

Cuban Outrage

The fake “parliament” of the communist dictatorship of Cuba has been **criticising** conditions under which unlawful combatants are being held at Guantanamo Bay. We are not sure what President Castro hopes to achieve with this drivel. But if he has public-relations consultants, it must surely be against their advice that he has dared to invite comparison between Guantanamo Bay and the rest of Cuba.

A Cuban parliament statement called the leased US facility a “concentration camp”

That's a term usually reserved for places where innocent people or political prisoners are detained. Its misuse in this context is despicable.

It might be an appropriate term, however, for describing a country which is generally a hell hole and where attempted emigration is a **criminal offence**.

and said inmates were subjected to “indescribable humiliations”.

That's presumably why they didn't deign to describe them, then. Unlike **these** people.

The comments add to growing concern over the rights of those being held.

What, like **this**?

[...]

The prisoners are “totally isolated, without the possibility of communicating with their families or access to appropriate legal defence,” the Cuban statement said.

What, like **this**?

“They commit very serious attacks on human dignity, in an atmosphere of hysteria and fear

What, like **this**?

nurtured by North America's far-right,” it continued.

What, like **this**?

How long before the Cuban regime disintegrates under the torsional strain of its own twisted cynicism?

Sun, 12/28/2003 - 21:22 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

too linky

i would have liked this post better if it made more sense without reading the links (which i don't intend to). couldn't some short quotes from each have made things clearer?

btw i realise this would be difficult with only one type of block quote. but if you had 2 or more it'd work ok. i just recently made 4 for my blog just by using different colours. i think it works well. if you don't like that, i'm sure you could figure something else out too. (if you're against colour for aesthetic reasons, how about plain black dotted outline vs plain black dashed outline vs plain black solid outline vs no outline).

-- Elliot Temple

<http://www.curi.us/>

by [Elliot Temple](#) on Mon, 12/29/2003 - 05:03 | [reply](#)

Pot calling the kettle black

So your point is that Cuba treats his prisoners as badly as we do? Should we be proud of this as Americans?

I particularly like the implication that Castro is cruel for transferring his prisoners to locations far away from their families, as if this is something that has not been a common practice in the US since the prison system was privatized. There are thousands of people right here in Massachusetts who have been unable to visit their loved ones because they have been sold to the Texas prison industry.

Last One Speaks

by a reader on Mon, 12/29/2003 - 12:48 | [reply](#)

Re: Pot calling the kettle black

Last One Speaks asks:

So your point is that Cuba treats his prisoners as badly as we do?

No. That's your point, and it is false as well as irrelevant. We urge you to read the links. You too, Elliot.

by [Editor](#) on Mon, 12/29/2003 - 13:08 | [reply](#)

Castro is no President

I'm not criticizing your post but I do have to mention that Castro is not the President of Cuba. Presidents are elected democratically, and we all know how democratic the elections in Cuba are.

It's impossible to compare the Guantanamo prisoners to the thousands upon thousands of prisoners held in Castro's jails. For one, I don't think there are any prisoners in Guantanamo jailed for being simply independent journalists trying to enlighten the Cuban people about the world around them. I'm sure the conditions and treatment are completely night and day also.

If anyone, such as the commentor "a reader" above believes these comparisons to have some legitimacy, please visit Cubanet or my site (Babalu) for some schooling on the cruelty of Castro's regime.

by a reader on Mon, 12/29/2003 - 14:07 | [reply](#)

Good Post

Excellent. Castro is just hoping to distract from recent E.U. condemnation by trying to shift the focus to U.S. detainees.

And as to the Texas prison industry cited by Last One Speaks...write your congressman and have the law changed. Yes, we're allowed to work for reform here in the U.S. Just look at the recently passed prison rape legislation which was created out of grass-roots efforts. Those same grass-roots efforts would land YOU in jail in Cuba. There's no comparison.

--scott

by a reader on Mon, 12/29/2003 - 17:40 | [reply](#)

Read my Links

Editor note:

No. That's your point, and it is false as well as irrelevant. We urge you to read the links. You too, Elliot.

I did read the links, twice to make sure I didn't miss anything and the conditions in our own prisons is completely relevant on the point of human rights and inhumane treatment of prisoners. Read [this report](#) on Correctional Corp of America's failure to meet its obligations to US citizens.

Further [excerpts from the press release](#).

"Not only will CCA be unable to fill its beds, but the company has not improved operationally and is still mired by debt and controversy since going virtually bankrupt in the late 1990s."

..."States should think twice before signing any new contracts with CCA," said co-author Mafruza Khan, also from Good Jobs First. "This report shows that CCA has not undergone any significant

transformation since being racked by scandals at its prisons in the

late 1990s. It is still involved in numerous controversies and lawsuits involving conditions in its facilities."

and this on how they get away with it,

The study also notes hefty campaign contributions by CCA to legislators to drive policies to maintain and grow the prisoner population. The report reviews cases in which CCA appeared to use its contributions and ties with public officials and legislators to help it win new contracts and influence public policy. According to the Institute on Money in State Politics (www.followthemoney.org), 830 candidates in the 2000 election received contributions from the private prison industry for a total of \$1.12 million. CCA was the top giver with 600 contributions for a total of \$443,300..

Sorry, I'm no supporter of Castro but the Bush regime is no better.

Last One Speaks

by a reader on Mon, 12/29/2003 - 19:35 | [reply](#)

erm

when you say "no better" do you really mean they are exactly equally bad? is castro not even a tiny bit worse?

-- Elliot Temple

<http://www.curi.us/>

by [Elliot Temple](#) on Mon, 12/29/2003 - 21:39 | [reply](#)

RE: ERM

Elliot was heard asking:

when you say "no better" do you really mean they are exactly equally bad? is castro not even a tiny bit worse?

-- Elliot Temple

Yes I mean any violation of human or civil rights, by anyone, is exactly equally inhumane. And on that criteria, I find the policies of my own country worse because the violations occur on a wider scale than one aging dictator can acheive within his limited sphere of influence.

The US prison gulag currently holds over 2 million Americans. We have more people in jail than China, and I just don't see that we have any moral ground to stand on in the face of Castro's criticism. Fidel may be hypocritical but he's right about Gitmo. We are denying those prisoners basic rights that they deserve under international conventions. We would expect no less if the situation were reversed.

just my opinion,

Last One Speaks

by a reader on Tue, 12/30/2003 - 01:14 | [reply](#)

i can see clearly now

so all abuses are equally inhumane, and the USA is the worst. got it.

PS the singular is criterion

-- Elliot Temple

<http://www.curi.us/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Tue, 12/30/2003 - 03:57 | [reply](#)

CASTRO AS PRESIDENT? BAH, HUMBUG!

You've hit it right on the button. He never was and never will be a President. For one thing, he doesn't have the stature to be anything more than a thug, and dictator, kept in office merely by force of arms.

Why is it that every criticism of La Maxima Cucaracha (LMC) in Havana brings these guys out of the woodwork who try to make the U.S. look like the *Evil Empire* and Castroconcentrationcamp land a *Paradise* where everyone enjoys free schooling and free medical care, which supposedly are far more valuable than **FREEDOM**. Cuba, before LMC, always had a top rating for education in the Americas, and the medical care in Cuba today is sub-par by any standard.

His supposed-caring nature in sending Cuban doctors abroad to help in the rural areas of South America is merely a cover-up for these subversive communist infiltrators, the same thing he did in S.A. in his youth.

Look how Capitalism produced the only success in all of Cuba over the past 45 years in the Tourist Zone, and compare that with the abject poverty in the rest of the Island! That thug is a moron who has mesmerized Hollywood. Why, I'll never know.

Keep the pressure on. You're doing a good job.

by **Howard e.** on Tue, 12/30/2003 - 06:52 | [reply](#)

THE BLACK KETTLE

Well, I don't see what the Massachusetts's prisoners situation has to do with Cuban prisoners, unless you have a loved one down there in Texas and must make the comparison. First, I assume that Massachusetts's prisoners are those convicted of felonies, even murder. In Cuba we are speaking about those who differ with The Great Cockroach politically, which can result in execution or a long prison sentence. That's a big difference, amigo. (There have been more than 10,000 executions of political dissidents in Cuba since 1959, not murderers, but those who disagreed with LMC.)

Secondly, we are talking about a legally constituted government in

Massachusetts and the U.S. vs a Dictatorship imposed upon Cubans and laws they did not initiate by majority vote.

Third, we are talking about **a free people with inalienable rights** versus a **slave state** where The Great Cockroach has ALL the authority, even though he never held an elective office in his life. How would you like to still have old mayor "Curley" still in power in Boston? As corrupt as they were, they don't even come close to what Cubans suffer today. Bah, humbug.

by [Howard e.](#) on Tue, 12/30/2003 - 07:09 | [reply](#)

Moral Equivalency

Cuba treats its average citizens much worse than the US treats its prisoners. US convicts have far more rights of appeal, just to name one difference. Cuba is one big slave plantation, Guantanamo is a prison camp for enemy combatants. There's a big difference, and if you can't see it then you're wearing moral blinders.

As for the poor "loved ones" who can't visit their beloved convicted felons, that wouldn't be the case if they hadn't committed the crimes they were convicted of in the first place. Being out of touch with their "loved ones" is a penalty they should have considered before committing those crimes.

Tim Starr

by a reader on Wed, 12/31/2003 - 22:46 | [reply](#)

What's Castro got to do with our sorry human rights record?

Last One Speak's point was correct, and the last few posters have proven it. WE'RE the nation that prattles on endlessly about civil rights and freedom, but hypocritically fall short of our own standards. I **expect** Fidel Castro to act like a tinhorn despot and to oppress his people in the name of building some socialist utopia.

What is your (our) excuse? Pointing to Castro or other despots and saying "we're not as bad as him" is pretty laughable as a reason to ignore our own manifest shortcomings.

To the last several posters who go on about U.S. prisoners deserving what they get because of their own supposed choices about disobeying the laws, etc., have you read the incarceration statistics Last One Speaks cited? Exactly what do you make of it that we have more prisoners and a higher incarceration rate (owing to the quite political, racist "War on Drugs") than the all-time badass totalitarian countries, you know, Commie China, Russia, Cuba and all of those "Axis of Evil" countries you all love to hate?

Cuba? Who cares? I'll grant you Castro is a badass if you'll extend to the rest of your fellow citizens that it's morally wrong and a bad thing to send one of Last One Speaks' black or brown

Massachusetts neighbors to prison in Texas for '20 to life' for

selling/using cocaine or marijuana.

And yes, I do assume from your hugely self-righteous bleatings that your response might be "Yada Yada, Drugs Bad, they 'chose' to break the law, etc.", but perhaps even someone as cloistered and self-righteous as the last few posters have probably tried dangerous "illegal drugs" like marijuana or cocaine, and unless you're totally partisan and a right-wing Moral Majority ideologue, you'll probably agree that the use or sale of those substances isn't much different than legal, politically-correct drugs like alcohol or tobacco and doesn't rate Draconian prison sentences and the break-up of the "offenders" family to a distant state.

But can we leave Castro out of it? Castro being a jerk doesn't at all condone or justify our own sorry human rights record in this regard.

by a reader on Sun, 01/04/2004 - 00:33 | [reply](#)

Is this a trick question?

A reader asked :

Exactly what do you make of it that we have more prisoners and a higher incarceration rate (owing to the quite political, racist "War on Drugs") than the all-time badass totalitarian countries, you know, Commie China, Russia, Cuba and all of those "Axis of Evil" countries you all love to hate?

Well, assuming this is true, I would guess that those countries killed/are killing more prisoners than the US.

How'd I do?

Rowina

by a reader on Mon, 01/05/2004 - 00:45 | [reply](#)