

New evidence has emerged in Congressional inquiries that throw more light on the extent to which early knowledge and approval of the abuse went to the highest levels. What does a country do when compelling evidence shows its leaders have authorised international crimes?

Buried away in this testimony lies the most dangerous material of all: evidence which may establish that abuses on detainees in Iraq in September 2003, in the period perhaps including the events at Abu Ghraib, were the result of decisions taken at the highest levels of the administration.

At the very least, the next US president must ensure the full facts are established. It will then be for others to decide what follows. But if the US doesn't get its own house in order and restore its reputation for the rule of law, others will surely step in.

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