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## Open Guantanamo to U.N. Inspections

Editorial

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The United States should open its detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to inspection by the United Nations.

The Bush administration has placed three restrictions on an inquiry by U.N. officials. The United Nations has accepted two of these restrictions: that the inspection take place over the course of only one day and that the delegation consist of only three rather than five U.N. investigators.

The third restriction — which would prevent the inspection team from interviewing detainees — renders the purpose of the visit meaningless. The United Nations has understandably deemed this restriction to be unacceptable.

The United States has already granted the International Committee of the Red Cross the ability to interview detainees as part of its monitoring of conditions at Guantanamo. If, as U.S. officials repeatedly suggest, detainees are not being mistreated, there is no reason why the Bush administration should deny access to U.N. inspectors.

By doing so, however, the administration is adding credence to allegations of torture and inhumane treatment.

Moreover, by denying the United Nations access to prisoners, the United States is setting a reprehensibly low benchmark that serial human rights abusers will emulate. Recall also that it was Saddam Hussein's refusal to allow unfettered access to U.N. weapons inspectors that served as primary evidence of his regime's illegitimacy in the international community.

North Korea and Iran, with their illicit nuclear programs, and China, with its menace to human rights, are carefully observing this U.S. double standard on U.N. inspections. For prudential as much as for pragmatic reasons, the Bush administration should end the hypocrisy.