

**The following text may be printed, copy/pasted, or downloaded and emailed.**

## **Guantánamo prison hailed as a success**

The leader of the Miami-Dade-based Southern Command told Congress the Guantánamo detention center has been an intelligence bonanza.

PABLO BACHELET AND CAROL ROSENBERG

Miami Herald

March 11, 2005

WASHINGTON - The Pentagon's chief of Latin American operations cast the Guantánamo Bay prison for terrorism suspects as a success Wednesday, downplaying abuse allegations and emphasizing the gains of intelligence gathering.

The 550 or so captives at the Navy base in Cuba include "highly trained, dangerous members of al Qaeda, its related terrorist networks and the foreign Taliban regime," Army Gen. Bantz Craddock said in written testimony for the House Armed Services Committee.

About 4,000 reports from Guantánamo detainees have provided an "unprecedented body of information" on al Qaeda and other terror groups, the general in charge of the Miami-Dade-based Southern Command said -- including their leadership, recruiting, funding, training and "plans for attacking the United States and other countries."

He did not give specifics but said the information has led to the apprehensions of Islamic extremists in "several European countries."

"Detainees have also provided information on individuals connected to al Qaeda's pursuit of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons," he added, also not elaborating.

Craddock said there is an abuse-related investigation under way but added that any troop misbehavior uncovered so far has been already dealt with at the 3-year-old prison for Taliban and al Qaeda terrorism suspects created to interrogate captives from Afghanistan.

### **ABUSE REPORTS**

"All credible allegations of abuse have been investigated and appropriate disciplinary action was taken against those who have engaged in misconduct," Craddock said, adding, "There have been only a small number of substantiated allegations of abuse or misconduct at Guantánamo over the last three years."

Meantime, he said there is an ongoing investigation into FBI allegations of "questionable conduct" at the Pentagon's premier interrogation center at Guantánamo Bay.

According to spokesmen at the base in Cuba, soldiers have been disciplined 11 times -- ranging from reductions in rank, fines and reprimands -- for such activities as giving detainees humiliating haircuts, throwing cleaning solvent on a prisoner and slugging a captive who spit on a soldier.

FBI e-mails, however, have offered firsthand accounts of interrogation-related tough treatment -- short-shackling, strobe lights, long bouts of mind-numbing noise and hot and cold extremes -- that disturbed one detainee so much he reportedly tore out his hair.

Captives have likewise claimed they were beaten by rapid reaction forces, terrorized by attack dogs, starved and stripped of their clothing for long periods of time.

Also, the general reported to Congress that, as of Feb. 14, 12 of the captives had been found not to be enemy combatants through Navy-supervised status tribunal hearings. As of Wednesday, the Navy said the number had grown to 22.

### **STATUS REVIEW**

The Pentagon created the process to review the captives' status after the Supreme Court said the detainees were entitled to due process.

Craddock was testifying for the first time since he took charge of the Miami headquarters directing U.S. military operations in the the Southern Hemisphere.

Bachelet reported from Washington, D.C., and Rosenberg from Miami.