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Bush admits Guantanamo shattered U.S. image

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Bush admitted that the Guantanamo Bay detention facility has tarnished the U.S. image abroad

United States President George W Bush admitted that the Guantanamo Bay detention facility has tarnished the U.S. image abroad.

However, he said that the criticism wasn't fair.

When asked whether he thinks the long-term detentions and 20 specially designed military commissions could damage America's reputation as fair and just nation, Bush replied:

"We're a nation of laws and to the extent that people say well America is no longer a nation of laws that does hurt our reputation," he said.

"But I think it's an unfair criticism as you might remember our courts have made a ruling."

"They look at the jurisdiction, the right of people in Guantanamo to have habeas [corpus] review and so we're now complying with the court's decisions."

Guantanamo detainee wrongly held

A military review has found a second prisoner at the U.S. Naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, wrongly classified as an enemy combatant, the Navy's top civilian said Monday.

Of the 200 Guantanamo detainees already released, a dozen have returned to the battlefield, Navy Secretary Gordon England said.

During a news conference on Monday, Bush said "You've got to understand the dilemma we're in. These are people that got scooped up off a battlefield attempting to kill U.S. troops. And I want to make sure, before they're released, that they don't come back to kill again."

The latest prisoner to be released would be the second freed under a military process instituted after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled last summer Guantanamo prisoners could challenge their detentions through the U.S. court system.

In an attempt to bolster its case for each of the prisoners against any such challenge, the Pentagon has set up tribunals to review circumstances of each detainee's capture to determine whether they are properly held.

England rejected identifying the prisoner to be released by name or nationality, also the circumstances of his capture were not made public.

About 300 other cases are still being reviewed.

The ACLU's latest disclosures about the prisoners' mistreatment were obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. The documents it obtained contained e-mails between FBI officials whose names the government removed before releasing them.

Several of those e-mails detailed and criticised various interrogation methods they say they witnessed at Guantanamo.

One of the emails, the writer said he witnessed "detainee sitting on the floor of the interview room with an Israeli flag draped around him, loud music being played and a strobe light flashing."

In another mail, the writer said that he witnessed more than once prisoners chained to the floor in a fetal position, with no food or water. They had often soiled themselves.

On one occasion, the mail described, the temperature in a room was lowered so much to the extent that the barefooted detainee shivered. In another incident, the room was so hot to the extent that a detainee was pulling out his hair before passing out.

Executive director of the ACLU Anthony Romero, said that the FBI documents continue to show the U.S. government was "torturing individuals in some instances" and reflects a major rift between FBI agents and the military over proper interrogation techniques.

"There was real concern within our law enforcement community about whether we are torturing individuals," Romero said.

An e-mail dated May 22 said that Bush personally signed off on harsher methods, which was denied by the White House.

Those techniques included sleep deprivation, sensory deprivation by forcing detainees to wear hoods, the use of military dogs and stress positions such as forced squatting for an extended period, the e-mail said.

"What the FBI agent wrote in the e-mail is wrong. There is no executive order on interrogation techniques," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said Monday. "Interrogation methods for military detainees are decisions made by the Department of Defense," an official said on condition of anonymity.

Most of the names in the documents released by the ACLU were blacked out. The name of the FBI author of the May 22 e-mail from Iraq was redacted, but the author was referred to as "On Scene Commander-Baghdad."

A June 25 FBI memo titled "URGENT REPORT" to the FBI director, provided details from someone "who observed serious physical abuses of civilian detainees" in Iraq.

"He described that such abuses included strangulation, beatings, placement of lit cigarettes into the detainees ear openings, and unauthorized interrogations," the document stated. The memo also mentioned "cover-up of these abuses."

Jameel Jaffer, an ACLU lawyer, said the documents made clear there was no question that prisoner abuse by U.S. forces "resulted from policies that were adopted by the highest levels of government." The administration denies this.