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New Images of Abu Ghraib Abuse Are Broadcast in Australia

By [DAVID STOUT](#)

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15 — An Australian television network broadcast today previously unseen pictures of Iraqi prisoners being abused by American soldiers, scenes the State Department said were "absolutely disgusting" but that added nothing to what was already known about the scandal.

The videotapes and photographs of naked captives at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad were consistent with images shown earlier in the United States and depict captives naked, with hoods over their heads and posed in sexual situations.

One video shows a handcuffed man pounding his head against a metal cell door. The same prisoner is shown in other pictures dangling upside down and naked from a top bunk and smeared with his own feces, according to the Special Broadcasting Service's "Dateline" program.

The man was mentally ill and became a "plaything" for the guards who "experimented with ways to restrain them," the S.B.S. reported, according to The Associated Press in Sydney. The S.B.S. declined to say where it had obtained the pictures.

The State Department legal adviser, John B. Bellinger 3d, said the latest pictures "show once again just the reprehensible conduct that was going on in Abu Ghraib," conduct "that is absolutely disgusting."

Mr. Bellinger noted that, following the instances of abuse in late 2003 and their disclosure early in 2004, there had been numerous public investigations, prosecutions and internal reviews. "And it's unfortunate, in fact, that these photographs are coming out further and fanning the flames," Mr. Bellinger said, referring to the Australian broadcast.

But critics of the Pentagon's handling of the episode said the latest disclosures only confirm the need for a truly independent investigation into abuse of prisoners not only at Abu Ghraib but in Afghanistan and at the Guantánamo Bay naval base in Cuba. The critics say only an outside investigation could adequately look into possible wrongdoing up the entire chain of command, to Defense Secretary [Donald H. Rumsfeld](#).

Bill Goodman, the legal director for the Center for Constitutional Rights, said his organization would continue to sue the federal government to release all pertinent videotapes and photographs. He the State Department's assertion that it would be better to keep them under wraps "absurd" and reflective of an administration philosophy that "the less information the people have, the better democracy operates."

The American Civil Liberties Union had a similar reaction. "We continue to see undeniable evidence that abuse and torture have been widespread and systematic, yet high-level government officials have not been held accountable for creating the policies that led to these atrocities," said Anthony D. Romero, the A.C.L.U.'s executive director.

The prisoner-abuse scandal has been acutely embarrassing for the United States military, whose members are taught to treat prisoners with respect. The incidents at Abu Ghraib were considered especially damaging to the United States' image among Iraqi civilians and in the wider Arab world, where nudity is disdained.

Two of the best-known defendants were Army Specialist Charles A. Graner Jr., convicted of being a ringleader in the abuse, and his former lover, Private Lynndie R. England, who was photographed mistreating naked Iraqis. Specialist Graner was sentenced to 10 years in prison and reduced to private, while Private England was sentenced to three years in prison. Several other soldiers were imprisoned or dishonorably discharged.

But Amnesty International said the latest pictures indicate there may be more to the scandal than has yet been reported. "The repulsive images released today give a clearer picture of the scope of the abuses perpetrated at Abu Ghraib and raise the question of what other abuses occurred there and elsewhere when cameras weren't present," said William F. Schulz, the organization's executive director.

"Prosecutions of primarily lower-level military personnel create the impression that those on the front lines are the scapegoats for policy set at the top," he said.