

Torture in Iraq and Here at Home

The Bush administration may never openly admit to its role in the black ops program code named Copper Green. It seems apparent that senior members of the administration and the military gave their blessings to the carefully orchestrated systematic torture and humiliation of prisoners recently disclosed in the shocking photographs and videos from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Congress expressed shock and outrage but deigns to ignore the torture it funds in the primate laboratories across our own nation.

As horrible as the Iraqi prison surely was, when compared to the monkey labs paid for by U.S. taxpayers, Abu Ghraib was a dance in the park. In Abu Ghraib, most of the detainees actually got out with their life; in Abu Ghraib, none of the detainees were intentionally infected with deadly diseases, or had their children taken away to be experimented on, or had holes drilled through their skulls or had electrodes inserted into their brains. The treatment of the prisoners is a repudiation of the claims that America stands for honor, the rule of law, democracy, or decency. But

nothing about Abu Ghraib comes close to the torture paid for by us in the nation's premier National Institutes of Health's Primate Research Centers.

Our Homegrown Torture Chambers

One recent example is a radiation experiment conducted at the Washington National Primate Research Center in Seattle.* The results were published in the July 2004 issue of the *Journal of Comparative Pathology*. The authors explained that two young monkeys received total body irradiation (TBI). "In this procedure, the TBI consisted of treatment on two consecutive days with 255cGy on one side, followed after 1-2 min by a similar dose on the other side." In humans, a single TBI

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exposure greater than 200cGy is considered a high and dangerous dose. Several hours after a single 200cGy exposure, humans experience nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, followed by a debilitating weakness.

The consequences to these monkeys? "The two pigtailed macaques ... succumbed either to systemic cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection and necrotising colitis or to haemorrhagic cystitis and tubulointerstitial nephritis." In other

words, one died from pneumonia and diarrhea as the tissues of his or her bowels died, and the other died as his or her bladder hemorrhaged uncontrollably and his or her kidneys failed.

The results? "The results suggest that pigtailed macaques have a lower tolerance threshold than baboons, rhesus macaques or human beings to TBI."

Inquisitors

What sorts of people are attracted to jobs that give them absolute power over others? Prison guards, military interrogators, and vivisectors must have certain characteristics in common. In all three areas, it is fairly common to learn of instances of unthinkable abuse. When Congress funds activities that lead to cruelty and murder, every taxpayer is partially responsible; the cruelty occurs in our name. Congress must be held accountable and be expected to remedy the situation.

An Individual and Congressional Responsibility

But Congress is merely a group of men and women. Each member is individually responsible for every atrocity funded with federal tax revenues whether the atrocity occurs due to a secret policy to terrorize Moslem prisoners or a public policy to allow sadists to torture animals. Every member bears responsibility for the monkeys at Washington who slowly died in agony. Every member has a responsibility to force Congress to act in a way that promotes compassion.

It is time for a change. If America is going to present itself as the ideal of democracy and the model of freedom

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The Congressional Educator is mailed quarterly to members of Congress.

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to the world, lawmakers must first put our own house in order, and the task before them is immense. Over 100,000 monkeys are currently dying, being experimented on, or waiting their turn to be victims of pseudoscience in the U.S. laboratories.

Abu Ghraib or the National Primate Research Center System, the differences are hard to see. Monsters are in charge of each one. Our tax dollars are keeping each open and operating. Our tax dollars are making the contract interrogators and the primate vivisectors quite rich. Congress must do more than simply express concern.

Science: Good and Evil

The scientific evidence for these animals' emotional and mental likeness to us is significant and easily accessible to all who care to look. The people who have made the discoveries demonstrating our likenesses are often the very same people who poison them, shock them, and kill them – all with money that Congress gives to them without question.

* Bielefeldt-Ohmann H, Gough M, Durning M, Kelley S, Liggitt HD, Kiem HP. Greater Sensitivity of Pigtailed Macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*) than Baboons to Total Body Irradiation. *J Comp Pathol.* 2004 Jul;131(1):77-86.

Have you Heard?

College student Jeremy Beckham is on a national tour to expose the abuse of primates in the NIH National Primate Research Center System. From May 20th – August 4th Beckham will travel across the United States to draw attention to the primate experimentation issue.

The Washington National Primate Research Center was chosen as starting point for the tour because the lab ranks #1 nationally in federal funding for primate experimentation, receiving over \$250 million per year from the NIH. The Washington Primate Center uses over 2100 primates per year.

Beckham's National Primate Freedom Tour will travel to the 8 National Primate Research Centers this year. Stops will include Seattle (WA), Portland (OR), Madison (WI), Boston (MA), Atlanta (GA), New Orleans (LA), San Antonio (TX), and Davis (CA).

A diary of Beckham's travels is available at www.primatelifedom.com.

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