

IN APRIL 2003, AFTER WATERBOARDING HIM 183 TIMES, THE CIA ADMITTED KSM WAS LYING TO THEM

In March 2003, the CIA subjected Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to the most brutal of its torture techniques. Over the course of that month, we know, the CIA waterboarded Khalid Shaikh Mohammed 183 times.

Then, three days into April, the CIA wrote an analytical report admitting that KSM lied during those interrogations.

A footnote in the 9/11 Report provides some detail on this analytical report (footnote 4 in Chapter 7).

In an assessment of KSM's reporting, the CIA concluded that protecting operatives in the United States appeared to be a "major part" of KSM's resistance efforts. For example, in response to questions about U.S. zip codes found in his notebooks, KSM provided the less than satisfactory explanation that he was planning to use the zip code to open new email accounts. CIA report, Intelligence Community Terrorist Threat Assessment, "**Khalid Shaykh Muhammed's Threat Reporting—Precious Truths, Surrounded by a Bodyguard of Lies,**" April 3, 2003, pp 4-5.[my emphasis]

Admittedly, CIA was bemoaning the perceived lies KSM was telling to protect operatives the Agency assumed he had planted around the United States (the footnote serves to explain why the 9/11 Commission did not believe KSM's claims that there were no al Qaeda operatives in Southern California to assist two of the hijackers). At

least from this description, we don't know whether the Agency also admitted that KSM was lying about knowing where Osama bin Laden was—as was declassified the other day. But we do know that CIA acknowledged he was lying about precisely the subject—threat reporting—that the torture apologists claim waterboarding was so successful in eliciting.

I present this not as proof that KSM was lying about who al Qaeda had stationed in the US. Rather, it is a document written contemporaneously with the torture. And it shows what role torture-induced knowledge played for the CIA. Where KSM didn't confirm CIA's preconceptions, they assumed he was lying. Where he gave them stories of scary attacks, they wasted resources tracking them down. But, partly because they were torturing him, they had no easy way to sort through the crap to find any real intelligence.

There are a number of outlets that believe KSM's admissions of lying at his CSRT are the big takeaway, even though equally damning admissions in the CSRTs have long been unclassified and KSM's CSRT already had unclassified claims of lying.

But why take KSM's word for it? CIA made the same claims back when they tortured him, and that admission has been unclassified for five years.