

TORTURE IS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO INTERROGATION RESULTS!

As Fatster noted, there is a new report out from Pamela Hess of the AP relating the conclusions of a paper, published in the scientific journal *Trends in Cognitive Science: Science and Society*, by Irish professor and researcher Shane O'Mara, on the deleterious effects of the procedures employed by the Bush Administration torture program:

The CIA's harsh interrogation program likely damaged the brain and memory functions of terrorist suspects, diminishing their physical ability to provide the detailed information the spy agency sought, according to a new scientific paper.

The paper scrutinizes the harsh techniques used by the CIA under the Bush administration through the lens of neurobiology. Researchers concluded that the harsh methods were biologically counterproductive to eliciting quality information because prolonged stress harms the brain's ability to retain and recall information.

Gee, who could have expected? Read the whole article, it is worth it and not that long. I applaud Professor O'Mara for doing the work and publishing the paper (if anyone is able to find a copy on the net, please leave a link in comments). But the basic conclusions have been known maxims in the interrogation field for a very long time in one form or another. Take this quote from the article for instance:

He warned that this could lead to brain lobe disorders, making the prisoners

vulnerable to confabulation – in this case, the pathological production of false memories based on suggestions from an interrogator. Those false memories mix with true information in the interrogation, making it difficult to distinguish between what is real and what is fabricated.

This root concept and knowledge as to suggestibility and contamination of information gleaned from subjects has been around for a couple of decades as anybody familiar with the work of Dr. Gisli Gudjonsson is aware. Heck the very basics of suggestibility, and problems associated therewith, are even alluded to in the seminal law enforcement interrogation treatises of Inbau, Reid and Buckley *Criminal Interrogation and Confessions*, the first volume of which was published in the 60s.

And therein lies the problem. Where has the media been on this? Dr. O'Mara's paper, again to be heavily applauded for apparently specifically addressing the Bush torture modalities and resultant physiological effects, may be new; but the insanity of the use by the Bush Administration of those modalities, for the purpose claimed, has been crystal clear all along. The people advocating these programs had to be willfully, wantonly and intentionally ignorant of the science and knowledge base in the interrogation community. That is but another reason the claim of "good faith" by the torturers is laughable.