

# Detainee abuse and the rule of law

*How the Bush administration altered laws governing the treatment of prisoners in wartime to permit harsh treatment of detainees captured in the war on terror that began after the September 11 attacks:*

- **Sept. 11, 2001** Al-Qaida terrorists hijack planes, crash them into N.Y. World Trade Center and Pentagon

## In Washington, D.C.

**Jan. 9** Justice Dept. attorney John Yoo argues that al-Qaida and Taliban detainees aren't covered by the Geneva Conventions Common Article Three\*

**Jan. 25** White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales says withholding Geneva protections from detainees would reduce threat of U.S. officials being prosecuted

**Feb. 7** President Bush denies POW status to al-Qaida and Taliban and the Geneva Conventions' ban on degrading treatment, torture

**March 21** Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld orders creation of military commissions to try detainees

**Aug. 1** At Gonzales' request, Justice Dept. sets bar for torture as "injury, such as death, organ failure or serious impairment of body functions"

**June 28** U.S. Supreme Court rules that Guantanamo detainees may challenge their detentions in federal court

**July** Pentagon sets up Combatant Status Review Tribunals to review detainees' cases

**Dec. 30** Bush approves law prohibiting "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment" of detainees, but says he'll decide how to apply it

**June 29** Supreme Court rules that Geneva protections apply to detainees

**Oct. 17** Bush signs legislation saying no unlawful foreign combatants can invoke Geneva Convention rights before U.S. military commissions

**June 12** U.S. Supreme Court rules that detainees can challenge their confinement by filing writs of habeas corpus in federal court

2001

## In Afghanistan

**Oct. 7** U.S. invades Afghanistan

### November

- Detainees suffocate after they're stuffed into shipping containers by a U.S.-allied warlord
- U.S. task force arrives in Afghanistan, sets up detention camp at Bagram Air Base

**Nov. 25** CIA officer Johnny Michael Spann killed during uprising at northern Afghan prison

**December** Osama Bin Laden reportedly escapes into Pakistan

2002

**Jan. 11** First detainees arrive at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, prison camp

**Early December** Afghan detainees Habibullah and Dilawar beaten to death in separate incidents at Bagram Air Base

100 km  
100 miles



2003

2004

2005

2006

2008

\*Common Article Three bans humiliating or degrading treatment of detainees