



Colonel: U.S. Soldiers Should Not ‘Impose’ on All Afghan Customs, Including Child Rape



by [Edwin Mora](#) 2 Sep 2015 Washington, D.C.

United States soldiers should tolerate all Afghan customs, even if they go against American moral values, suggested Col. Steve Johnson, referring to a decorated Green Beret who has been reprimanded by the U.S. Army for “striking” a child rapist in Afghanistan back in September 2011.

“You cannot try to impose American values and American norms onto the Afghan culture because they’re completely different... We can report and we can encourage them,” Col.

Johnson told [The News Tribune](#). “We do not have any power or the ability to use our hands to compel them to be what we see as morally better.”

The practice of influential men using underage boys as their sexual partners, known as “[Bacha Bazi](#),” is an illegal but common custom in Afghanistan.

Sgt. First Class (SFC) Charles Martland, the Green Beret, is expected to be kicked out of the Army by November 1.

Johnson’s comments drew the ire of Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA) who, along with Rep. Al Green (D-TX).

Beret veterans, argues that the Army [should not discharge](#) Martland for standing up to the alleged rapist, [identified](#) as Afghan local police (ALP) commander Abdul Rahman.

The incident took place in Afghanistan’s Kunduz province.

Hunter, a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, declared that the Army’s decision to dismiss Sgt. Martland shows the “moral decay” currently afflicting military leadership. Rep. Hunter told Breitbart News:

Martland’s experience shows the type of moral decay among certain aspects of military leadership—starting at the top. In fact, had he not intervened in my opinion, that should have been grounds for removal. At what point will Army leadership stand up for Martland for doing the right thing? Instead, they continue to hide behind a process that seems to makes most sense, in the case specifically, to an Afghan rapist who was happy to see Martland pulled from duty.

Rep. Hunter, who serves on the House Armed Services Committee, has written three letters to Defense Secretary Ashton Carter asking him to intervene in the Army’s case against the Green Beret, for the purpose of granting him his wish to continue serving in the U.S. Army.

Sgt. Martland admitted “striking” the alleged rapist accused of kidnapping, chaining, and raping a 12-year-old boy and then beating his mother for pleading for help. The local police commander reportedly laughed about committing the crimes.

Rep. Duncan Hunter disagrees with Col. Johnson’s comments about U.S. soldiers having to tolerate all Afghan customs even if they go against American moral values.

“It is, in fact, a fundamental duty for our military to project American power, strength, and values,” wrote the congressman in the most recent letter addressed to Sec. Carter, dated September 1. “The ALP commander’s action was a human rights violations—and SFC Martland was right to step in and attempt to protect the child from further harm.”

Duncan also noted that Col. Johnson, in talking to *The News Tribune*, claimed the alleged rapist was “an inch from his death” after he was assaulted by Sgt. Martland and Quinn.

A cultural adviser and linguist who witnessed the incident contradicted those allegations, telling the office of Rep. Hunter, on condition of anonymity, that the rapist exaggerated the nature of his wounds, adding that the provincial police chief “strongly condemned” the alleged rapist and suggested that “he should be dismissed, arrested and put away.”

The police chief commended Sgt. Martland for confronting the Afghan police commander who allegedly laughed when approached by Martland.

Prior to the September 2011 incident, Col. Steve Johnson commanded Sgt. Charles Martland when he was the commander in the Army’s 1st Special Forces Group.

Johnson was in Afghanistan when Martland and Capt. Daniel Quinn, his Green Beret team leader, approached Rahman for allegedly kidnapping, chaining, and raping a 12-year-old boy and then beating his mother for reaching out to the Green Berets for help.

The Army reprimanded Martland and Quinn, relieving them from their duties in Afghanistan’s Kunduz province where the incident took place back in 2011.

Quinn has since taken a private sector job in New York. Sgt. Martland is fighting to stay in the military.

Sgt. Martland is now facing involuntary discharge from the Army.

A spokesperson for the U.S. Army and the public affairs office for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, citing the Privacy Act, told Breitbart News that the Army was unable to confirm whether or not the September 2011 incident is linked to its decision to remove Martland.

When Breitbart News asked for a comment on accusations that the Army had chosen to side with the rapist instead of Sgt. Martland, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, said, “The Privacy Act prevents us from releasing any additional information about the administrative action taken regarding this topic.”

When the 2011 incident occurred, Sgt. Martland was serving with an elite Joint Base Lewis-McChord unit.

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