The Logic of Torture

By Mark Danner

Tags: Iraq, Torture, Middle East

1.

We've now had fifteen of the highest-level officials involved in this entire operation, from the secretary of defense to the generals in command, and nobody knew that anything was amiss, no one approved anything amiss, nobody did anything amiss. We have a general acceptance of responsibility, but there's no one to blame, except for the people at the very bottom of one prison.

—Senator Mark Dayton (D-Minn.) Armed Services Committee May 19, 2004

What is difficult is separating what we now know from what we have long known but have mostly refused to admit. Though the events and disclosures of the last weeks have taken on the familiar clothing of a Washington scandal—complete with full-dress congressional hearings, daily leaks to reporters from victim and accused alike, and of course the garish, spectacular photographs and videos from Abu Ghraib—beyond that bright glare of revelation lies a dark area of unacknowledged clarity. Behind the exotic brutality so painstakingly recorded in Abu Ghraib, and the multiple tangled plotlines that will be teased out in the coming weeks and months about responsibility, knowledge, and culpability, lies a simple truth, well known but not yet publicly admitted in Washington: that since the attacks of September 11, 2001, officials of the United States, at various locations around the world, from Bagram in Afghanistan to Guantanamo in Cuba to Abu Ghraib in Iraq, have been torturing prisoners. They did this, in the felicitous phrasing of General Taguba’s report, in order to “exploit [them] for actionable intelligence” and they did it, insofar as this is possible, with the institutional approval of the United States government, complete with memoranda from the President’s counsel and officially promulgated decisions, in the case of Afghanistan and Guantanamo, about the nonapplicability of the Geneva Conventions and, in the case of Iraq, about at least three different sets of interrogation policies, two of them modeled on earlier practice in Afghanistan and Cuba.[1]

They did it under the gaze of Red Cross investigators, whose confidential reports—which, after noting that “methods of physical and psychological coercion were used by the military intelligence in a systematic way to gain confessions and extract information,”
then set out these “methods” in stark and sickening detail—were handed over to American military and government authorities and then mysteriously “became lost in the Army's bureaucracy and weren’t adequately addressed.”[3] Or so three of the highest-ranking military officers in the land blandly explained to senators on the Armed Services Committee on May 19. On that same day, as it happened, an unnamed “senior Army officer who served in Iraq” told reporters for The New York Times that in fact the Army had addressed the Red Cross report—“by trying to curtail the international organization’s spot inspections of the prison”:

> After the International Committee of the Red Cross observed abuses in one cellblock on two unannounced inspections in October and complained in writing on Nov. 6, the military responded that inspectors should make appointments before visiting the cellblock. That area was the site of the worst abuses. . . . Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, commander of the 800th Military Police Brigade, whose soldiers guarded the prisoners, said that despite the serious allegations in the Red Cross report, senior officers in Baghdad had treated it in “a light-hearted manner.”[4]

Why had these “senior officers” treated the grave allegations of the Red Cross, now the subject of so much high-level attention, in “a lighthearted manner”? The most plausible answer is that they did so not because they were irresponsible or incompetent or evil but because they were well aware that this report—like the others that had been issued by the Red Cross, and by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch and other wellknown organizations—would have no bearing whatever on what the American military did or did not do in Iraq.

The officers almost certainly knew that, whatever the investigators of the Red Cross observed and wrote, American policies in Abu Ghraib prison were governed by entirely different concerns, and were sanctioned, even as the insurgency in Iraq gained strength and the demand for “actionable intelligence” became more urgent, by their most senior commanders—among others, by Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, the overall commander in Iraq, who on October 12 (about the time Red Cross investigators were making their two unannounced inspections) signed a classified memorandum calling for interrogators at Abu Ghraib to work with military police guards to “manipulate an internee's emotions and weaknesses” and to assume control over the “lighting, heating . . . food, clothing, and shelter” of those they were questioning.[5]

Six weeks later, Brigadier General Karpinski herself wrote to Red Cross officials to say that “military necessity” required the isolation of prisoners of “significant intelligence value” who were not, she asserted, entitled to “obtain full [Geneva Convention] protection,” despite the Bush administration’s stated position that the conventions would be “fully applicable” in Iraq.[6] We now have a good deal of evidence about how military policemen at Abu Ghraib, who had been ordered (according to Sergeant Samuel Provance, one of the first soldiers in military intelligence to speak to reporters) to “strip down prisoners and embarrass them as a way to help 'break' them,”[7] attempted, whether enthusiastically or reluctantly, to fulfill these orders.

2.

We can begin with the story of the as-yet-anonymous prisoner who on January 21, 2004, gave a sworn statement—obtained by The Washington Post—to the military’s Criminal Investigation Division about his time in Abu Ghraib:

> The first day they put me in a dark room and started hitting me in the head and stomach and legs.
They made me raise my hands and sit on my knees. I was like that for four hours. Then the Interrogator came and he was looking at me while they were beating me. Then I stayed in this room for 5 days, naked with no clothes. . . . They put handcuffs on my hand and they cuffed me high for 7 or 8 hours. And that caused a rupture to my right hand and I had a cut that was bleeding and had pus coming from it. They kept me this way on 24, 25, and 26 October. And in the following days, they also put a bag over my head, and of course, this whole time I was without clothes and without anything to sleep on. And one day in November, they started different type of punishment, where an American Police came in my room and put the bag over my head and cuffed my hands and he took me out of the room into the hallway. He started beating me, him, and 5 other American Police. I could see their feet, only, from under the bag.

A couple of those police they were female because I heard their voices and I saw two of the police that were hitting me before they put the bag over my head. One of them was wearing glasses. I couldn't read his name because he put tape over his name. Some of the things they did was make me sit down like a dog, and they would hold the string from the bag and they made me bark like a dog and they were laughing at me. . . . One of the police was telling me to crawl in Arabic, so I crawled on my stomach and the police were spitting on me when I was crawling and hitting me. . . .

Then the police started beating me on my kidneys and then they hit me on my right ear and it started bleeding and I lost consciousness. . . .

A few days before they hit me on my ear, the American police, the guy who wears glasses, he put red woman’s underwear over my head. And then he tied me to the window that is in the cell with my hands behind my back until I lost consciousness. And also when I was in Room #1 they told me to lay down on my stomach and they were jumping from the bed onto my back and my legs. And the other two were spitting on me and calling me names, and they held my hands and legs. After the guy with the glasses got tired, two of the American soldiers brought me to the ground and tied my hands to the door while laying down on my stomach. One of the police was pissing on me and laughing on me. . . . And the soldier and his friend told me in a loud voice to lie down, so I did that. And then the policeman was opening my legs, with a bag over my head, and he sat down between my legs on his knees and I was looking at him from under the bag and they wanted to do me because I saw him and he was opening his pants, so I started screaming loudly and the other police starting hitting me with his feet on my neck and he put his feet on my head so I couldn't scream. . . . And then they put the loudspeaker inside the room and they closed the door and he was yelling in the microphone. . . .

They took me to the room and they signaled me to get on to the floor. And one of the police he put a part of his stick that he always carries inside my ass and I felt it going inside me about 2 centimeters, approximately. And I started screaming, and he pulled it out and he washed it with water inside the room. And then two American girls that were there when they were beating me, they were hitting me with a ball made of sponge on my dick. And when I was tied up in my room, one of the girls, with blonde hair, she is white, she was playing with my dick. . . . And they were taking pictures of me during all these instances.[8]

What is one to make of this Dantesque nightmare journey? The very outlandishness of the brutality might lead one to think such acts, if not themselves fantasies, must be the product of a singularly sadistic mind—and that indeed, as the Army has maintained, we are dealing here with the abuses of a half-dozen or so unstable personalities, left unsupervised, their natures darkened and corrupted by the stresses of war and
homesickness and by the virtually unlimited power that had been granted them. That the
abuse reported by many other Abu Ghraib detainees in their affidavits, and depicted in
the photographs, is very similar does not of course disprove the Army’s “few bad apples”
defense; on the contrary, perhaps these half-dozen or so miscreants simply terrorized
their cellblock, inflicting similar abhorrent acts on anyone they pleased. But then we come
upon the following report, written by the Reuters bureau chief in Baghdad and published
in the magazine *Editor and Publisher*, about the treatment of three Iraqi employees of
Reuters—two cameramen and a driver—who were filming near the site of the downing of
a US helicopter near Fallujah in early January when troops of the 82nd Airborne Division
arrived:

When the soldiers approached them they were standing by their car, a blue
Opel. Salem Uraiby [who had worked for Reuters as a cameraman for twelve
years] shouted “Reuters, Reuters, journalist, journalist.” At least one shot
was fired into the ground close to them.

They were thrown to the ground and soldiers placed guns to their heads.
Their car was searched. Soldiers found their camera equipment and press
badges and discovered no weapons of any kind. Their hands were cuffed
behind their backs and they were thrown roughly into a Humvee where they
lay on the floor. . . .

Once they arrived at the US base (this was [forward operating base] Volturno
near Fallujah) they were kept in a holding area with around 40 other
prisoners in a large room with several open windows. It was bitterly cold. . . .

Bags were alternately placed on their heads and taken off again. Deafening
music was played on loudspeakers directly into their ears and they were told
to dance around the room. Sometimes when they were doing this, soldiers
would shine very bright [flashlights] directly into their eyes and hit them
with the [flashlights]. They were told to lie on the floor and wiggle their
backsides in the air to the music. They were told to do repeated press ups and
to repeatedly stand up from a crouching position and then return to the
crouching position.

Soldiers would move between them, whispering things in their ear. . . . Salem
says they whispered that they wanted to have sex with him and were saying
“come on, just for two minutes.” They also said he should bring his wife so
they could have sex with her. . . .

Soldiers would whisper in their ears “One, two, three . . .” and then shout
something loudly right beside their ear. All of this went on all night . . .
Ahmad said he collapsed by morning. Sattar said he collapsed after Ahmad
and began vomiting. . . .

When they were taken individually for interrogation, they were interrogated
by two American soldiers and an Arab interpreter. All three shouted abuse at
them. They were accused of shooting down the helicopter. Salem, Ahmad,
and Sattar all reported that for their first interrogation they were told to
kneel on the floor with their feet raised off the floor and with their hands
raised in the air.

If they let their feet or hands drop they were slapped and shouted at. Ahmad
said he was forced to insert a finger into his anus and lick it. He was also
forced to lick and chew a shoe. For some of the interrogation tissue paper
was placed in his mouth and he had difficulty breathing and speaking. Sattar
too said he was forced to insert a finger into his anus and lick it. He was then
told to insert this finger in his nose during questioning, still kneeling with his
feet off the ground and his other arm in the air. The Arab interpreter told
him he looked like an elephant. . . .
Ahmad and Sattar both said that they were given badges with the letter “C” on it. They did not know what the badges meant but whenever they were being taken from one place to another in the base, if any soldier saw their badge they would stop to slap them or hurl abuse.[9]

Different soldiers, different unit, different base; and yet it is obvious that much of what might be called the “thematic content” of the abuse is very similar: the hooding, the loud noises, the “stress positions,” the sexual humiliations, the threatened assaults, and the forced violations—all seem to emerge from the same script, a script so widely known that apparently even random soldiers the Reuters staffers encountered in moving about the Volturno base knew their parts and were able to play them. All of this, including the commonly recognized “badge,” suggests a clear program that had been purposely devised and methodically distributed with the intention, in the words of General Sanchez’s October 12 memorandum, of helping American troops “manipulate an internee’s emotions and weaknesses.”

3.

I think what happened is that you took a sophisticated concept at Gitmo, where the Geneva Convention did not apply . . . and you put it in the hands of people [in Iraq] who should have been driving trucks, or doing something else instead of guarding prisoners. It was a disaster waiting to happen.

—Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Armed Services Committee

What “sophisticated concept” does Senator Graham have in mind? How can what seems to be random and bizarre brutality possibly be described as “sophisticated”?

Though we are limited here to what is publicly known, as Senator Graham with his security clearances is not, it is still possible to chart, in the history of “extreme interrogation” since the late Fifties, a general move toward more “scientific” and “touchless” techniques, the lineaments of which are all too evident in the morbid accounts now coming out of Iraq. The most famous compilation of these techniques can be found in the CIA’s manual KUBARK Counterintelligence Interrogation, produced in 1963, and in particular its chapter “The Coercive Counterintelligence Interrogation of Resistant Sources,” which includes the observation that

> All coercive techniques are designed to induce regression. . . . The result of external pressures of sufficient intensity is the loss of those defenses most recently acquired by civilized man. . . . “Relatively small degrees of homeostatic derangement, fatigue, pain, sleep, loss, or anxiety may impair these functions.”[10]

The intent of such “homeostatic derangement,” according to the CIA manual, is to induce “the debility-dependence-dread state,” causing the prisoner to experience the “emotional and motivational reactions of intense fear and anxiety.” . . .

The circumstances of detention are arranged to enhance within the subject his feelings of being cut off from the known and the reassuring, and of being plunged into the strange. . . . Control of the source’s environment permits the interrogator to determine his diet, sleep pattern and other fundamentals. Manipulating these into irregularities, so that the subject becomes disorientated, is very likely to create feelings of fear and helplessness. [emphasis added]

Thus the hooding, the sleep deprivation, the irregular and insufficient meals, and the exposure to intense heat and cold. As a later version of the manual puts it, the
“questioner”

is able to manipulate the subject’s environment, to create unpleasant or intolerable situations, to disrupt patterns of time, space, and sensory perception. . . . Once this disruption is achieved, the subject’s resistance is seriously impaired. He experiences a kind of psychological shock, which may only last briefly, but during which he is far . . . likelier to comply. . . . Frequently the subject will experience a feeling of guilt. If the “questioner” can intensify these guilt feelings, it will increase the subject’s anxiety and his urge to cooperate as a means of escape.[11] [emphasis added]

Viewed in this light, the garish scenes of humiliation pouring out in the photographs and depositions from Abu Ghraib—the men paraded naked down the cellblock with hoods on their heads, the forced masturbation, the forced homosexual activity, and all the rest—begin to be comprehensible; they are in fact staged operas of fabricated shame, intended to “intensify” the prisoner’s “guilt feelings, increase his anxiety and his urge to cooperate.” While many of the elements of abuse seen in the reports from Iraq, particularly the sensory deprivation and “stress positions,” resemble methods used by modern intelligence services, including the Israelis and the British in Northern Ireland, some of the techniques seem clearly designed to exploit the particular sensitivities of Arab culture to public embarrassment, particularly in sexual matters.

The American military, of course, is well aware of these cultural sensitivities; last fall, for example, the Marine Corps offered to its troops, along with a weeklong course on Iraq’s customs and history, a pamphlet which included these admonitions:

Do not shame or humiliate a man in public. Shaming a man will cause him and his family to be anti-Coalition.

The most important qualifier for all shame is for a third party to witness the act. If you must do something likely to cause shame, remove the person from view of others.

Shame is given by placing hoods over a detainee’s head. Avoid this practice.

Placing a detainee on the ground or putting a foot on him implies you are God. This is one of the worst things we can do.

Arabs consider the following things unclean:

Feet or soles of feet.

Using the bathroom around others. Unlike Marines, who are used to open-air toilets, Arab men will not shower/use the bathroom together.

Bodily fluids. . . .[12]

These precepts, intended to help Marines get along with the Iraqis they were occupying by avoiding doing anything, however unwittingly, that might offend them, are turned precisely on their heads by interrogators at Abu Ghraib and other American bases. Detainees are kept hooded and bound; made to crawl and grovel on the floor, often under the feet of the American soldiers; forced to put shoes in their mouths. And in all of this, as the Red Cross report noted, the public nature of the humiliation is absolutely critical; thus the parading of naked bodies, the forced masturbation in front of female soldiers, the confrontation of one naked prisoner with one or more others, the forcing together of naked prisoners in “human pyramids.” And all of this was made to take place in full view not only of foreigners, men and women, but also of that ultimate third party: the ubiquitous digital camera with its inescapable flash, there to let the detainee know that the humiliation would not stop when the act itself did but would be preserved into the future in a way that the detainee would not be able to control. Whatever those taking them intended to do with the photographs, for the prisoners the camera had the potential of
exposing his humiliation to family and friends, and thus served as a “shame multiplier,” putting enormous power in the hands of the interrogator. The prisoner must please his interrogator, else his shame would be unending.

If, as the manuals suggest, the road to effective interrogation lay in “intensifying guilt feelings,” and with them “the subject’s anxiety and his urge to cooperate as a means of escape,” then the bizarre epics of abuse coming out of Abu Ghraib begin to come into focus, slowly resolving from what seems a senseless litany of sadism and brutality to a series of actions that, however abhorrent, conceal within them a certain recognizable logic. Apart from the Reuters report, we don’t know much about what went on in the interrogation rooms themselves; up to now, the professionals working within those rooms have mostly refused to talk.\[13\] We do know, from the statements of several of the military policemen, that the interrogators gave them specific instructions: “Loosen this guy up for us. Make sure he has a bad night. Make sure he gets the treatment.” When one of these soldiers, Sergeant Javal S. Davis, was asked why he didn’t protest the abusive behavior, he answered that he “assumed that if they were doing anything out of the ordinary or outside the guidelines, someone would have said something. Also, the wing belongs to [Military Intelligence] and it appeared that MI personnel approved the abuse.” He went on, speaking about one of the other accused policemen:

The MI staffs, to my understanding, have been giving Graner compliments on the way he has been handling the MI holds [i.e., prisoners held by military intelligence]. Example being statements like “Good job, they’re breaking down real fast”; “They answer every question”, “They’re giving out good information, finally”; and “Keep up the good work”—stuff like that.\[14\]

As a lawyer for another of the accused, Staff Sergeant Ivan Fredericks, told reporters,

The story is not necessarily that there was a direct order. Everybody is far too subtle and smart for that. . . . Realistically, there is a description of an activity, a suggestion that it may be helpful and encouragement that this is exactly what we needed.

These statements were made by accused soldiers who have an obvious motive to shift the blame. Though few in military intelligence have spoken, and three have reportedly claimed the equivalent of Fifth Amendment protection,\[15\] one who has talked to journalists, Sergeant Samuel Provance, confirmed Sergeant Davis’s assertion that the policemen were following orders:

Military intelligence was in control. Setting the conditions for interrogations was strictly dictated by military intelligence. They weren’t the ones carrying it out, but they were the ones telling the MPs to wake the detainees up every hour on the hour. . . .

Provance told the reporters that “the highest ranking officers at the prison were involved and that the Army appears to be trying to deflect attention away from the military intelligence’s role.”\[16\]

One needn’t depend on the assertions of those accused to accept that what happened in Abu Ghraib and elsewhere in Iraq was not the random brutality of “a few bad apples” (which, not surprisingly, happens to be the classic defense governments use in torture cases). One needn’t depend on the wealth of external evidence, including last fall’s visit to Abu Ghraib by Major General Geoffrey Miller, then the commander of Guantanamo (and now commander of Abu Ghraib), in which, according to the Taguba report, he “reviewed current Iraqi Theater ability to rapidly exploit internees for actionable intelligence”\[17\]; or Lieutenant General Sanchez’s October 12 memorandum, issued after General Miller’s visit, instructing intelligence officers to work more closely with military policemen to “manipulate an internee’s emotions and weaknesses”; or statements from Thomas M. Pappas, the colonel in charge of intelligence, that he felt “enormous pressure,” as the insurgency increased in intensity, to “extract more information from prisoners.”\[18\] The
internal evidence—the awful details of the abuse itself and the clear logical narrative they take on when set against what we know of the interrogation methods of the American military and intelligence agencies—is quite enough to show that what happened at Abu Ghraib, whatever it was, did not depend on the sadistic ingenuity of a few bad apples.

This is what we know. The real question now, as so often, is not what we know but what we are prepared to do.

4.

Should we remain in Algeria? If you answer “yes,” then you must accept all the necessary consequences.

—Colonel Philippe Mathieu, *The Battle of Algiers* (1965)

When, as a young intelligence officer, the late General Paul Aussaresses arrived in war-torn Algeria a half-century ago and encountered his first captured insurgent, he discovered that methods of interrogation were widely known and fairly simple:

When I questioned them I started by asking what they knew and they clearly indicated that they were not about to talk. . . .

Then without any hesitation, the policemen showed me the technique used for “extreme” interrogations: first, a beating, which in most cases was enough; then other means, such as electric shocks . . . ; and finally water. Torture by electric shock was made possible by generators used to power field radio transmitters, which were extremely common in Algeria. Electrodes were attached to the prisoner’s ears or testicles, then electric charges of varying intensity were turned on. This was apparently a well-known procedure. . . .[19]

Aussaresses remarks that “almost all the French soldiers who served in Algeria knew more or less that torture was being used but didn’t question the methods because they didn’t have to face the problem directly.” When as a responsible officer he gives a full report to his commander on his methods—which are yielding, as he notes, “very detailed explanations and other names, allowing me to make further arrests”—he encounters an interesting response:

“Are you sure there aren’t other ways of getting people to talk?” he asked me nervously. “I mean methods that are . . .”

“Faster?” I asked.

“No, that’s not what I mean.”

“I know what you mean, Colonel. You’re thinking of cleaner ways. You feel that none of this fits in with our humanistic tradition.”

“Yes, that’s what I mean,” answered the Colonel.

“Even if I did agree with you, sir, to carry out the mission you’ve given me, I must avoid thinking in moral terms and only do what is most useful.”

Aussaresses’s logic is that of a practical soldier: a traditional army can defeat a determined guerrilla foe only through superior intelligence; superior intelligence can be wrested from hardened insurgents in time to make it “actionable” only through the use of “extreme interrogation”—torture; therefore, to have a chance of prevailing in Algeria the French army must torture. He has nothing but contempt for superior officers, like his
It has long since become clear that President Bush and his highest officials, as they confronted the world on September 11, 2001, and the days after, made a series of decisions about methods of warfare and interrogation that General Aussaresses, the practical soldier, would have well understood. The effect of those decisions—among them, the decision to imprison indefinitely those seized in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the war on terror, the decision to designate those prisoners as “unlawful combatants” and to withhold from them the protections of the Geneva Convention, and finally the decision to employ “high pressure methods” to extract “actionable intelligence” from them—was officially to transform the United States from a nation that did not torture to one that did. And the decisions were not, at least in their broad outlines, kept secret. They were known to officials of the other branches of the government, and to the public.

The direct consequences of those decisions, including details of the methods of interrogation applied in Guantanamo and at Bagram Air Base, began to emerge more than a year ago. It took the Abu Ghraib photographs, however, set against the violence and chaos of an increasingly unpopular war in Iraq, to bring Americans’ torture of prisoners up for public discussion. And just as General Aussaresses would recognize some of the methods Americans are employing in their secret interrogation rooms—notably, the practice of “water-boarding,” strapping prisoners down and submerging them until they are on the point of drowning, long a favorite not only of the French in Algeria but of the Argentines, Uruguayans, and others in Latin America[20]—the general would smile disdainfully at the contradictions and hypocrisies of America’s current scandal over Abu Ghraib: the senior American officers in their ribbons prevaricating before the senators, the “disgust” expressed by high officials over what the Abu Ghraib photographs reveal, and the continuing insistence that what went on in Abu Ghraib was only, as President Bush told the nation, “disgraceful conduct by a few American troops, who dishonored our country and disregarded our values.” General Aussaresses argued frankly for the necessity of torture but did not reckon on its political cost to what was, in the end, a political war.

A half-century later, the United States is engaged in another political war: not only the struggle against the insurgency in Iraq but the broader effort, if you credit the administration’s words, to “transform the Middle East” so that “it will no longer produce ideologies of hatred that lead men to fly airplanes into buildings in New York and Washington.” We can’t know the value of the intelligence the torturers managed to extract, though top commanders admitted to The New York Times on May 27 that they learned “little about the insurgency” from the interrogations. What is clear is that the Abu Ghraib photographs and the terrible story they tell have done great damage to what was left of America’s moral power in the world, and thus its power to inspire hope rather than hatred among Muslims. The photographs “do not represent America,” or so the President asserts, and we nod our heads and agree. But what exactly does this mean? As so often, it took a comic, Rob Corddry on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, to point out the grim contradiction in this:

There’s no question what took place in that prison was horrible. But the Arab world has to realize that the US shouldn’t be judged on the actions of a . . . well, we shouldn’t be judged on actions. It’s our principles that matter, our inspiring, abstract notions. Remember: Just because torturing prisoners is something we did, doesn’t mean it’s something we would do.
Over the next weeks and months, Americans will decide how to confront what their fellow citizens did at Abu Ghraib, and what they go on doing at Bagram and Guantanamo and other secret prisons. By their actions they will decide whether they will begin to close the growing difference between what Americans say they are and what they actually do. Iraqis and others around the world will be watching to see whether all the torture will be stopped and whether those truly responsible for it, military and civilian, will be punished. This is, after all, as our President never tires of saying, a war of ideas. Now, as the photographs of Abu Ghraib make clear, it has also become a struggle over what, if anything, really does represent America.

—May 27, 2004

(This is the second of two articles.)

Notes

[1] “In Abu Ghraib prison alone, senior officials have testified that no less than three sets of interrogation policies were put in play at different times— those cited in Army field manuals, those used by interrogators who previously worked in Afghanistan and a third set created by Iraq’s commanding general after policies used at Guantanamo Bay,” from Craig Gordon, “High-Pressure Tactics: Critics Say Bush Policies—Post 9/11—Gave Interrogators Leeway to Push Beyond Normal Limits,” Newsday, May 23, 2004.


[8] See "Translation of Sworn Statement Provided by _ Detainee # 1430/21 Jan 04," available along with thirteen other affidavits from Iraqis, at "Sworn Statements by Abu Ghraib Detainees," www.washingtonpost. com. The name was withheld by The Washington Post because the witness "was an alleged victim of sexual assault."


[13] Though we do know something of what has gone on at other American interrogation centers, for example, the American air base at Bagram, Afghanistan. See Don Van Natta Jr., “Questioning Terror Suspects in a Dark and Surreal World,” The New York Times, March 9, 2003, and my “Torture and Truth.”


[16] See White and Higham, “Intelligence Officers Tied to Abuses in Iraq.”

