

CIA CHANGED THE PELOSI BRIEFING DESCRIPTION AFTER DECIDING TO DESTROY TORTURE TAPES

I'm working on some deep weeds for a post later on Monday (hopefully).

But as a preliminary to them, I wanted to point out a minor—but very critical—bit of timing.

As I pointed out in the comments to this thread, someone (I'll show in my new weedy post why it might be then-Counterterrorism Center Legal Counsel Jonathan Fredman) changed the initial description of the briefing that Jose Rodriguez and two others (I believe Fredman was one of the two) gave to Porter Goss and Nancy Pelosi on September 4, 2002. To see the documents showing discussing the alteration (but not the content of it), see PDF 84 of this set and PDF 11-12 of this set.

That's suspicious enough. But as the email discussions of destroying the torture tape show (see PDF 3), the briefing and the alteration to the briefing record happened the day before and the day after—respectively—the day “HQS elements” started talking seriously about destroying the torture tapes.

On 05 September 2002, HQS elements discussed the disposition of the videotapes documenting interrogation sessions with ((Abu Zubaydah)) that are currently being stored at [redacted] with particular consideration to the matters described in Ref A Paras 2 and 3 and Ref B para 4. As reflected in Refs, the retention of these tapes, which is not/not required by law, represents a serious security risk for [redacted] officers recorded on them, and for all

[redacted] officers present and participating in [redacted] operations.

[snip]

Accordingly, the participants determined that the best alternative to eliminate those security and additional risks is to destroy these tapes [redacted]

So here's what this looks like in timeline form:

September 4, 2002: Jose Rodriguez, C/CTC/LGL (probably Fredman) and a CTC Records officer brief Porter Goss and Nancy Pelosi on Abu Zubaydah's treatment. According to both Goss and Pelosi, CIA briefs them on torture techniques, but implies they are hypothetical techniques that might be used in the future, not the past.

September 5, 2002: Unnamed people at CIA HQ discuss destroying the torture tapes, ostensibly because of danger to CIA officers conducting the torture.

September 6, 2002: Someone (possibly Jonathan Fredman or someone else in CTC's Legal department) alters the initial description of the Goss-Pelosi briefing, eliminating one sentence of it. "Short and sweet" Rodriguez responded to the proposed change.

September 9, 2002: CIA records show a scheduled briefing for Bob Graham and Richard Shelby to cover the same materials as briefed in the Goss-Pelosi briefing. The September 9 briefing never happened; Graham and Shelby were eventually briefed on September 27, 2002 (though not by Rodriguez personally).

September 10, 2002: The altered description of the briefing is sent internally for CTC records. This briefing is never finalized by Office of Congressional Affairs head Stan

■ Moskowitz into a formal Memorandum for the Record.

Or, to put it more plainly, they briefed Pelosi, decided they wanted to destroy the torture tapes (there's no record Pelosi was told about the tapes), and then tweaked the record about what they had said to Pelosi.