

SEEING A CATFIGHT WHERE THERE IS NONE

Spencer Ackerman has a more complete version of Nancy Pelosi's statement about when she was briefed on torture techniques.

On one occasion, in the fall of 2002, I was briefed on interrogation techniques the Administration was considering using in the future. The Administration advised that legal counsel for the both the CIA and the Department of Justice had concluded that the techniques were legal.

I had no further briefings on the techniques. Several months later, my successor as Ranking Member of the House Intelligence Committee, Jane Harman, was briefed more extensively and advised the techniques had in fact been employed. It was my understanding at that time that Congresswoman Harman filed a letter in early 2003 to the CIA to protest the use of such techniques, a protest with which I concurred.

And then he makes what I consider a gross misreading of the statement.

One: Pelosi isn't saying that she knew how detainees were interrogated. She's saying she was told that all techniques used in those interrogations were considered legal. So did she know what those techniques were, and what they entailed? We'll find out, or get stonewalled trying.

Two: Never mind the brief mention of Jane Harman's protest. Pelosi just threw Harman under the bus. It's no secret that the two Californians don't get along. But she didn't need to put the blame on her committee successor in her

statement on this controversy.

Let's take the key clauses from Nancy's statement. I've bolded them up there in the statement so it's crystal clear that they're direct quotes, written in plain language.

1. I [Nancy Pelosi] was briefed on interrogation techniques
2. Jane Harman, was briefed more extensively and advised the techniques had in fact been employed
3. Harman filed a letter in early 2003 to the CIA to protest the use of such techniques, a protest with which I concurred

So, Pelosi in fact says clearly she was told about the interrogation techniques—albeit not in great detail. She notes only that Jane Harman got a more detailed briefing and got notice that the intelligence community was actually using them. But how, if she mentions Harman's protest and says she concurred with it, is that throwing Harman under the bus? If anything, it's Nancy trying to claim that she just didn't have enough gory details in the 2002 briefing to make the correct objection that Harman made after the 2003 briefing. But she's not denying that she was briefed on interrogation techniques and she's not throwing Harman under the bus.

We all know these two have had some disagreements. But this, at least according to Nancy Pelosi, was not one of them.