/2011



The Hamptons alternative, via the A Train -
NYTimes.com/Fashion

[Copyright 2005The New York Times Company](#) | [Home](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [XML](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#) |
[Back to Top](#)
