

Playing well with others

By Dan Hammes

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It turns out a play date will fix everything.

For those who missed it, the Pentagon issued a report last week on how to "fix" the prison at Guantanamo.

Make no mistake, this is tricky stuff.

First of all, most folks don't think there is anything to fix. That is, it is very well documented prisoners at Gitmo are not abused nor are their rights violated. The problem is there are a bunch of folks who don't believe that. Never mind of course that countless reporters, Congressmen and aid workers have made continual visits to the prison and never reported any serious violations, the myth continues.

Of course, when the President of the United States spouts off about Gitmo it tends to keep the story alive. The fact Barack Obama has promised to close the prison adds to the myth that "something" must be happening there that is out of sorts.

So it is that the Pentagon was ordered to write a report about the prison. And gee n what a surprise! n it turns out there are no violations of the Geneva Convention.

That's not to say everything passed muster at Gitmo. Nope. Not at all. It seems the people charged with writing the report did find something amiss at Gitmo.

There is a sad lack of group recreation.

Who woulda' guessed?

After all the muss and fuss over the prison at Guantanamo; after all the speeches; after all the protests; after all the ranting; after all the politics n it turns out play dates for the terrorists there will make things right.

Now, we don't know if the people who crafted the report actually believe that. What is certain is the Navy officer who drew the short straw and was ordered to write a report for President Obama knew he had better come up with something. So, knowing he was reporting directly to the Commander in Chief, the guy did his best.

Think about it.

You're a high-ranking officer in the Navy. You've enjoyed a good career. It is a career that you want to continue to enjoy. Then the call comes. The President of the United States n the same guy who has made speeches about how bad things are at Gitmo - wants a report on his desk ASAP on how to "fix" things there.

Good grief.

A submariner in the Civil War had easier duty.

There is absolutely no reason not to believe the report's author, Admiral Patrick Walsh is an honorable man. The fact he attained his rank tells us he is a cut above average. A rather large cut. Given that, there is no reason to question his report; either its conclusion or its thoroughness. So, after considerable study, review and contemplation - the best of the worst he could come up with relating to the prisoners at Gitmo is that they should be able to play

together more often.

Now, there is absolutely no reason to believe President Obama will take this report seriously. He knew the truth about Gitmo before he ordered the report be drafted. This entire exercise has nothing to do with information or human rights. This is about politics and President Obama's need to appease his party's base.

But since hope and change are in vogue these days, perhaps we could employ some in this instance. Perhaps it is not too much to wish that our new president will eventually rise above the politics.

That is, instead of releasing the prisoners at Gitmo - as he has promised n he will simply order they be allowed more group play time.

n Dan Hammes is publisher of this newspaper.