DATE: March 9, 2018

FROM: (Insert YOUR name here)

TO: Prof.

RE: Prisoner Abuse at Abu Ghraib

**I. What are the major factors that have brought this matter to a crisis point?**

During the war in Iraq, there were angry reactions globally that arose due to accusations of prisoner abuse of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib camp. The issue affected the image of the US and mostly the Bush administration. Donald Rumsfeld the defense secretary at that time accepted full responsibility of the activities that took place at the camp (Heurich & Vaughn, 2009). The defense secretary had to apologize to the Iraqi detainees who faced abuse under the US military police at Abu Ghraib. The defense secretary acknowledged that the actions of the military exhibited at the camp were contrary to the national values and the teachings of the military.

At the camp, prisoners were subjected to cruel and unusual punishments including death, torture and rape. It has been established that there was unethical treatment of prisoners that were encouraged by some military officers. The breakdown in leadership within the military ranks made it impossible for the ranking officers to notice the misconduct. The minor section of the military acted in contradiction to the Geneva convention’s stipulations that demanded that all prisoners of war be treated in a humane manner, moreover, the acts were contrary to military core values. The photos from the scandal led to outrage from people all over the globe. In this respect, it could be argued that the US government acts like the dictators when their misdeeds get discovered by claiming that it respects and upholds human rights, however, it covers what is happening and shifting blames to its low-ranking officials.

**II. The Authorizing Environment—To Whom and For What is Rumsfeld Most Responsible?**

Secretary Rumsfeld was in charge of the military troops in Iraq; therefore, he must bear legal liability for the war crimes committed under command responsibility doctrine. The doctrine acts such that it holds a superior responsible for crimes committed by the subordinates for failing to take reasonable action when he should have known or knew of the crimes. For violation of the Geneva Convention against torture and approval of techniques for torture that violated human rights should have made Secretary Rumsfeld aware that the military would commit such crimes. During the war period, Rumsfeld should have been alert that the military troops were committing illegal activities from the various press reports, press accounts, human rights reports and briefings. Moreover, he never issued any form of warning to his subordinates that the mistreatment of prisoners had to be stopped.

The secretary must be held accountable since he should have instructed the military to consult him before putting into motion any form of torture that inflicted pain on detainees. Furthermore, Secretary Rumsfeld would be directly liable legally in the event that the allegations made by journalist Seymour Hersh were true that he authorized a a secret program that violated human rights through encouraging sexual humiliation and physical coercion of the Iraqi prisoners. Therefore, Rumsfeld must be held accountable for the breakdown in leadership that resulted in prisoners being poorly treated at Abu Ghraib prison.

**III. What are the major aspects of a strategy to address this crisis?**

The type of torture techniques use at the camp were approved by the secretary of defense. The abuse scandal surfaced due to the availability of 12 different defense departments, inspections, inquiries and combatant commander directed investigations. This was the first factor that resulted in the crisis instead, there should have been a single headquarter with a single command over everything that took place in the camp. The US National Security Strategy contained the intentions for engagement and building of a sovereign state on the basis of democracy principles (Bush, 2006).

The US since the year 1999, there has been a consistency in the US National Security Strategy in the pursuance of national interest specifically supporting democratization, human rights promotion, adherence to rule of law and halting violations. Therefore, the actions undertaken have all been steered towards making the world a better place. The strategy aspect of the crisis that needs addressing is the barbaric techniques of interrogations and torture that go against the beliefs of the US and its efforts towards making the world a safer place. The US breaking its own fundamental values, the human rights and the Geneva Convention regarding treatment of war prisoners should be addressed.

**IV. Conclusion—What lessons can we learn from this situation?**

In conclusion, the treatment of the prisoners at the camp was contrary to human rights treatment alongside other violations. The environment created at the camp and all the powers given to the military must have raised suspicion and could have been a clear indicator that something was wrong at the prison camp. Therefore, the government should be on the watch as to the activities that take place at such camps to avoid any violations. The issues that occurred at the Abu Ghraib camp narrows down to leadership, hence action should be taken to ensure that the leadership lapse that took place does not occur again. The government must ensure that strategies undertaken do not contradict the beliefs and values of the country, additionally, they should give human rights a priority before putting in place such barbaric measures.

References

George W. Bush, (2006) The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (Washington, D.C.: The White House, March 2006), 2, 3, 4, 11, 13, 16, 38.

Heurich, S., & Vaughn, M. (2009). Ill‐treatment and torture at Abu Ghraib prison: irrational policy implementation and administrative breakdown. *Criminal Justice Studies*, *22*(2), 181-201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14786010902975473>