

# AL-LIBI DIES IN A LIBYAN PRISON



Graphic by Darkblack

We have been talking heavily about torture, renditions and the legal and motivational justifications therefore nonstop for the last couple of weeks. But one of the earliest entries in this sordid tale (witness the December 18, 2001 entry on Marcy's Torture Timeline) was the capture and torture of Ibn Sheikh al-Libi. What became of al-Libi has been ripe discussion ever since he was disappeared. From Andy Worthington (h/t Barb) we learn of al-Libi's demise:

The Arabic media is ablaze with the news that Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi, the emir of an Afghan training camp – whose claim that Saddam Hussein had been involved in training al-Qaeda operatives in the use of chemical and biological weapons was used to justify the invasion of Iraq – has died in a Libyan jail.

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This news resolves, in the grimmest way possible, questions that have long been asked about the whereabouts of Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi, perhaps the most famous of "America's Disappeared" – prisoners seized in the "War on Terror," who were rendered not to Guantánamo but to secret prisons run by the CIA or to the custody of governments in third countries – often their own – where, it was presumed, they would never be seen or heard from again.

Al-Libi was captured by Pakistan on or about December 18, 2001 and was one of the earliest subjects rendered at the will of the CIA, being sent to Egypt for torture. And what did Bush/Cheney want out of him? Information connecting Sadaam Hussein with al-Qaida of

course, which he eventually coughed up to his tormenters.

The significance of al-Libi in the events that followed and have led us to where we are today cannot be overestimated.

In Egypt, he came up with the false allegation about connections between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein that was used by President Bush in a speech in Cincinnati on October 7, 2002, just days before Congress voted on a resolution authorizing the President to go to war against Iraq, in which, referring to the supposed threat posed by Saddam Hussein's regime, Bush said, "We've learned that Iraq has trained al-Qaeda members in bomb making and poisons and deadly gases."

That October 7, 2002 speech in Cincinnati was a critical base for entire set of lies that put us into the unconscionable and unjustified invasion and occupation of Iraq. You might remember the Cincinnati speech, it was the first time Bush and Cheney tried to use the infamous "16 Words" that would later appear in the State of the Union and lead to Joe Wilson's Op-Ed and the eventual outing of his wife Valerie Plame. And those prophetic words were in that very same speech until Tenet and the CIA insisted on them being excised at the last minute because they were based upon faulty information. Think about it – the Cincinnati speech was originally a double whammy of bogus war provocation, the al-Libi fraud *and* the 16 Words.

But, as Bush and Cheney cravenly brought back the 16 Words (for the SOTU), so they came back with the fraudulent al-Libi based Iraq lie again too:

Four months later, on February 5, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell made the same claim in his notorious speech to the UN Security Council, in an attempt

to drum up support for the invasion. "I can trace the story of a senior terrorist operative telling how Iraq provided training in these [chemical and biological] weapons to Al Qaeda," Powell said, adding, "Fortunately, this operative is now detained, and he has told his story." As a Newsweek report in 2007 explained, Powell did not identify al-Libi by name, but CIA officials – and a Senate Intelligence Committee report – later confirmed that he was referring to al-Libi.

The problem is that the US government knew in early 2002 that al-Libi had fabricated his stories. We know this from statements by Jack Cloonan to Jane Mayer for her *New Yorker* article that became the basis for her book *The Dark Side* and (from another Andy Worthington piece) corroborating statements by fellow FBI agent Dan Coleman. (See also this Michael Hirsh article in Newsweek).

So we appear to have a final answer (there has been previous speculation about Libya) to the question of what became of Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi. He ended up in a Libyan prison and died there. But, as is so often the case with the Bush/Cheney torture regime, with every answer comes even more questions. How did al-Libi commit suicide, and when? Was it really suicide or was he terminated with prejudice? What exactly was the relationship of the US to Libya in this little play? There are so many questions.