

Guantanamo operating manual posted on Internet

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MIAMI (Reuters) - The U.S. military's operating manual for the Guantanamo prison camp has been posted on the Internet, providing a glimpse of the broad rules and tiniest minutia for detaining suspected terrorists.

The 238-page manual, "Standard Operating Procedures for Camp Delta," is dated March 27, 2003, and signed by Army Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, who was then the commander of the prison that still holds about 300 al Qaeda and Taliban suspects.

It appears to be an authentic copy of the rules as they existed at the time at the U.S. naval base in Cuba, a spokesman for the Guantanamo detention operation, Lt. Col. Ed Bush, said on Wednesday.

It says incoming prisoners are to be held in near-isolation for the first two weeks to foster dependence on interrogators and "enhance and exploit the disorientation and disorganization felt by a newly arrived detainee in the interrogation process."

Styrofoam cups must be confiscated if prisoners have written on them, apparently because prisoners have used cups to pass notes to other captives. "If the cup is damaged or destroyed, the detainee will be disciplined for destruction of government property," the rules say.

The manual was posted last week on the Wikileaks.org Web site, which invites whistle-blowers around the world to anonymously publish state documents containing evidence of government corruption and injustice.

The Guantanamo manual is stamped "unclassified," and "for official use only," meaning it was not secret but was never intended for mass distribution either.

The manual also indicates some prisoners were designated as off limits to visitors from the International Committee of the Red Cross, something the military has repeatedly denied.

Some rules seem obvious. One advises troops: "In the event that dumpsters become full before scheduled pick up, utilize another dumpster within the camp."

Another notes that "Detainees are not allowed to color their hair."

Allegations of abuse at Guantanamo have been lodged for years by prisoners, their lawyers, human rights monitors and a few military or government employees who worked at Guantanamo.

The manual clearly mandates humane treatment and advises that "Abuse, or any form of corporal punishment is prohibited."

INSTRUCTIONS ONLY MILITARY COULD WRITE

It contains instructions as only the military can write them, such as how to use pepper spray on

unruly prisoners. "Aim at the eyes, nose and mouth when possible. Use a 1/2 to 1 second burst from a distance of 36 to 72 inches away."

When prisoners are forcibly removed from their cells, the role of each member of the five-member "Immediate Reaction Force team" is clearly defined -- "The number three man is responsible for securing the detainee's left arm..."

The manual spells out in minute detail how captives should be shackled, searched and moved and how the chains should be collected afterward.

Four pages are devoted to describing how new arrivals should be taken off the plane and ferried across Guantanamo Bay to the prison camp on the main portion of the base -- with one sniper and two spotters atop the ferry.

Prisoners are to be checked for scars, markings and tattoos, which are to be photographed for FBI records, and a linguist should be present to explain what is happening when body cavity searches are conducted, the rule book says.

Bush, the Guantanamo spokesman, said there have been three changes in command since 2003 and the rules "have evolved significantly." He said the camp holds dangerous terrorists and would not comment on specific rules for security reasons.

(Editing by Michael Christie)

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