

No Excuses

There is nothing in **this** report of mistreatment of prisoners by US soldiers in Afghanistan that would make a reasonable person doubt its authenticity or a decent person deny its seriousness.

It is a story of casual cruelty, torture and murder, unmitigated by the heat of battle, force majeure, 'ticking-bomb' necessity, or even good intentions.

The United States authorities will now prosecute the perpetrators of those crimes. We are confident that they will also discover, and do whatever is necessary to rectify, the negligence or institutional failings at a higher level which, it seems likely, were a necessary condition for those crimes to be committed.

None of this has any bearing on the justice of the liberation of Afghanistan, nor of Iraq. Those wars and any future wars of that sort will turn closed societies where casual cruelty and insitutional flaws are allowed to remain entrenched, into open societies that try continuously to root out such problems. But more: the overall war is a war of necessity – a **come-as-you-are war**. The United States did not ask to be attacked, nor did the West choose the logic of what has been or will be necessary to allow its uniquely benevolent and peaceful civilisation to survive. Nor, therefore, can the fear of further such incidents affect any future decision by the United States or its allies to take military action. To consider those two issues as even remotely connected would in the first instance be an insult and betrayal of the liberated. But more importantly it would also be a betrayal of those for whose longer-term protection such action would, if it were justified, be **essential**.

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A bit strong?

I agree with the sentiment, but not the literal assertion of the strong position that it's wrong "To consider those two issues as even remotely connected."

I think it's right to consider those costs that we can reasonably expect when deciding whether an action is justified.

Again, I agree that these costs are unlikely to be dispositive, when

weighed against the enormous potential benefits of these actions.

But, I think it weakens the case to state it too strongly.

Gil

by **Gil** on Mon, 05/23/2005 - 18:27 | [reply](#)

The NY Times a reliable source?

Pardon me while I barf my dinner. I wouldn't believe anything the NY Times reports without verification from two other independent sources. As far as deaths go of detainees you realize that over five per cent of the prisoners next by the US in WWII died?

by TJ Jackson on Tue, 06/28/2005 - 03:27 | [reply](#)