

# TIMING AND THE SHEIKH AL-LIBI DEATH

Since Andy Worthington reported on Sheikh al-Libi's death over the weekend, a few more details on timing have come out.

Ibn Sheikh al-Libi Died in the Last Two Weeks

The first important point is that al-Libi died sometime after April 27, when a Human Rights Watch researcher spoke with him in a Libyan jail.

Human Right Watch researcher Heba Morayef told Reuters in London that she saw Fakhiri on April 27 during a visit to the Libyan capital's main Abu Salim jail.

She said Fakhiri appeared for just two minutes in a prison courtyard. He look well, but was unwilling to speak to the Rights Watch team, she said. "Where were you when I was being tortured in American prisons?" she quoted him as saying.

This makes his death all the more suspicious, as it occurs after it has become clear there will be an inquiry of some sort here in the US (to say nothing of international prosecutions). The SSCI, remember, is conducting detainee by detainee reviews of treatment, and al-Libi is close to the top of the list in terms of seniority and brutality of treatment. Any reconsideration of Moussaoui's sentencing given the treatment of evidence in his case may well point to al-Libi. Likewise, any contempt proceedings out of the ACLU case my bring attention to al-Libi's treatment.

Most importantly, think of the people who would have an interest in having al-Libi—recently discovered by Human Rights Watch—silenced. If al-Libi had an opportunity to testify about how

he fabricated the reports of al Qaeda ties to Iraq, it would focus intense attention on Dick Cheney's lies to get us into war. And Egypt can ill afford to have the extent of their cooperation with the US on these matters exposed.

So there are a lot of reasons why al-Libi's recent death is all the more suspicious.

Ibn Sheikh al-Libi Was Turned Over to Libya in 2006

Then there's the detail that al-Libi was rendered to Libya in 2006 (which had been reported by the WaPo in 2007). Obviously, that would mean the US gave up custody of al-Libi before it moved the remaining High Value Detainees to Gitmo and ultimately made them available to the Red Cross. But it also means al-Libi's return to Libya happened in the same year that the US restored relations with Libya, and Stephen Kappes—who had played a key role in restoring relations—returned to the CIA, both in May 2006. While the treatment of Maher Arar shows we don't need great relations with a state (in his case, Syria) to render someone into their custody, al-Libi's rendition was likely a more sensitive subject (particularly given his role at the nexus of torture and false intelligence to trump up the Iraq War.

Particularly given the suspicious timing of al-Libi's death, it raises questions about what our understanding with Qadaffi was when we gave him custody over al-Libi.