



## Media Reality ✓ Check

# QUICK TAKE

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**A DEMOCRATIC SENATE LEADER COMPARES AMERICAN SOLDIERS TO POL POT, STALIN'S GULAG, AND NAZIS — WHY IS THAT NOT NEWS?**

## ***NETS TARGET U.S. MILITARY "ABUSES," BUT SKIP DICK DURBIN'S "NAZI" RANT***

Complaints about the U.S. military's treatment of terrorists at Guantanamo Bay were once again featured on all three broadcast network evening newscasts Wednesday. Full stories on ABC, CBS and NBC cast the military on the defensive at congressional hearings. *CBS Evening News* anchor Bob Schieffer — who has likened Guantanamo to the "Hanoi Hilton," the infamous North Vietnamese prison camp — grumped that "Congress asked a lot of questions today" about Guantanamo, but "the problem is, they didn't get many answers."

ABC followed up its story on yesterday's hearings with a second full report by ABC's Terry Moran, who zeroed in on a memo written more than two years ago by a Navy lawyer questioning the interrogation techniques at Guantanamo. Only in the last sentence of a nearly three-minute story did Moran allow how the issue is really moot, as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had "dialed back" the rules of interrogation in early 2003.

But while the networks kept their spotlight on the U.S. military's conduct, none of last night's broadcasts bothered to note a Tuesday speech by Minority Whip Dick Durbin — the second highest ranking Democrat in the Senate. Describing the treatment of al-Qaeda terrorists at the Guantanamo prison — including allegations that inmates are kept too hot or too cold, or forced to stay awake — Durbin wildly charged that "you would most certainly believe this must have been done by Nazis, Soviets in their gulags, or some mad regime, Pol Pot or others, that had no concern for human beings."

The comparison could not be more absurd. As reporter Rowan Scarborough noted in Thursday's *Washington Times*, "About 9 million persons, including 6 million Jews, died in Hitler's death camps, 2.7 million persons died in Stalin's gulags and 1.7 million Cambodians died in Pol Pot's scourge of his country. No prisoners have died at Guantanamo...."

On Wednesday, Durbin stuck by his crazy charge, yet none of the network morning shows on Thursday mentioned the controversy. Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton made the rounds of all three shows, but none dared ask whether she agreed with Durbin's portrait of U.S. military guards as acting as if they were from "some mad regime."