

No hoods. No electric shocks. No beatings. These Iranians clearly are a very uncivilised bunch

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I share the outrage expressed in the British press over the treatment of our naval personnel accused by Iran of illegally entering their waters. It is a disgrace. We would never dream of treating captives like this – allowing them to smoke cigarettes, for example, even though it has been proven that smoking kills. And as for compelling poor servicewoman Faye Turney to wear a black headscarf, and then allowing the picture to be posted around the world – have the Iranians no concept of civilised behaviour? For God's sake, what's wrong with putting a bag over her head? That's what we do with the Muslims we capture: we put bags over their heads, so it's hard to breathe. Then it's perfectly acceptable to take photographs of them and circulate them to the press because the captives can't be recognised and humiliated in the way these unfortunate British service people are.





It is also unacceptable that these British captives should be made to talk on television and say things that they may regret later. If the Iranians put duct tape over their mouths, like we do to our captives, they wouldn't be able to talk at all. Of course they'd probably find it even harder to breathe – especially with a bag over their head – but at least they wouldn't be humiliated.

And what's all this about allowing the captives to write letters home saying they are all right? It's time the Iranians fell into line with the rest of the civilised world: they should allow their captives the privacy of solitary confinement. That's one of the many privileges the US grants to its captives in Guantánamo Bay.

The true mark of a civilised country is that it doesn't rush into charging people whom it has arbitrarily arrested in places it's just invaded. The inmates of Guantánamo, for example, have been enjoying all the privacy they want for almost five years, and the first inmate has only just been charged. What a contrast to the disgraceful Iranian rush to parade their captives before the cameras!

What's more, it is clear that the Iranians are not giving their British prisoners any decent physical exercise. The US military make sure that their Iraqi captives enjoy PT. This takes the form of exciting "stress positions", which the captives are expected to hold for hours on end so as to improve their stomach and calf muscles. A common exercise is where they are made to stand on the balls of their feet and then squat so that their thighs are parallel to the ground. This creates intense pain and, finally, muscle failure. It's all good healthy fun and has the bonus that the captives will confess to anything to get out of it.

And this brings me to my final point. It is clear from her TV appearance that servicewoman Turney has been put under pressure. The newspapers have persuaded behavioural psychologists to examine the footage and they all conclude that she is "unhappy and stressed".

What is so appalling is the underhand way in which the Iranians have got her "unhappy and stressed". She shows no signs of electrocution or burn marks and there are no signs of beating on her face. This is unacceptable. If captives are to be put under duress, such as by forcing them into compromising sexual positions, or having electric shocks to their genitals, they should be photographed, as they were in Abu Ghraib. The photographs should then be circulated around the civilised world so that everyone can see exactly what has been going on.

As Stephen Glover pointed out in the Daily Mail, perhaps it would not be right to bomb Iran in retaliation for the humiliation of our servicemen, but clearly the Iranian people must be made to suffer – whether by beefing up sanctions, as the Mail suggests, or simply by getting President Bush to hurry up and invade, as he intends to anyway, and bring democracy and

western values to the country, as he has in Iraq.

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