

# IN WHICH COUNTRY WERE THE TAPES STORED?

The NYT's article has one more detail of note—again, reporting something that is intuitive, but not something that had been confirmed before, AFAIK. The torture tapes were stored in the country—singular—where the interrogations of Abu Zubaydah and al-Nashiri took place.

Until their destruction, the tapes were stored in a safe in the C.I.A. station in the country where the interrogations took place, current and former officials said. According to one former senior intelligence official, the tapes were never sent back to C.I.A. headquarters, despite what the official described as concern about keeping such highly classified material overseas.

Which raises some really interesting questions. Abu Zubaydah has been widely reported to have been taken from Pakistan to Thailand to be interrogated. Yet al-Nashiri's trajectory has been less clear. He was reported to have been detained in the United Arab Emirates but it has never been clear where he was taken after he was captured (though I've seen unreliable sources say al-Nashiri was taken to Jordan).

But according to the NYT, al-Nashiri was apparently interrogated in the same country as Abu Zubaydah. So, presumably, Thailand, unless Abu Zubaydah was moved.

Though there is a distinct possibility that Abu Zubaydah was moved. From James Risen's *State of War*:

The CIA assigned a group of agency officials to try to find alternative prison sites in countries scattered

around the world. They were studying, said one CIA source, "how to make people disappear."

There were a number of third world countries, with dubious human rights records, willing to play host. One African country offered the CIA the use of an island in the middle of a large lake, according to CIA sources, and other nations were equally accommodating. Eventually, several CIA prisons were secretly established, including at least two major ones, code-named Bright Lights and Salt Pit. A small group of officials within the CIA's Counterterrorist Center was put in charge of supporting the prisons and managing the interrogations.

[snip]

Bright Light is one of the prisons where top al Qaeda leaders—including Abu Zubaydah and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the central planner of the September 11 attacks—have been held. Bright Light's location is secret, and it has been used for only a handful of the most important al Qaeda detainees. (30)

This passage follows Risen's reporting that Abu Zubaydah was moved to Thailand not long after his capture. Which suggests, as far as Risen knows, Bright Light may not be in Thailand. And therefore, the country where Abu Zubaydah and al-Nishiri were tortured (and where their torture tapes were stored for three years) may not be Thailand.

That's not much to go on. But I find this news particularly interesting considering the news that,

... the CIA came into possession of the three recordings [revealed to Leonie Brinkema in October] under unique circumstances involving separate

national security matters unrelated to the Moussaoui prosecution.

On September 13, 2007, an attorney for the CIA notified us of the discovery of a videotape of the interrogation of [redacted]

The whole discussion of the destroyed torture tapes appears to be connected to the discovery, three months ago, of these other torture tapes, which were not destroyed. So it might suggest that the "separate national security matters" might have something to do with the location at which the torture tapes had been stored.