



Statement of Senator Feinstein on Abuse of Iraqi Prisoners
May 5, 2004

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today appeared on CNN's American Morning to discuss her views on the abuse of Iraqi prisoners at the hands of their American military guards.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, of which Senator Feinstein is a member, today is holding a closed door briefing on the status of investigations into these allegations. Following are remarks she made earlier today on CNN:

“First of all, not only is this unacceptable, but it’s deplorable and it casts a pall of shame worldwide over what the United States says versus what it does.

I think we want to know, how deep is this? How many incidents? What was the chain of command?

Clearly, the behavior had to be acceptable enough for people participating to take pictures of it and then to show their pictures around. This indicates to me that there was not an appropriate command presence. It should have been stopped.

I was surprised when General Meyers went on television this Sunday and said he hadn’t read the two star General’s report. I was surprised when Mr. Rumsfeld came before the entire Senate last [Wednesday], the day this was on CBS, with the Pentagon delaying the CBS broadcast, and didn’t tell the Senate anything about it.

I believe that this never would have come out had it not been reported publicly.

So I think there are a lot of questions to ask. Why has no major disciplinary action been taken? How broad is this?

It’s a terrible thing because it completely belies everything this nation stands for. It belies everything our armed forces as a trained professional unit that serves with credibility and valor. It belies every tenet of Americanism, and particularly, the particular conduct that was entered into was aimed to humiliate a Muslim culture.

I find it unacceptable. I hope the president, when he goes on [Arab TV], apologizes for the United States. I certainly apologize.

This is not what we stand for and it's about time the president of the United States stands up and says that, and it's about time that the military and the intelligence units take the kind of disciplinary action that this calls for. It's unacceptable.

There is not a daily obligation [for the Defense Department to come to Capitol Hill and brief Congress on the ongoing war]. But secondly, when they do come, they should be open and above board and tell the Congress in classified sessions exactly what's going on. Particularly, because they knew that all of this was going to come out the very night Secretary Rumsfeld was addressing the Senate in classified session.

We were told by our intelligence staff yesterday that we couldn't download the report that's on the Internet. That is ridiculous, and it's unacceptable.

I am, as you can probably tell, very angry about the way this has been handled because it's shameful and this is not America. I say this to the world, we don't do these kinds of things to people. And to see those young people, doing this to others with smiles on their faces was absolutely sickening.

This is not the time to sweep something under the rug. This is the time to hold people responsible and take the appropriate action."

###