New York, 17 June 2004 - Secretary-General's press encounter upon arrival at UNHQ (unofficial transcript)

Q: In light of the prisoner abuses in Iraq, should the US get another exemption on ICC [International Criminal Court] at the Council, for peacekeepers?

SG: As you know, for the past two years, I have spoken quite strongly against the exemption, and I think it would be unfortunate for one to press for such an exemption, given the prisoner abuse in Iraq. I think in this circumstance it would be unwise to press for an exemption, and it would be even more unwise on the part of the Security Council to grant it. It would discredit the Council and the United Nations that stands for rule of law and the primacy of rule of law.

Q: Are you saying that if Iraq had been a signatory, those prisoner abuses would have fallen within the ambit of the Criminal Court?

SG: I am not saying that. What I am saying is that blanket exemption is wrong. It is of dubious judicial value, and I don't think it should be encouraged by the Council.