

Guantanamo Rally Remarks

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March 6, 2008

Hi, I'm Dan. How's it going?

So I've had some experience with Guantanamo Bay. Not first hand, but first hand in terms of primary sources. Let me explain how.

I've done a bit of work in recent times with a certain remarkable website called wikileaks.org — it's a wiki for whistleblowers, a Wikipedia of leaked documents. You might have heard of it, it's been in the news lately. In fact, it got sued, and somehow, I got dragged into it, even though I had nothing to do with the case, basically it was like dragging a Wikipedia editor into a dispute with Wikipedia. But apparently, they thought I was an appropriate person to drag into the lawsuit, because I moderate a facebook group about wikileaks. Hmm.

Well, anyway, as you will know if you've been following the news, a couple of weeks ago, Bank Julius Baer & Trust, of Switzerland and the Cayman Islands, first won a completely unconstitutional injunction shutting down the website — and then, last Friday, they got their arse kicked in court by me along with others and some 19 civil rights and media organizations — and yesterday they dropped their case. So anyway, I've been having some fun lately, have defeated a multi-billion-dollar Swiss and Cayman Islands bank, and the share price of Bank Julius Baer has dropped 10%.

This was all very outrageous — but, you might think, not so related to Guantanamo. But it is! This recent dispute was about leaked documents allegedly detailing tax evasion on certain Caribbean islands. And it's generally fairly well known that the Cayman Islands are a tax haven, a separate jurisdiction where people hide from the law.

Which brings me to my involvement with Guantanamo — via leaked documents detailing *human rights* evasion on a certain Caribbean island. And Guantanamo Bay also functions as a haven — a haven from accountability for human rights abuses. It is a place where, purportedly, there are no substantive human rights laws, a separate jurisdiction where people hide from the law.

There should never really have been any question about whether there were abuses going on at Guantanamo. When someone transfers assets to the Cayman Islands, you know why. Similarly, when a government transfers detainees to Cuba, you know why. There are not many possible reasons why you would

establish a vast military prison in a separate jurisdiction, purportedly out of the reach of mainland US civilian courts. So, it's clear. It was established for a purpose, and that purpose is abuse — and, as we know now, some absolutely outrageous abuses indeed.

In any case, in early December last year, some documents from Camp Delta at Guantanamo Bay were leaked to this same website, wikileaks.org. Namely, the operating manuals! Look, I have them here!

So, if we take a look inside, what do we see?

Number one: Non-compliance with the Geneva Conventions is official policy. Under Article 126 of the Third Geneva Convention, the Red Cross must be allowed access to all prisoners. But according to chapter 17 of the operating manual, prisoners are systematically categorized into 4 different levels of Red Cross access — and one of these categories is not permitted contact of any kind with the Red Cross.

Number two: Incredible petty restrictions. No dictionaries. No periodicals. No books about English. No books about geography. No discussion of current affairs. Toilet paper is regarded as a luxury “comfort item”. Styrofoam cups are confiscated if written on. And when any VIPs visit, detainees will be turned away so that they never see their faces.

Number three: Spin control! The manual contains a whole separate sub-manual for the so-called “Medium security Camp 4”. Personnel here are required to have “excellent PR skills”. Guantanamo Bay provides its own media sideshow.

Number four: Segregation and isolation are used routinely and systematically — and when you first arrive at Guantanamo, you are greeted by being put in solitary confinement for at least 4 weeks, possibly longer. The reason for this, says the manual, and I quote, is “to enhance and exploit the disorientation and disorganization felt by a newly arrived detainee”.

So that is the sort of treatment we're talking about. Those are the sort of behaviours which are codified as official US military policy. There is much more of course, which you can find online at wikileaks.org, including the full manual. And none of this, of course, includes the actual torture going on in the interrogation rooms, denial of habeas corpus, and so on — about which, there is plenty more to say.

But here we see abusive practices as official, written policy — and that says, as a matter of organization, as a matter of bureaucratic fact, as a matter of everyday activity, that it will go on, and that it will be accepted, that it is expected. And that is something that is absolutely intolerable.

Now, as we all know, one of the principal instigators of all this has been our own most infamous local war criminal — certainly not the only one, Condoleezza Rice is only on leave, and let us not forget that George Shultz, one of Ronald Reagan's co-conspirators in his vast campaign of US terrorism in Central America in the 1980s, is here too — not the only, but the most infamous one, Donald Rumsfeld, is right here, appointed as a so-called “Distinguished Visiting Fellow” on this very campus.

Do we remember what Rumsfeld said when reviewing proposed interrogation

techniques? When it was proposed that detainees should stand for 4 hours continuously? What did our “Distinguished Visiting Fellow” Rumsfeld say in response? He wrote, and I quote: “I stand for 8-10 hours a day. Why is standing limited to four hours?”

And Rumsfeld was so happy with Guantanamo, that he then sent the commander of the Guantanamo Bay prison, Major General Geoffrey Miller, to Abu Ghraib with orders to, quote, “Gitomize it”.

So this is what people right here on campus are responsible for: torture, abuse, Guantanamo, major violations of international law — and this is not to mention, of course, the crime of aggressive war, the supreme crime against international law, the crime which the US has committed against Iraq — and for which it needs to face accountability.

So: how can we do nothing about Rumsfeld’s presence here? How can we do nothing and let the war go on? How can we do nothing while the prison at Guantanamo Bay is still in operation? How can we do nothing while torturers, mass murderers and war criminals remain in the government and on our campus?

So I urge you, don’t do nothing. And I don’t think voting Democrat counts. Join a human rights organization. Go read some documents at wikileaks.org. Talk about them. Write about them. Come to our meetings of Stanford Says No To War, the website is antiwar.stanford.edu. Something, anything! Upholding human rights means working for change, and acting according to your own conscience. All I ask you is, listen to your own conscience.