



The Pentagon's Detainee Torture Whitewash

The Obama administration also [told a federal court February 20](#) that detainees incarcerated elsewhere had no rights whatsoever. "Having considered the matter, the government adheres to its previously articulated position," the Justice Department argued before the Washington, D.C., federal court. In other words, the Bush policy of denial of basic human rights and [the use of torture](#) will continue against detainees. The case argued before the court involved the treatment of five detainees at Bagram Air Force base in Afghanistan. The detainees were seeking treatment in accord with Geneva Convention protocols, and the Obama administration took the Bush position that detainees have no human rights.

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The results of the earlier-mentioned Pentagon report shouldn't have been a surprise, as treatment of detainees at Guantanamo has gradually improved over the past two years anyway. The huge international spotlight on Guantanamo led the Bush administration to make improvements for detainees.

Although interrogators were trained at Guantanamo in [Chinese communist-inspired torture techniques designed to elicit false confessions](#), Guantanamo was not the location of the worst forms of torture conducted under the Bush administration. By all accounts, the worst torture occurred in the [Salt Pit prison](#) in Afghanistan, [secret CIA prisons](#) in Poland and Romania, and in rendition programs where detainees were outsourced to [Uzbekistan](#), [Egypt](#), [Morocco](#), [Syria](#), and [other brutal dictatorships](#) for torture. [Several dozen detainees](#) of those tortured in these other venues [have been killed as a result of torture](#).

If the Pentagon report on the Guantanamo prison were part of a genuine Obama administration effort to uncover torture where it has occurred and to make sure it does not happen again, that effort would have to extend to the prisons in Afghanistan and elsewhere as well as rendition programs. Thus far, when the administration has been pressed in federal court for documentation on rendition programs, they've simply [offered "state secrets" excuses](#) for keeping these programs secret. And the Obama administration has [offered to provide government lawyers for the Bush-era architects of torture policies](#). The February 20 government statement on the treatment of five detainees at Bagram Air Force base simply extends the continuity.

One month into the Obama administration, the public and private emphasis has been solely on the highly publicized Guantanamo prison rather than the prisons where the worst forms of torture occurred.

The Obama administration wants to look good. They want to appear that they have abandoned the inhuman torture techniques of the Bush administration ... without actually abandoning them.

In those places where the worst torture occurred, the Obama administration has pursued an increasingly consistent pattern of covering up past torture and keeping in place policies that allow for the torture to continue. It is becoming increasingly obvious that Obama's highly publicized emphasis on Guantanamo is a whitewash that will allow torture to continue in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and is not part of an attempt to restore the [Eighth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution](#).

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