OMNI NEWSLETTER # 2 ON TORTURE WAR CRIMES, MAY 9, 2011 (#1 October 5, 2007 http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/). Compiled by Dick Bennett, Building a Culture of Peace

As on every other subject regarding US illegal and unjust wars, OMNI has not been silent regarding our abhorrence of torture and by torture the subversion of our constitutional and best moral traditions. In addition to this newsletter: our book forums and petitions to our senators. If you wish to be help or lead OMNI’s anti-torture efforts, contact Gladys Tiffany at OMNI 935-4422.

Contents of #2
No Exceptions
Apologists
Bad Science and Medical Ethics
Bush Admin. War Crimes, Psychology, and Accountability
Prosecuting Bush Officials
Cheney Admits to War Crimes
CIA Waterboarding Legal Shield
Solitary Confinement
Justice Denied to Guantanamo Dead
Books
President Obama and Faisal Shahzad


Excerpt: "Yet Lincoln's code also said that 'military necessity does not admit of cruelty ... nor of torture.'"

READ MORE http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/287-124/5870-no-torture-no-exceptions

“The Torture Apologists” By The New York Times Editorial

05 May 11

he killing of Osama bin Laden provoked a host of reactions from Americans: celebration, triumph, relief, closure and renewed grief. One reaction, however, was both cynical and disturbing: crowing by
the apologists and practitioners of torture that Bin Laden's death vindicated their immoral and illegal behavior after the Sept. 11 attacks.

There is no final answer to whether any of the prisoners tortured in President George W. Bush's illegal camps gave up information that eventually proved useful in finding Bin Laden. A detailed account in The Times on Wednesday by Scott Shane and Charlie Savage concluded that torture "played a small role at most" in the years and years of painstaking intelligence and detective work that led a Navy Seals team to Bin Laden's hideout in Pakistan.

That squares with the frequent testimony over the past decade from many other interrogators and officials. They have said repeatedly, and said again this week, that the best information came from prisoners who were not tortured. The Times article said Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who was waterboarded 183 times, fed false information to his captors during torture.

Even if it were true that some tidbit was blurted out by a prisoner while being tormented by CIA interrogators, that does not remotely justify Mr. Bush's decision to violate the law and any acceptable moral standard.

No matter what Mr. Yoo and friends may claim, the real lesson of the Bin Laden operation is that it demonstrated what can be done with focused intelligence work and persistence. For the full essay go to http://www.readersupportednews.org/opinion2/287-124/5836-the-torture-apologists

The New Yorker
Jane Meyer writes: "Well, that didn't take long. It may have taken nearly a decade to find and kill Osama bin Laden, but it took less than twenty-four hours for torture apologists to claim credit for his downfall. Funny. You would think that if the CIA's interrogation of high-value detainees was all it took, the US government would have succeeded in locating Bin Laden before 2006, which is when the CIA's custody of so-called 'high-value detainees' ended."
READ MORE http://readersupportednews.org/off-site-opinion-section/123-123/5807-bin-laden-dead-torture-debate-lives-on

“Bad Science Used to Support Torture and Human Experimentation” by Iacopino, Allen, and Keller, in Science (Jan. 7, 2011). “The science used to justify torture…failed to assess important long-term physical and mental health outcomes….and violated the most basic tenet of medical ethics and scientific inquiry…first, do no harm.”

THE WAR CRIMES OF THE TORTURERS AND THEIR RATIONALIZATIONS
“CIA Psychologist's Notes Reveal True Purpose Behind Bush's Torture Program” by Leopold and Kaye From Truthout 3-22-11
It's been nine years since the Bush administration implemented its highly-classified torture program, where government interrogators subjected "war on terror" detainees held at CIA prisons and at Guantanamo to brutal techniques in an effort, the public was told, to thwart pending terrorist attacks against the United States and its interests abroad.

While President Obama and Congressional lawmakers "look forward" and have failed to hold accountable those individuals who violated international and domestic human rights laws, new revelations continue to surface showing the extent of the previous administration's war crimes and the lies upon which they were based.

Indeed, as Jason Leopold and Jeffrey Kaye report in this in-depth investigative report, the handwritten notes, obtained exclusively by Truthout, that were drafted by Dr. John Bruce Jessen, the psychologist who was under contract to the CIA and credited as being one of the architects of the so-called "enhanced interrogation" program, show that torture was used to "exploit" detainees and to get them to "collaborate" with government authorities.

The documents stand as the first pieces of hard evidence to surface that further explain the psychological aspects of Bush's torture program and the rationale for subjecting detainees to so-called "enhanced interrogation techniques." Jessen's notes were provided to Truthout by retired Air Force Capt. Michael Kearns, a decorated veteran who previously held high-ranking positions within the Department of Defense, and is speaking publicly for the first time. Kearns, who worked closely with Jessen in developing a survival training program for military personnel that the torture program was based upon, said Jessen's "duplicitous act is appalling to me and shall haunt me for the rest of my life."

Supplementing this groundbreaking report is an exclusive, on-camera interview with Captain Kearns conducted by Jason Leopold. Truthout is also providing our readers with copies of Jessen's notes that can be downloaded from the article page.

Michael Ratner, “Bringing the 'Bush Six' to Justice “
Guardian UK
Michael Ratner writes: "Today, the Centre for Constitutional Rights filed papers encouraging Judge Eloy Velasco and the Spanish national court to do what the United States will not: prosecute the 'Bush Six.' These are the former senior administration legal advisors, headed by then US Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, who violated international law by creating a legal framework that materially contributed to the torture of suspected terrorists at US-run facilities at Guantanamo and other overseas locations."
READ MORE https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12d670f6c304e5dc

Cheney Admits to War Crimes, Media Yawns, Obama Turns the Other
Cheek” [01/20]
TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2010
Cheney Admits to War Crimes, Media Yawns, Obama Turns the Other Cheek
Monday 15 February 2010
by: Jason Leopold, t r u t h o u t | News Analysis
Dick Cheney is a sadist.
On Sunday, in an exclusive interview with Jonathan Karl of ABC News' "This Week," Cheney
proclaimed his love of torture, derided the Obama administration for outlawing the practice,
and admitted that the Bush White House ordered Justice Department attorneys to fix the law
around the administration's policy interests.
"I was a big supporter of waterboarding," Cheney told Karl, as if he were issuing a challenge
to officials in the current administration, including President Barack Obama, who said flatly
last year that waterboarding is torture, to take action against him. "I was a big supporter of the
enhanced interrogation techniques."
The former vice president's declaration closely follows admissions he made in December
2008, about a month before the Bush administration exited the White House, when he said he
personally authorized the torture of 33 suspected terrorist detainees and approved the
waterboarding of three so-called “high-value” prisoners.
“I signed off on it; others did, as well, too,” Cheney said in an interview with the right-wing
Washington Times about the waterboarding, a drowning technique where a person is
strapped to a board, his face covered with a cloth and then water is poured over it. It is a
torture technique dating back at least to the Spanish Inquisition.
The US has long treated waterboarding as a war crime and has prosecuted Japanese
soldiers for using it against US troops during World War II. And Ronald Reagan’s Justice
Department prosecuted a Texas sheriff and three deputies for using the practice to get
confessions.
But Cheney's admissions back then, as well as those he made on Sunday, went unchallenged
by Karl and others in the mainstream media. Indeed, the two major national newspapers--The
New York Times and The Washington Post--characterized Cheney's interview as a mere spat
between the vice president and the Obama administration over the direction of the latter's
counterterrorism and national security policies.
The Times and Post did not report that Cheney's comments about waterboarding and his
enthusiastic support of torturing detainees amounted to an admission of war crimes given that
the president has publicly stated that waterboarding is torture.
Ironically, in March 2003, after Iraqi troops captured several US soldiers and let them be
interviewed on Iraqi TV, senior Bush administration officials expressed outrage over this
"If there is somebody captured," President George W. Bush told reporters on March 23, 2003,
"I expect those people to be treated humanely. If not, the people who mistreat the prisoners
will be treated as war criminals." For the rest of the article go to:
https://mail.google.com/mail/?
ui=2&ik=dd75a4efec&view=cv&fs=1&tf=1&ver=b1_WpQkzs8s.en.&am=!10dEyMHDV0SxhZxjitQ2BOc5EP5Pl_K7beUNJVTcGSJNCxD30BZD2Q&search=inbox&th=1
2c9e8229f5772a7&cvid=1

“Officials: CIA Gave Waterboarders $5 Million Legal Shield”
Adam Goldman and Matt Apuzzo, Associated Press
Reader Supported News (18 December, 2010)
The Associated Press reports: "When the CIA decided to waterboard suspected terror
detainees in overseas prisons, the agency turned to a pair of contractors. The men designed
the CIA's interrogation program and also personally took part in the waterboarding sessions."
READ MORE https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12cfac10193dccea

Is Long-Term Solitary Confinement Torture?
Atul Gawande, The New Yorker
The article begins: "Human beings are social creatures. We are social not just in the trivial
sense that we like company, and not just in the obvious sense that we each depend on
others. We are social in a more elemental way: simply to exist as a normal human being
requires interaction with other people."
READ MORE https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12cfac10193dccea

US DENIES JUSTICE TO MEN WHO DIED IN GUANTANAMO
By Andy Worthington http://pubrecord.org/law/8359/court-denies-
justice-guantanamo/
From Cindy Sheehan 10-16-10

BOOKS
--Greenberg, Karen. The Torture Debate in America. (see rev. below)
Magazine (Dec. 2010). Torture of Muslim prisoners was “systemic,” with “countless acts of murder…
at least in the hundreds.” “Pentagon architects designed prisons that were sadistic torture chambers.”
--Alfred McCoy A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation, from the Cold War to the War on
Terror (American Empire Project)
--Roth, Kenneth, et al. Torture. (see rev. below)
--Spero, Nancy. Torture of Women. Siglio, 2010. Artist Spero created the 125-foot
scroll-like "Torture of Women" in 1976. Here the artwork is remembered in detail.

Books on Torture

Necessity or Atrocity?

• E-Mail This
• Printer-Friendly
• Single-Page
• Save Article

Review by LANCE MORROW
Published: January 29, 2006

Sept. 11 encouraged a corrupted version of American exceptionalism, among other things. The
superpower suddenly became the embattled victim, the injured innocent - which was how Americans imagined themselves when they declared their independence in 1776. The Bush Justice Department's 2002 "torture memos" - hardboiled pettifogging intended to give legal cover for getting rough, for "taking the gloves off" in America's war on terror - were later repudiated by the administration. But the memos amounted subliminally to a different sort of declaration of independence, conjured up out of the founding Shinto: America, claiming a special dispensation under Providence, would make its own rules, especially if national security was at stake. The signal emanating from the White House and the Pentagon borrowed a memory from the American subconscious: we would not be contradicted by the tainted Old World, with its treaties and conventions drawn up far away - in Geneva, for example - especially not when such conventions would protect the likes of Al Qaeda.

**Skip to next paragraph** THE TORTURE DEBATE IN AMERICA
Edited by Karen J. Greenberg.

TORTURE
Does It Make Us Safer? Is It Ever OK?
Edited by Kenneth Roth and Minky Worden; Amy D. Bernstein, contributing editor.
218 pp. The New Press. $25.95.

**Forum: Book News and Reviews**

New reality trumps old morality. Out of a new emergency of history, one particularly menacing narrative took shape, darkened by the prestige of apocalypse - the ticking bomb. A script emerged, along these lines:

The Qaeda terrorist breaks under aggressive questioning. (The waterboard worked. He came up spluttering and talking.) The interrogator relays information that, just in time, snips the wire on the dirty nuke hidden in the heart of an American city. The interrogator - "torturer," if you insist - is actually a hero. Thousands of lives are saved.

The ticking bomb may be hypothetical for now, but according to this scenario a certain amount of rough stuff may already have paid off in the war on terror, which, mind you, is a real war against ingeniously concealed fanatics traveling the globe at will, capable of mass killing, anywhere, without warning. In this context, due process, beyond a certain formal point, is for sissies. We live in a newly vulnerable, porous world. Human rights fetishists, fighting the last war (a state-to-state conflict, with old rules now rendered quaint) have become Al Qaeda's useful idiots. What will the bien-pensants have to say if and when another 9/11 - or something worse - occurs?

Who-whom?, Lenin asked. The rough-stuff rationale elicits an indignant counterversion from advocates of human rights:

Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo have become outposts in a global American gulag in which innocent and guilty alike are illegally detained and tortured, usually with no yield of usable intelligence - we squander the nation's moral capital for trash. Torture is the refuge of the lazy, the stupid, the
pseudo-tough. Real intelligence services don't have to torture; they are intelligent enough to learn
the prisoner's language and culture. Why would a tortured man tell you the truth? He will say
anything to stop the pain. What happened to those mystic chords of memory about all men - all of
them - being created equal, endowed with unalienable rights? What of America's respect for human
dignity? For itself? A couple of dozen prisoners, give or take, have died in the American gulag - not
to speak of those whom the C.I.A. has disappeared into regimes far less fastidious than our own.

The American superpower, many human rights advocates go on, has under George W. Bush turned
its back on civilized opinion from Aristotle on, has abandoned the Geneva Conventions, America's
1994 antitorture law and a century's progress toward basic rights, and in the process, compromised
the ideals of freedom and democracy for which the wars on terror and in Iraq are supposedly being
fought. America has become a pariah among nations by committing human rights crimes similar to
those for which Nazi government officials were tried and convicted at Nuremberg.

Two new volumes of essays take up all of the questions contained in these contrasting views,
examining the subject of torture in the context of international terrorism, studying it in various
lights - moral, legal, political, historical, military, philosophical. "The Torture Debate in America,"
edited by Karen J. Greenberg, focuses especially on legal questions; almost all of its contributors
have been trained as lawyers, and are either professors of law or human rights workers. "Torture: Does It Make Us Safer? Is It Ever OK?," edited by Kenneth Roth and Minky Worden, looks at
torture from a more global and historical perspective, ranging from ancient Greece and Rome,
through the Renaissance, to contemporary Israel and Algeria and Argentina and Rwanda. Both
collections proceed from an essentially left-brain mentality; the right brain's script has only token
defenders. Overall, the voices in these books suffer from a tendency toward piousness: Torture bad, me virtuous.

More Articles in Books >
Related Articles

- Playwright Takes a Prize and a Jab at U.S. (December 8, 2005)
- THE REACH OF WAR: PRISON SCANDAL; New Book Says Bush Officials Were Told of Detainee Abuse (September 12, 2004)
- World Briefing | Asia: Cambodia: Khmer Book A Hot Seller (March 6, 2004)
- At Internet Torture Trial, Defense Builds Case on a Beat Novel (March 26, 1998)

END OF TORTURE NEWSLETTER #2