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White House Should Look in Mirror

Letter To the Editor
Boston Globe
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THE WHITE HOUSE has demanded that Newsweek magazine retract a story that claimed that American interrogators at Guantanamo Bay desecrated a copy of the Koran (Page A1, May 17). The story, it turns out, might not be true. According to the Bush administration, the story has hurt America's image and is also responsible for riots in Afghanistan that claimed at least a dozen lives.

Is it possible that there is no one at the White House with a sense of irony? A dubious story leads to a number of deaths and tarnishes America's reputation. Could they think of no other instance in which such a thing has happened? Is it possible that the administration has forgotten the false stories it told -- stories that have since cost many thousands of lives and made the United States a pariah nation?

How arrogant is this administration? It feels it can lecture a magazine over a possible mistake and yet never take responsibility for its own far more serious transgressions. The White House knows it can get away with this because the mainstream media has been cowed.

Newsweek has retracted the story, but there is little chance that the mainstream media will have the courage to write about the irony of the administration's lectures.

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