

to [Department 90], I did not know where I had been taken... After two days, I learned that I was in 90 from my cellmates. There is so much beating at 90 that people call it Hell.”

The fact that the worst abuse occurred at the facility in the nation’s capital and center of both the Karzai regime and the American occupation command makes all the more absurd the attempts to distance the puppet government and its American masters from the crimes detailed in the UN report.

With the collaboration of the UN, the Karzai government, the US and NATO have been engaged in an effort at damage control in anticipation of Monday’s release of the torture report. After being given a draft of the report in September, Gen. John R. Allen, the NATO commander in Afghanistan, suspended transfers of suspected insurgents to 16 of the facilities identified as sites where torture routinely took place.

In its article on the UN report Tuesday, the *New York Times*, an avid supporter of the war and President Obama’s escalation of it, attempted to insulate the US government, writing merely of its “potential complicity” and stressing the remedial actions supposedly taken by the occupation forces and the Afghan government.

Of General Allen, the *Times* wrote: “He has since initiated a plan to investigate the sites, provide training in modern interrogation techniques and monitor the Afghan government’s practices. The American Embassy is now heavily involved in devising a long-term monitoring program for Afghan detention sites, American officials said.

“In a statement, NATO officials said they were working with the United Nations and the Afghan government to ‘improve detention operations’ and ‘establish safeguards.’”

The newspaper quoted uncritically an unnamed American official who sought to alibi for Washington, declaring: “I know of no one who knew of these alleged abuses as they were happening... Thus, it’s impossible to know if there was any information passed on that came in some form from these alleged incidents.”

For its part, the Karzai regime has denied the worst of the UN allegations, admitting only to “deficiencies.”

The article makes clear that the overriding concern of the *Times* is not the horrors being inflicted on the Afghan population, but the potential for the UN revelations to complicate the plans of US imperialism to draw down its troops in Afghanistan—even while maintaining a substantial and permanent military force—and turn over

the job of policing the population and repressing the anti-occupation resistance to the US-trained Afghan military and security forces.

The *Times* notes that the UN report could jeopardize US financing of the Afghan police and intelligence forces. It cites a US law barring both the State Department and the Defense Department from providing financial assistance or training to any unit of the security forces of a country where there is credible evidence of gross human rights abuses. It adds, however, that “financing can go forward to other units not involved and even to the offending units if serious remedial actions are taken,” which goes far in explaining the elaborate gestures toward reforming the Afghan national police and NDS.

Both the US government and the *New York Times* proceed as though the American and international public suffer from collective amnesia and have no recollection of the systematic torture by the US exposed in places such as Abu Ghraib, Iraq; Guantanamo, Cuba; and Bagram, Afghanistan. In fact, all of the torture techniques detailed in the UN report on Afghanistan have been employed—and continue to be employed—by the US at these and other sites around the world.

In Monday’s article, the *Times* maintains a discreet and cynical silence about its own exposé of US torture at the US base in Bagram published in May of 2005, after the newspaper obtained a 2,000-page US Army report concerning the 2002 killing of two unarmed civilian Afghan prisoners by US troops at the base.

In an accompanying editorial at the time, the *Times* wrote: “The investigative file on Bagram, obtained by the *Times*, showed that the mistreatment of prisoners was routine: shackling them to the ceilings of their cells, depriving them of sleep, kicking and hitting them, sexually humiliating them and threatening them with guard dogs—the very same behavior later repeated in Iraq.”



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