



Statement of Senator Feinstein  
*On Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and the Abuse of Iraqi Prisoners*  
May 6, 2004

**“I am profoundly concerned about the reported abuses of detainees at Al Ghraib and other facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan and possibly Guantanamo Bay. The acts of abuse were deplorable and belie the values for which this nation stands.**

**This morning, the *Washington Post*, in a well researched and strong editorial, pointed out that: ‘...Mr. Rumsfeld decided to overturn decades of previous practice by the U.S. military in its handling of detainees in foreign countries ...the United States would no longer be bound by the Geneva Conventions ...Army regulations on the interrogation of prisoners would not be observed; and that many detainees would be held incommunicado and without any independent mechanism of review.’**

**These decisions, the Post noted, ‘helped create a lawless regime in which prisoners in both Iraq and Afghanistan have been humiliated, beaten, tortured and murdered.’**

**Now, after the media obtained the photos from Abu Ghraib and a confidential investigative report by a two-star general, Mr. Rumsfeld has finally acknowledged that abuses occurred. Sadly, accountability for these abuses and resulting deaths has been almost nonexistent.**

**The question remains whether the United States is well served by a Secretary of Defense who does not believe in the need to follow international law. Today, we see the results of that policy. Clearly, the Secretary of Defense is responsible for a policy that has placed this nation in enormous disrepute in the world.**

**The failure to respect the Geneva Convention also poses a serious risk to American men and women serving in our Armed Forces. After all, if we do not follow the Geneva Convention standards for the handling of prisoners of war, why should any other nation?**

**Secretary Rumsfeld has many questions to answer. He is scheduled to appear before the Senate and House Armed Services Committees tomorrow and the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee next week. I am anxious to hear what he has done to hold individuals accountable for their actions and whether he intends to change his directives and reinstitute Geneva Convention standards for the treatment of prisoners of war in U.S. military prisons and detention facilities.”**