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Insults to Core Human Values.

Editorial
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Yet more examples of America's disregard for justice, respect and human rights

Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, self-inflicted wounds by the Bush White House. Janis Karpinski is a name linked to the horrors of Abu Ghraib.

Much of the documented abuse took place while she was in charge of the sprawling jail just outside Baghdad. Karpinski has always claimed that she was unaware of widespread abuse of prisoners and has written a book which is highly critical of the behaviour of guards at Abu Ghraib.

Karpinski was a brigadier-general in the army reserve and was the highest ranking officer demoted as a result of prisoner abuse.

But even allowing for the possibility of an axe-to-grind motive behind her book, the allegations she makes against fellow soldiers and officers, if true, describe nothing less than a catalogue of cruelty and incompetence.

According to Karpinski, prisoners were able to lift their cell doors off hinges and walk free and a sergeant major at the camp behaved like a "wild animal".

As for America's Guantanamo prison facility in Cuba, there is no doubt about its security. However, The Red Cross, which is allowed limited access to the camp, has documented human rights abuse there on top of the most obvious abuse that the entire detention centre is a lawless place where men are held without trial or charge.

The very reason they are held on the island of Cuba, itself under US imposed sanctions, is because it is beyond the jurisdiction of the US courts.

A Saudi rights group has been refused permission to visit Saudi Arabian citizens held at the camp. Other rights groups have also been denied access.

Neither Guantanamo or Abu Ghraib are of any benefit to America and US efforts to reassure allies. They are insults to core values vital to daily life in the US, such as justice, respect, human rights, that America is rightly proud of.