

Americans jailed in Iraq receive Western visitors

(AP) — Two Americans jailed for entering Iraq illegally received their first Western visitors Wednesday and appeared weary but in good health. They insisted they were inside U.N.-marked territory when arrested.

David Daliberti and William Barloon met with a Polish diplomat and a CNN reporter Wednesday in Abu-Graib prison. They were in "much better shape" than when he saw them before, the Polish diplomat said.

"They are very brave. They are keeping strong and they hope for the best," Ryszard Krystosik, who heads the American interest section in Iraq, told Associated Press

Television.

Daliberti, 41, of Jacksonville, Fla., and Barloon, 39, of New Hampton, Iowa, were arrested March 13 and sentenced Saturday to eight years in prison.

A top Iraqi official said Wednesday that the two Americans could not be given clemency because that would "create a lot of complications," the official Iraqi News Agency reported in a broadcast monitored in Cyprus.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz did not say what those complications might be.

White House press secretary Mike McCurry said the report "is one more rea-

son we are insisting for humanitarian reasons that they be released promptly."

The two aircraft mechanics were working in Kuwait under civilian contract to the U.S. Navy. They say they were going to visit friends when arrested.

CNN said the men were adamant that they were in U.N.-marked territory when they were arrested and said they had passed at least two unmanned barricades before being taken into custody.

Krystosik and CNN visited the pair for two hours. Poland has represented U.S. interests in Iraq since Washington broke off diplomatic relations with Baghdad after its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

"They seemed downcast, hollow-eyed, tired and in a complete state of uncertainty as to what their future is going to be," CNN correspondent Brent Sadler said from the Iraqi capital.

But generally speaking, they appeared healthy. Krystosik said he found them to be "in much better shape" than when he saw them Thursday and Saturday.

Daliberti, however, said he had suffered a heart seizure in Baghdad on Saturday. Barloon hammered on the prison cell doors for three hours trying to attract the attention of prison guards before Daliberti was given medicine and an electrocardiogram. Sadler said he was told.

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Guatemalan army colonel denies role in murders

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Guatemala's president said Wednesday he is convinced a colonel in his army had nothing to do with two high-profile killings, and advised him to file a defamation lawsuit against a U.S. congressman who claimed otherwise.

U.S. Rep. Robert Torricelli accused Col. Julio Roberto Alpirez last week of ordering the deaths of American innkeeper Michael Devine and guerilla leader Efraim Bamaca. Torricelli said Alpirez was a CIA informant at the time.

President Ramiro de Leon Carpio said Wednesday he was convinced Alpirez was innocent, and again challenged the United States to provide him with evidence suggesting otherwise.

"I met Alpirez this morning and let him know he has the right to sue the U.S. congressman here [in Guatemala] ... and in U.S. civil courts for the damage this has caused him and his family," the president said.

De Leon, speaking before leaving for a Central American meeting in neighboring El Salvador, denied that his government had formal ties to the CIA.

"The Guatemalan government and army cannot have knowledge about something illegal and keep it illegal," he said.

Torricelli, D-N.J., leveled the charges against Alpirez in a March 22 letter to President Clinton. He said Alpirez ordered the June 1990 murder of Devine, 49, and the 1992 torture and murder of Bamaca, who was married to American attorney Jennifer Harbury.

Torricelli said Alpirez was on the CIA payroll at the time, and claimed the CIA tried to cover up details of Bamaca's death.

Guatemala asked U.S. officials for evidence of Torricelli's claims, but the congressman's office dismissed the request.

"The facts are not seriously at issue," Torricelli said Tuesday, saying government agencies have "widely admitted" the allegations in leaks to the media.

President Clinton has demanded information from the CIA and threatened to fire agents who withhold it. The agency denies withholding information, but will not say whether Alpirez was an informant.

Torricelli told the National Security Agency and the U.S. Army to secure records that might shed light on the killings. The New York Times reported Wednesday.