

MARK MAZZETTI, THE GRAY LADY'S GRAMMAR-IMPAIRED SPOOK STENOGRAPHER

✖ C'mon, NYT, don't you remember how embarrassing it was when Judy Miller was playing warmonger stenographer in 2002? Then why are you guys whoring yourself out to serve disinformation again?

I'm speaking of this post on Nancy Pelosi's press conference spelling out reaaaaalllyyyy slowly that the CIA lied when it briefed Pelosi and Goss on torture in 2002. When I first looked at the post, the headline said something like, "Pelosi says CIA misled Congress" (sorry, I didn't get a screen cap; I should have known). Now it has shifted its focus back onto the fact that a Pelosi staffer—**not the CIA**, as required by law—informed Pelosi that CIA was in the torture business in 2003.

And with its update—including reporting from the NYT's spook guy, Mark Mazzetti—the NYT claims that Porter Goss refutes Nancy Pelosi's statement.

According to the C.I.A. records, Ms. Pelosi attended the Sept. 4 briefing about the agency's interrogation techniques with her Republican counterpart, Representative Porter J. Goss of Florida. Based on agency notes from the briefing, the two lawmakers were told the specific techniques "that had been employed" on Abu Zubaydah.

By then, that C.I.A. already used a number of harsh methods on Mr. Zubaydah, including waterboarding.

The C.I.A. records do not list the individual techniques that lawmakers were told about. However, in an op-ed

last month, Mr. Goss said he remembers being told specifically about waterboarding during the September 2002 briefing.

"I am slack jawed to read that members claim to have not understood that the techniques on which they were briefed were to actually be employed; or that specific techniques such as "waterboarding" were never mentioned," Mr. Goss wrote in The Wall Street Journal.

Mark, Mark, Mark. I spelled this all out here, back when it became apparent to anyone with a command of the English language that Goss' dispute with Pelosi had nothing to do with her contention (which was clear even then) that the CIA hadn't told Congress that it had **already** been using waterboarding. Rather, Goss argued that Pelosi should have known that the CIA **was going to use** waterboarding given that they told Pelosi they had gotten approval for it.

Now, that's clear even from the excerpt you've included in the post. But here, I'll give you the whole excerpt so you can begin to understand how the English language works so you won't be so susceptible to Porter's spin next time.

In the fall of 2002, while I was chairman of the House intelligence committee, senior members of Congress were briefed on the CIA's "High Value Terrorist Program," including the development of "enhanced interrogation techniques" and what those techniques were.

[snip]

Today, I am slack-jawed to read that members claim to have not understood that the techniques on which they were briefed were to actually be employed; or that specific techniques such as "waterboarding" were never mentioned.

Now Goss asserts five things with respect to that first briefing in 2002:

1. He and Pelosi were briefed on the CIA's High Value Terrorist Program
2. He and Pelosi were briefed on the development of EITs
3. He and Pelosi were briefed on what those techniques were
4. Waterboarding was mentioned
5. Those techniques—including, presumably, waterboarding—"were to actually be employed"

Pelosi agrees that she and Goss were briefed on the program and, generally, that they discussed techniques. She even agrees that waterboarding was mentioned; the phrase "waterboarding was not being employed" certainly counts as a mention of waterboarding.

But see what number 5 doesn't say? It doesn't say, "those techniques had already been employed." "Were to be employed," a prospective use of waterboarding, not "had been employed," a past use of waterboarding.

Now, Mark. If you want to continue doing Porter's bidding, you're going to have to go back to him—I'm sure you've got him on speed-dial?—and get a stronger statement from him. But as things stand today, Porter Goss' statement is completely consistent with Nancy Pelosi's. The CIA, when it briefed Goss and Pelosi in 2002, did not tell them they had already been using waterboarding with Abu Zubaydah.

As a spook stenographer, Mark, I'm sure you're familiar with the National Security Act, but if you need a primer, why not read about it on the pages of the NYT? You'll see that the National Security Act requires the Administration inform

Congress—arguably, the entire intelligence committees—about their covert ops. Requires. But instead, what happened here is that CIA took up torturing, and then, when they "briefed" Pelosi and Goss on it in September 2002, they didn't tell them they were already doing it. They didn't get around to revealing that until five months later—and six months after they had gotten into the torture business.

That is a violation of the law—some might even consider it news. But not the NYT!!! Nope, the NYT is going to keep recycling Porter Goss' carefully parsed statements and imply they refute Nancy Pelosi when they don't. The NYT is going to obsess over the fact that a staffer told Nancy Pelosi something that CIA should have told her almost a year earlier.

But the NYT is not, apparently, going to tell its readers that the CIA broke the law.