

So for those that can be tried, obviously we will do that, but that is a very small percentage. There is no point in charging prisoners of war or enemy combatants with anything because the whole point of their being held is to prevent them from going back to war against you.

The final purpose for this detention is intelligence gathering. We have found that human intelligence is the best intelligence and that the highest percentage of human intelligence is the interrogation that has occurred here and elsewhere that has led us to learn a lot about the techniques of the terrorists, their plans, the names of others, and other important information that has helped us save lives. So the point of this detention is to save lives, to keep people from killing us, and to get information that will help us to prevent future killing. That is an appropriate purpose of Guantanamo.

So when people use irresponsible language, when they seem to leap to conclude that the United States must have done wrong simply because a lawyer or some group or a prisoner has alleged abuse—and by the way, remember that the al-Qaida training includes a manual instruction on how to allege that they are being abused as a prisoner, as a detainee. They are supposed to allege abuse, and they do. So let us not jump to the conclusion that any al-Qaida terrorist who alleges abuse at Guantanamo Bay must be right and all of the Americans, from the President on down, must be wrong. I like to put my chances on Americans trying to do the right thing. We will make mistakes, but we will try to correct those mistakes and punish those responsible. In the meantime, I think the benefit of the doubt goes to those people whom we have given a very hard job to do.

To get back to my original point, the use of irresponsible language, irresponsible charges, has consequences. It can hurt those people that we put in harm's way by turning international public opinion against the United States. When responsible American officials make irresponsible charges, all the world listens. When they listen, sometimes they react very badly. It does our cause no good when—as some of my colleagues have said, this is all about winning the hearts and minds of the Muslim world. There is a great deal of truth in that. It does no good in that battle to denigrate our own actions in a way that is calculated to or one must know will inflame the passions of terrorists and others around the world that support the terrorists. It does no good to this ultimate goal of winning hearts and minds to unduly criticize America, Americans and American leaders for actions that are nothing more than what any Nation has the right to do when it captures people who have been engaged in combat or terrorism against it.

I urge my colleagues to keep this issue in perspective, to understand the reason we detain people, to understand

the impact of irresponsible language, to tone down the rhetoric, understand that the President and all acting on his behalf are trying their very best to do what we want them to do, and at the end of the day, this is all about winning the war on terror, saving American lives and moving on to a more peaceful world.

Mr. FRIST. Madam President, in the past few weeks a number of allegations have been leveled against the Guantanamo Bay detention center.

There have been some legitimate questions about the treatment of detainees, which is fair and responsible. The United States is governed by the rule of law. And it is proper for the Congress, in its oversight role, to ask the executive branch about such matters and make sure the interests of our constituents and the Nation are being properly addressed.

That being said, in many cases, the allegations that have been made recently have been false, distorted or misrepresented.

Newsweek, as we are all too familiar, erroneously reported that an American guard flushed a Koran down a toilet. That report, which was later withdrawn, resulted in widespread protests and the deaths of several individuals.

When the facts came out, we learned that, in the 3 years that Gitmo has been in operation, there have only been 5 cases of "mishandling" of the Koran by our military staff.

In those few instances where mistakes were made—and people do make mistakes—they were corrected and persons were held accountable.

We also learned that the prisoners themselves had abused the Koran 15 times, in some cases, reportedly, to implicate our soldiers in a religious crime.

Multiple inquiries have found that the detainees at Guantanamo are being treated in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and U.S. law. They are well fed and well housed. They have access to clean showers, Muslim chaplains, and even psychological counseling if they request it.

Some might say they are living in more luxury and safety than our soldiers and marines fighting the terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Our service men and women in the field usually eat cold, packaged meals; sleep in crude living areas without beds; and often wonder if they will live to see the next day, all in the cause of promoting freedom and democracy and defending our country.

One thing is for sure, the detainees are enemy combatants who were picked up off the battlefields of Afghanistan and elsewhere. They are hardened terrorists and have pledged their lives to jihad, the death of Americans, and the destruction of our country.

They are being held at Guantanamo so they don't kill more Americans, either at home or abroad.

They are being held at Guantanamo so that we can question them, so that

we can prevent their colleagues from committing more terrorist acts.

The intelligence we have learned about the terrorists, their networks, their plans, and so on, has been a treasure trove that has saved lives and is helping us win the war on terror.

Personally, I am convinced that Guantanamo is humanely and fairly serving its much needed purpose. And I am also convinced that if we closed the camp, it wouldn't make one bit of difference to the terrorists who hate us and murdered 3,000 innocent American citizens before Guantanamo or the war on terror was ever conceived of.

And it will make no difference to those who have agitated and protested against American policy from the very start.

We can debate whether Guantanamo helps us save lives and win the war on terror. But what I can't stomach are the comparisons being made between Guantanamo and some of the most egregious symbols in the history of mankind.

I am referring to the remarks of Amnesty International officials that compared the U.S.-run Guantanamo to the Soviet gulag.

I am referring to the International Committee of the Red Cross official who reportedly compared U.S. soldiers to Nazis.

And, regrettably, I am referring to a Senate colleague who, this week, called Guantanamo a "death camp" and drew parallels to Hitler's Germany, Stalin's gulags, and Pol Pot's killing fields.

This was a heinous slander against our country, and against the brave men and women who have taken great care to treat the captured terrorists with more respect than they would ever have received in any point in human history.

It is reported that nearly 9 million people were killed by Adolf Hitler; about 20.7 million were killed in the Soviet gulags from 1929-1953; and over 1.5 million people were killed in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979.

And there is no need to recount the brutal torture and manner in which many of these people died, most of whom, if not all, were innocent people.

Do we know how many people have been killed at Guantanamo? Zero. That's right: zero people.

And yet we have members of this body who have come to the Senate floor to level the most egregious charges, compare our troops to Nazis, and charge the United States with crimes against humanity. To accuse our sons and daughters, who are serving proudly to keep killers from the battlefield, with committing genocide and war crimes is beyond the pale.

It is wrong to make these comparisons; it is wrong to suggest such things. It is unfair to our military; it is unfair to the American people; and it is unfair to this body. This is wrong and it is the worst form of demagoguery.

It is anti-American and only fuels the animus of our enemies who are constantly searching for ways to portray