

British SAS soldier refuses to fight in Iraq

By [Global Research](#)

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A BRITISH SAS soldier has refused to fight in Iraq and has left the army over the “illegal” tactics of US troops and the policies of coalition forces.

After three months in Baghdad, Ben Griffin told his commander that he was no longer prepared to fight alongside American forces.

He said he had witnessed “dozens of illegal acts” by US troops, claiming they viewed all Iraqis as “untermenschen” – the Nazi term for races regarded as sub-human.

The decision sets a remarkable precedent, marking the first time a Special Air Service soldier has refused to go into combat and quit on moral grounds.

It immediately brought an end to Mr Griffin’s exemplary, eight-year career, in which he also served with the Parachute Regiment in Northern Ireland, Macedonia and Afghanistan. But it will also embarrass the British Government and have a potentially profound impact on the cases of other soldiers who have refused to fight. On Wednesday, the pre-trial hearing will begin into the court martial of Flight-Lieutenant Malcolm Kendall-Smith, a Royal Air Force doctor who has refused to return to Iraq for a third tour of duty on the grounds that the war is illegal.

Mr Griffin’s allegations came as British Foreign Office Minister Kim Howells, visiting Basra on Saturday, admitted that Iraq was now “a mess”.

Mr Griffin, 28, who spent two years with the SAS, said the American military’s “gung-ho and trigger-happy mentality” and tactics had completely undermined any chance of winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi population. He said many innocent civilians were arrested in night raids and interrogated by American soldiers, imprisoned in the notorious Abu Ghraib prison or handed over to Iraqi authorities and probably tortured.

Mr Griffin told SAS commanders at the regiment’s base in Hereford, England, that he could not take part in a war that he regarded as illegal. He now believed that Prime Minister Tony Blair and the British Government had repeatedly lied over the war’s conduct.

“I did not join the British Army to conduct American foreign policy,” he said. He expected to be labelled a coward and to face a court martial and imprisonment.

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his convictions”.

Last night Patrick Mercer, the shadow minister for homeland security, said: “Trooper Griffin is a highly experienced soldier. This makes his decision particularly disturbing and his views and opinions must be listened to by the Government.”

The MoD declined to comment.

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