

SITTING ACROSS FROM KSM: KSM'S ABU GHAITH ANSWERS

Earlier today I noted that torture defender Philip Mudd argued the benefits of sitting across from top al Qaeda figures to learn more about them.

Now you can have that opportunity.

In the Suleiman Abu Ghaith trial, his lawyers have just posted the 14-pages of answers Khalid Sheikh Mohammed gave to their questions.

He was not a friendly witness. He said he suspected the US government had a hand in the questions, and used the opportunity to voice his suspicions as an opportunity to air what had been done to him.

I received the set of questions from the lawyer for Sulaiman Abu Ghayth (Allah preserve him) consisting of 24 pages and 451 questions. It reminded me of the interrogations at the Black Sites and the questions from the dirty team at Guantanamo.

[snip]

I want to inform Sheikh Sulaiman Abu Ghayth's lawyer that I suspect the U.S. government has a hand in the questions because they correspond precisely with the way the CIA and FBI posed questions. I may be right or wrong in this assumption, but I feel that most of the questions do not serve the interests of his client or anyone for that matter; yet they are primary directed to me.

And there are several other places where KSM clearly engages in craft (which I'll post in updates).

Nevertheless, this is a fairly uncensored view of that which Mudd insisted was so instructive – instructive enough to torture to get.

On camps

KSM claims that the camps the US has used as a sign of terrorism aren't the best measure.

I don not have any information on [the training camps] during this period because I was appointed by Sheikh Osama bin Laden (Allah have mercy upon him) as head of operations abroad, meaning all the jihadist operations conducted outside of Afghanistan.

[snip]

The candidates were sent to me and I had other means of training them apart from the well-known camps. I did not need the camps to prepare my men because of the nature of the special operations that were conducted outside Afghanistan.

This is presumably true: shooting guns in the desert isn't going to train one to live in the US inconspicuously and case out plane hijacking. But it's also a taunt that all the attention the US pays to people who've trained at generalized camps isn't going to find the people most apt to attack the US.

This claim to limited knowledge also allows him to claim Abu Ghaith did not train militarily, based on his limited knowledge.

On fighting Russia

This passage makes me wonder how recent of news coverage KSM gets.

At that time, during that particular war, the U.S. government was against the Russian forces for political and strategic reasons of their own. Thus they gave their proxies in the Arabian Peninsula countries the green light to

flood the Afghan Mujahideen with money, resources, and Arab fighters; they also opened the doors for merchants and businessmen to donate money without conditions or restrictions. The selfishness and stubbornness of Uncle Sam pushed the U.S. government to flood their agent, the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), with millions or billions of dollars in order to defeat the Russian Army by supporting the Afghan Mujahideen. This indirect support was the principle cause of the development of the non-Afghan groups and organizations in Afghanistan and their ability to achieve what they desired without any security pressures imposed by U.S. allies such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and other countries around the world. They never supported the non-Afghan groups directly with money or weapons, but by allowing absolute freedom for young people to spend their own money and take advantage of the open land contributed to attaining these achievements. In the end, Uncle Sam destroyed his own country by his own hand with his stupid foreign policy.

it was in this climate of complete inattention from the West that the groups in Afghanistan were able to develop their capabilities. The countries in the West were busy settling scores with the Russians and licking their chops over Mujahideen victories, and for the most part remained completely blind to what was happening in the camps and on the non-Afghan Mujahideen front.

[snip]

The American media had not yet used terms such as "foreign fighters" or "Afghan Arabs" or "terrorists" or even "the Afghan resistance", rather the

fixed term in the Western media policy at that time was “Mujahideen”. CNN, BBC, Reuters, France Press were all united in using the term “Jihad” to describe the Afghan resistance and “Mujahideen[“] to describe the fighters, whether Afghan or Arab, and the term “martyrs” for those among them who were killed.

All this was to impart international legitimacy on the Western and Islamic support for the Mujahideen in an effort to limit the expansion of the Red Bear and prevent it from obtaining a warm water port.

KSM is totally trolling here. But given events in Russia (especially concerning its warm weather port in Crimea) or – even moreso – Syria, his trolling should carry some weight (but won’t).

On Lists of Names

One of the key pieces of evidence the government used against many Gitmo detainees – and Abu Ghaith – was the list of names found on various computers captured in raids (I believe, though have not confirmed, that Abu Ghaith’s name appeared on the same computer list that Adnan Latif’s did, for example).

But KSM says they shouldn’t be used in that way.

[T]here was not a single, fixed system for dispersing funds, especially the expenses and financial guarantees distributed by Al-Qaeda and its beneficiaries. It did not limit its embers, families, and sympathizers, rather it gave freely to all needy families, regardless of their loyalties or affiliation, for two reasons: one, because it was a religious obligation ordering them to consider all the needy equally and fairly and without discriminating between them; and two, because it was a requirement for many

donors to not limit funding to any particular category of people but to give to all those who needed it. There were tables and charts and lists of names of the families who received aid and these lists did not delineate the affiliation of the person on record.

I suspect KSM is partly blowing smoke here, and he's not talking about the specific list at issue in this trial. But I also suspect there's some truth to what he says, and that the government has been overstating the value of these lists in large numbers of terrorism trials and, more importantly, Gitmo habeas cases. Philip Mudd says we learn from KSM; is this a fact (or partial truth) we should have learned but refused to?

On bayat

KSM similarly challenges the way the government treats bayat – swearing loyalty to the Taliban or al Qaeda – pointing out that swearing bayat to Mullah Omar but swearing bayat to Osama bin Laden was not (and he did not swear bayat to OBL for years).

That said, his claim here does not entirely rebut US claims.

The United States tries to fabricate charges against innocent people, saying they swore bayat or incited others to do so. Swearing bayat does not mean that a person is placed on a list to carry out an operation; even the cook has sworn bayat.

This, of course, is not the way US law currently works. You swear loyalty to al Qaeda, you're materially supporting them. For Abu Ghaith, the issue is somewhat different as material support laws changed with his involvement. But KSM's rebuttal here doesn't address the key issue of bayat.