

TORTURE TIMELINE AND IRAQ-AL QAEDA TIES

Mostly because I want to point you all to the newly updated Torture Timeline, I want to make a point about the timing of the decision to torture Abu Zubaydah.

At least according to the Senate narrative, they started discussing torture plans for Abu Zubaydah after February 22, 2002—when DIA first questioned Ibn Sheikh al-Libi’s claim of a tie between Iraq and al Qaeda that derived from torture. And they signed the Bybee Memo the day after the second DIA report questioning al-Libi’s Iraq-al Qaeda ties.

The intelligence reports from al-Libi’s torture, of course, were used (in spite of DIA doubts about them) as a central claim in Colin Powell’s speech to the UN a year later.

I can trace the story of a senior terrorist operative telling how Iraq provided training in these weapons to al Qaeda.

Fortunately, this operative is now detained, and he has told his story. I will relate it to you now as he, himself, described it.

This senior al Qaeda terrorist was responsible for one of al Qaeda’s training camps in Afghanistan.

His information comes firsthand from his personal involvement at senior levels of al Qaeda. He says bin Laden and his top deputy in Afghanistan, deceased al Qaeda leader Mohammed Atef, did not believe that al Qaeda labs in Afghanistan were capable enough to manufacture these chemical or biological agents. They needed to go somewhere else. They had to look outside of Afghanistan for help. Where did they go? Where did they look?

They went to Iraq.

The support that (inaudible) describes included Iraq offering chemical or biological weapons training for two al Qaeda associates beginning in December 2000. He says that a militant known as Abu Abdula Al-Iraqi (ph) had been sent to Iraq several times between 1997 and 2000 for help in acquiring poisons and gases. Abdula Al-Iraqi (ph) characterized the relationship he forged with Iraqi officials as successful.

In other words, they were getting false information from torture—the false information they would use to bring us to war with Iraq—at the same time as they were devising their plan to torture Abu Zubaydah.

Here's an excerpt of the full timeline.

September 17 (alternately, 15), 2001:

Bush signs Memorandum of Notification authorizing CIA to capture, detain, and interrogate al Qaeda figures.

October 21, 2001: OLC memo eviscerating 4th Amendment.

December 17, 2001: DoD OGC asks JPRA for information about detainee "exploitation."

December 2001 or January 2002: James Mitchell asked Bruce Jessen to review documents describing al Qaeda resistance training. They generated a paper on al Qaeda resistance capabilities and countermeasures.

December 18, 2001: Ibn Sheikh al-Libi captured. After being tortured, al-Libi made up stories about Al Qaeda ties to Iraq.

December 27, 2001: Rumsfeld announces plans to hold detainees at Gitmo.

January 20, 2002: Bybee to Abu Gonzales memo specifying that common article 3 of the Geneva Convention does not apply to "an armed conflict between a nation-state and a transnational terrorist organization."

January 25, 2002: Gonzales memo for Bush recommends against applying the Geneva Convention to enemy detainees.

January 2002: Supplemental Public Affairs Guidance on Detainees affirms Geneva Convention wrt *media* photographs.

February 2, 2002: William Taft argues for the application of Geneva Conventions.

February 12, 2002: Jessen sends paper on al Qaeda resistance capabilities to JPRA commander Randy Moulton.

February 22, 2002: DIA voices doubts about al-Libi's claims of Iraq-al Qaeda ties.

March 28, 2002: Abu Zubaydah taken into custody.

March 29, 2002: James Mitchell closes consulting company, Knowledge Works, in NC.

March 31, 2002: Abu Zubaydah flown to Thailand.

April 2002: CIA OGC lawyers begin conversations with John Bellinger and John Yoo/Jay Bybee on proposed interrogation plan for Abu Zubaydah. Bellinger briefed Condi, Hadley, and Gonzales, as well as Ashcroft and Chertoff.

April 16, 2002: Bruce Jessen circulates draft exploitation plan to JPRA Commander.

May 2, 2002: The US "un-signs" the International Criminal Court treaty.

May 8, 2002: Jose Padilla taken into custody based on material warrant signed by Michael Mukasey and based on testimony from Abu Zubaydah.

Mid-May 2002: CIA OGC lawyers meet with Ashcroft, Condi, Hadley, Bellinger, and Gonzales to discuss alternative interrogation methods, including waterboarding.

June 25, 2002: Moussaoui arraigned.

July 10, 2002: Date of first interrogation report from Abu Zubaydah cited in 9/11 Report.

July 13, 2002: CIA OGC (Rizzo?) meets with Bellinger, Yoo, Chertoff, Daniel Levin, and Gonzales for overview of interrogation plan.

July 17, 2002: Tenet met with Condi, who advised CIA could proceed with torture, subject to a determination of legality by OLC.

Late July 2002: Bybee discusses SERE with Yoo and Ashcroft.

July 24, 2002: Bybee advised CIA that Ashcroft concluded proposed techniques were legal.

July 26, 2002: Bybee tells CIA waterboarding is legal. CIA begins to waterboard Abu Zubaydah.

July 31, 2002: DIA issues second report doubting al-Libi's confession of Iraq-al Qaeda ties.

August 1, 2002: "Bybee Memo" (written by John Yoo) describes torture as that which is equivalent to :the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death."