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## **Abu Ghraib, Caribbean Style**

Editorial  
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Ever since the Abu Ghraib scandal broke, the Bush administration has claimed that the abuses depicted in those horrible photos were an isolated problem that was immediately fixed. The White House has repeatedly proclaimed its respect for the Geneva Conventions, international law and American statutes governing the treatment of prisoners.

An article in The Times on Tuesday by Neil A. Lewis showed how hollow those assurances are. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, prisoners at Guantánamo Bay, where the United States warehouses men captured in Afghanistan, have been subject to unremitting abuse that is sometimes "tantamount to torture." This continued well after the Abu Ghraib scandal came to light, and it may still be going on.

The Red Cross said it first complained about Guantánamo in January 2003. It found mistreatment similar to that at Abu Ghraib, including beatings, prolonged isolation, sexual humiliation and prolonged "stress positions" for prisoners. But the Red Cross found a new, disturbing practice at Guantánamo: the use of medical personnel to help interrogators get information.

The Red Cross reported the same level of abuse in the spring of 2003. By this June, it said, the regime was "more refined and repressive." The Red Cross did say fearful Guantánamo prisoners complained less frequently in 2004 than in 2003 about female interrogators who exposed their breasts, kissed prisoners, touched them sexually and showed them pornography. But it's hard to see that as progress.

The administration's response to the Red Cross report was unsurprising. The military brushed off the Red Cross's complaints when they were made, just as it did at Abu Ghraib. Yesterday, Lawrence Di Rita, a spokesman for Mr. Rumsfeld, said the Red Cross had "their point of view," which was not shared by the Bush administration. The Red Cross's point of view, however, is reflected in the Geneva Conventions and in American law. The recent debate over prisoner abuse has not been brought to the courts, but the Supreme Court has ruled that Mr. Bush cannot suspend due process for prisoners of his choosing.

The White House, the Pentagon and the Justice Department clearly have no intention of addressing the abuse. Indeed, Mr. Bush has nominated one of the architects of the administration's prisoner policy, the White House counsel Alberto Gonzales, to be attorney general. The general who set up the system at Guantánamo is now in charge of prisons in Iraq.

Only Congress can hold the administration accountable and begin to repair the damage to American values and America's image caused by the mistreatment of prisoners. Republican and Democratic senators - like John McCain and Lindsey Graham, and Hillary Clinton and Carl Levin - have tried hard to investigate prisoner abuse. But Republican leaders have ignored the issue. Senator John Kerry never even raised it during the campaign.

Congress should demand that the Central Intelligence Agency stop stonewalling on the release of its inspector general's report on the role of intelligence officers at Abu Ghraib. During confirmation hearings, the Senate Judiciary Committee should press Mr. Gonzales about why he signed off on two legal opinions that justified torture and claimed that Mr. Bush could suspend the Geneva Conventions whenever he liked. They should ask what he intends to do about fixing the problem.

Senator John Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, should resume his valuable hearings on prisoner abuse. Ideally, he would finally ask the Senate leadership to create a investigative committee with subpoena powers to impose accountability on high-ranking generals and civilian officials.