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## **Scapegoat Justice of Abu Ghraib**

Editorial  
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LYNNDIE ENGLAND, Charles Graner Jr. and Michael Smith -- remember them? They're the small-fry soldiers taking the fall for the disgraceful mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners.

The evidence against these low-ranking personnel is shocking and conclusive. They've degraded themselves, the U.S. Army and this nation's image. Each deserves the varying sentences meted out by military courts.

But the punishments are woefully short of full justice. That would mean finding the starting point for the harrowing images of snarling dogs, pyramids of half-clothed prisoners and others tethered to leashes.

To date, higher-ups have generally dodged blame. Smith, the latest in a line of Abu Ghraib jailkeepers, was sentenced this week for using an attack dog to terrorize detainees. He was given a six-month sentence, though others have received terms of up to 10 years.

But his lawyer had only a limited chance in asking higher-ranking officers and Pentagon brass about a prison atmosphere that tolerated detainee abuse. It's much the same story for other low-level soldiers facing abuse charges.

Serving up a string of sadistic cellblock guards isn't enough. Congress has shown no interest in probing military policies that allowed "aggressive interrogation" that borders on torture. An independent report in 2004 on prisoner-abuse policies faulted Pentagon leaders, such as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, but did little to change policies or an atmosphere of coercive treatment in the U.S. brigades in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and Afghanistan. The mind set on controlling abuse continues to be: Out of sight, out of mind.

It may be dreaming to ask a Republican-led Congress to push for an inquiry that can only be messy for the home team. But it's high time to explore the matter. Who set the broadbrush policies and ignored the predictable results? The country deserves to hear how its military -- and its civilian commanders -- have created a policy that so badly undercuts the war on terror and American values.