



ALTOONA, PA.  
Obama ribbed over low score at a bowling-alley campaign stop



NEW DELHI  
India, on the brink of a food crisis, bans the export of nonbasmati rice

# Dashboard

## WASHINGTON MEMO

LIKE A STUDIO releasing once censored scenes from a classic horror movie, on April 1 the Pentagon declassified a key memo used to justify the abuse of prisoners by the U.S. military in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantánamo Bay. Completed six days before the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the full text of the 81-page document is rife with shockingly broad edicts about



prisoner treatment, like this barely constitutional chestnut: "In wartime, it is for the President alone to decide what methods to use to prevail against the enemy."

The Justice Department withdrew the memo, written by deputy legal counsel John Yoo, nine months after it was written, but the issue of U.S. treatment of prisoners remains in the headlines. The governments in Baghdad and Washington together still hold tens of thousands of prisoners in Iraq amid continuing controversy over their legal rights. U.S. military interro-

gators are currently limited to the less aggressive methods of questioning listed in the Army's field manual, though President George W. Bush recently vetoed a bill that would have put similar limits on the CIA. For its part, the agency is investigating the destruction of videos allegedly showing torture in its secret overseas prisons, while Attorney General Michael Mukasey remains on the defensive for not condemning specific

forms of torture. A variety of cases in lower courts and at the Supreme Court address allegations of faulty process and illegal detention at Guantánamo.

For further proof that a five-year-old memo continues to haunt the U.S. and Iraq, there's next month's release of Errol Morris' documentary *Standard Operating Procedure*. Without mentioning Yoo specifically, the film shows some of his memo's darkest consequences: the systematic abuse of prisoners in U.S. custody at Abu Ghraib prison.

—BY ADAM ZAGORIN

## DEFENSE SPENDING

### The Cost of War

Waging battle is an expensive business—and it's getting more so. The U.S. Government Accountability Office's report on Pentagon spending details budget overruns on 72 vehicles and weapons systems owing to expensive redesigns or inefficient project management. As a result, the overall price tag of the military's investments in new technology is up about 50%, to \$1.6 trillion. Some of the programs analyzed:



### EFV

The Marine Corps' Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, which will serve as a troop carrier, saw a 55% increase over seven years.

ORIGINAL COST  
**\$8.7 billion**  
LATEST COST  
**\$13.5 billion**

## REFORM

### Not Quite Cuba Libre

Almost two years after Raúl Castro took over for his ailing brother Fidel, Cuba is launching a host of economic reforms. First came the right of ordinary Cubans to own cell phones, then to buy foreign electronics, rent cars and stay in tourist hotels. Now some private farmers can till their own land. A few questions about what it all means:

#### WHY NOW?

Early hopes that Raúl might be a reformer gave way to frustration with continued poverty and social restrictions. The changes may help for a while.

#### IS CUBA ANY FREER?

Not politically. In fact, critical blogs like *Generación Y* say the government has slowed their sites down in recent weeks to cut off visitors.

