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Justice Denied is No Matter of Pride.

Editorial

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What takes place at Guantanamo is a clear violation of America's honoured traditions

Guantanamo, the shame of the White House, a name that will live in infamy. A team of experts from the United Nations was conditionally invited by Washington to visit the detention centre in the corner of Cuba.

The United States has so far only allowed delegates from the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit the base on condition of strict confidentiality.

The UN team demanded access to the inmates and refused, rightly, to be gagged by the US.

When no guarantee was forthcoming by Washington, the UN refused to play any part in a demeaning charade.

The White House is scared that the torture that takes place in Guantanamo, the brutal force feeding without medical supervision, the daily degradation of inmates, would be publicised by the UN.

The Bush Administration is right to be scared; it should also be ashamed. The United States is a vibrant democracy, a country that has inspired many people around the world with its ideals.

That politicians like Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld should be able to besmirch the proud traditions of America - the tradition where all men enjoy the presumption of innocence, where justice is meant to be colour-blind, where men are equal before the law - by sanctioning what occurs in Guantanamo is an insult.

Guantanamo is a lawless, wretched place where people are held without charge for years on end. It should be shut down before it tarnishes America's image any further.

It is also self-defeating. You cannot fight a so-called war on terror by using means of terror. This is not a time to sacrifice values that have been held dear by generations past.

It is justice that ultimately defeats terror and it is the denial of justice that is the oxygen to its poisoned tentacles.