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THE O'REILLY FACTOR

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Ex-NATO Commander Gen. Wesley Clark on Afghanistan and Iraq Troubles

Wednesday, May 31, 2006

FOX NEWS

This is a *partial transcript* from "The O'Reilly Factor," May 30, 2006, that has been edited for clarity.

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BILL O'REILLY, HOST: Now for the top story tonight, another view of this. Joining us from Washington, FOX News military analyst General Wesley Clark.

General, if you were on active duty over in Iraq, and you heard Congressman Murtha, you know, don't stick up for the military, Charlie, you know, and really bomb throwing, agitating in my opinion, what would you think about that?

GEN. WESLEY CLARK, FOX NEWS MILITARY ANALYST: Well, I don't think I'd interpret it that way, not quite like you put it, Bill. I think that what Congressman Murtha is doing is a legitimate function of the legislative branch.

He's not part of the executive

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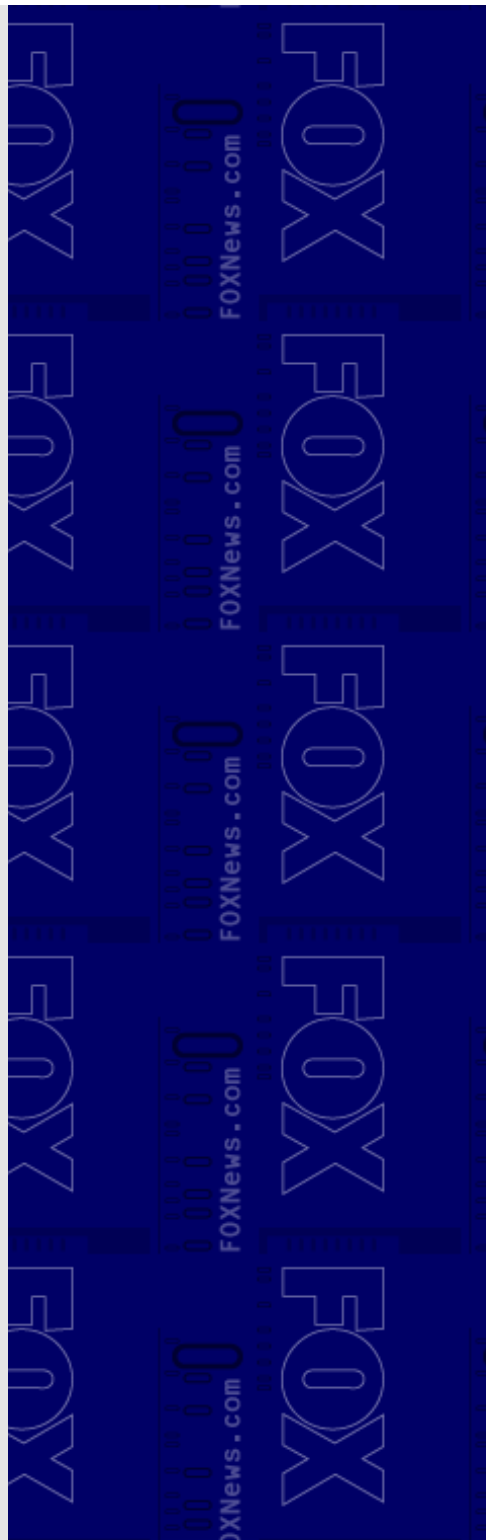
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The Radio Factor w/ Bill O'Reilly



branch of government. And he's getting fed information from the inside. He obviously has had a lot of people who have talk to him about this. He's not making this up. And that's the way he sees it. And he wants to get the facts out.

(Story continues below)

Look, when these things start to happen, and all of my sources in and around the Pentagon indicate that, in fact, something like this incident did happen, it was murder, people were covered up. Now I haven't seen the investigation. But people who have — are familiar with the facts are reporting these things.

And when it happens like that, it's an indicator that you are on the edge of feasibility of your policy. It's an indicator that the stress on the units is such that standards of discipline and performance are breaking down at the margin.

O'REILLY: See, I disagree.

CLARK: And it's a real warning for us.

O'REILLY: I disagree. In **Iwo Jima**, in the Battle of the Bulge, **Normandy**, all these things, and you're a military historian. You know, these

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happen. It happens in every war. It's happened in every army. And you're right. It's a breakdown caused by stress. And the breakdown has to be dealt with by the military extremely quickly, effectively.

CLARK: Yes.

O'REILLY: Murderers, if they're deemed guilty in a military court of justice, have to be punished.

But to draw a wider implication, general, when 95 percent, and I think you'd agree with that figure, of American forces overseas under tremendous stress, are performing heroically every day, to draw a wider implication at this juncture brutally unfair, both to our forces and to our country. What say you?

CLARK: I say that, first of all, you'll have to show me and prove to me that there were ever any American soldiers in Belgium, and **Normandy**, or in Iwo Jima, who murdered civilians.

Secondly, I think you're too low when you say 95 percent of the forces are performing effectively. I'd say 99.5 percent of the forces are performing effectively. Maybe higher.

But when you have incidents like this, and you have chains of command under enormous

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stress, that is an indicator that things aren't going right. You've got to be sensitive of those indicators. You've got to fix the problem. Otherwise, it's going to get worse.

O'REILLY: OK.

CLARK: This is a long-term problem.

O'REILLY: Nobody is disagreeing with that.

CLARK: Well that's my position.

O'REILLY: And in **Normandy**, as you know, U.S. forces captured S.S. forces, who had their hands in the air. And they were unarmed. And they shot them down. You know that. That's on the record. Been documented.

And Iwo Jima, the same thing occurred. The Japanese attempted to surrender, and they were burned in their caves.

CLARK: Bill, that's a lot different than this.

O'REILLY: OK.

CLARK: These are no forces.

O'REILLY: Listen, what I'm trying to say to you is neither of those things, in the Battle of the Bulge or in Iwo Jima reflected negatively on our military, as far as its total performance was concerned.

It was men under stress snapping. That's what this is. This isn't **Abu Ghraib**. Abu Ghraib was cowardice, in my opinion. Off the chart, irresponsible cowardice to do that.

Here.

CLARK: I think we have to see this investigation unfold.

O'REILLY: Right, but Murtha isn't doing that, general.

CLARK: There's a big difference between.

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O'REILLY: But Murtha isn't doing that.

CLARK: A firefight and some guy who suddenly, after he has been shooting at you, throws up his hands, says oh, now you can't shoot me because I've put down my weapon. That's one thing.

It's another thing, if it's true as reported, that they broke into homes.

O'REILLY: OK, but whoa, whoa.

CLARK: And shot men, women, and children.

O'REILLY: I don't want to.

CLARK: That's not the same thing.

O'REILLY: The Marines came to me and said, hey, Mr. O'Reilly, would you do us a favor and wait until we release our report? Because I had confronted Donald Rumsfeld on this very issue and used the Mai Lai massacre as a starting point.

And I said to the Marines fair enough, fair enough. I will let you put out your report before I start to advance a story.

Murtha, a U.S. congressman, goes on and indicts the entire military on a national program. And I'm mad about it. And Murtha doesn't have the stones to come on this program and back up what he says.

CLARK: I think Murtha has every right to say what he's saying. He's not saying.

O'REILLY: In the way he said it?

CLARK: He's saying that what he's heard. That's the legitimate function of the legislative branch of government, just like it could have been your function.

Look, when another commander in chief was under investigation, the news media had no problems talking about it. Now when our soldiers are under investigation, there have always been cases where people have pushed for that.

This is a function — this is the way government works. And.

O'REILLY: I think you have to be tempered in your remarks, general.

CLARK: I think he is tempered in the sense that he has expressed a great deal of respect for the men and women in uniform. John Murtha is a long-time supporter of our armed forces.

O'REILLY: Don't stick up for the military, Charlie? Don't stick up for the military, Charlie? Come on.

CLARK: You know what he's saying, Bill.

O'REILLY: I know what he's saying.

CLARK: This is about a specific incident of misconduct.

O'REILLY: No, this is about.

CLARK: And there's no one in the military who's going to condone that conduct.

O'REILLY: I'm going to give you the last word, general, but this is about Murtha saying I told you so, it's a bad war. That's what it's about. It's about him. Go ahead. I'll give you the last word.

CLARK: Bill, I think — here's my last word — I'm glad you've come around. Iraq was an unnecessary war.

Here's the other point. It's a failure by the way the president defined the mission. The problem is how do we move gracefully from this position?

What we've said is we need to turn this over to the Iraqi government.

O'REILLY: All right.

CLARK: And begin responsible redeployment. But we've got to protect the men and women in uniform and the integrity of our institutions.

O'REILLY: OK.

CLARK: John Murtha is worried about that and so am I.

O'REILLY: And I don't...

CLARK: And you should be, too.

O'REILLY: You're bending over backwards to give him the benefit of the doubt. Maybe I'm wrong.

CLARK: I'm just telling you the way I see it.

O'REILLY: I know. Maybe I'm wrong about it. I'd like to talk to the man face to face like we're talking here. General, thanks as always.

CLARK: Well, let's talk some more, Bill.

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