

# CHENEY'S SO-CALLED RECIDIVISTS

There's a number of impressions I get from the DOD "[report](#)" on the number of Gitmo detainees who have joined terrorists groups, including al Qaeda, since being released. First, while it appears to be what ABC [billed it as](#)—the report showing 14% of the people freed from Gitmo purportedly returning to the fight, the one that was used to scare the Senate into refuse funding for Gitmo—it looks fairly laughable. This is a DOD document, mind you, that has no originator or tracking information, and not even headers and footers. It sure doesn't look to me like a finished report—it looks like some guys' notes.

Then, look at the dates. The list confirms a point Lawrence O'Donnell made [when he was debating](#) Liz Cheney. If anyone is responsible for freeing these guys, it's Dick Cheney and his buddies. The sole 2009 date I see is this one:

Abu Sufyan al-Azdi al-Shihri—repatriated to Saudi Arabia in November 2007, and Mazin Salih Musaid al-Alawi al-Awfi—repatriated to Saudi Arabia in July 2007. On 24 January, a 19-minute video was released wherein al-Shihri and al-Awfi announced their leadership within the newly established al-Qaida in Arabian Peninsula.

Call me a cynic, but any video released just days after Obama became President and two days after [he signed](#) an order to close Gitmo ought to be treated with caution. We've seen way too much explicit propaganda in the last eight years to take this as face value.

Also note the standards involved. The report tries to refute a criticism made of it—that among the so-called recidivists included is a guy, Mohammed Ismail, who made a critical comment about the US. In its definitions section, the report says:

For the purposes of this definition, engagement in anti-U.S. propaganda alone does not qualify as terrorist activity.

Oh, okay. In the case of Ismail, the report claims he engaged in an attack on US forces in Afghanistan and was carrying a letter "confirming his status as a Taliban member in good standing."

Which brings us to another point. A number of these so-called recidivists joined not al Qaeda, but the Taliban, upon their return. That's different than al Qaeda membership, and I challenge it as a designation of "terrorist" membership. Anti-US, certainly (at least before we entered into talks with the Taliban), but strictly speaking not a terrorist organization.

Finally, there's the question of how these classifications of confirmed and suspected were collected. The report is based on "DIA assessments and analysis," which places it in a particular position in our own intelligence community and the foreign intelligence services we partner with. DIA, of course, did not have the lead on interrogating these people while at Gitmo; either CIA or (more likely) DOD's interrogators did. While a number of these so-called recidivists were killed, suggesting confirmation was made using DNA analysis, and a number of other ones were recaptured, a still significant bunch are necessarily based on intelligence reporting. To be designated a "suspected" so-called recidivist, the DIA would need only "unverified or single-source, but plausible, reporting." Presumably, the bulk of those the author of this report did not list specifically came from such sources.

Some of this intelligence is no doubt very good. Some of it, though, may well be the same kind of "intelligence" that got these men thrown in Gitmo in the first place.