THE CIA IG REPORT ON RENDITIONS

There are a couple of details I want to return to in this AP story on what has happened to those responsible for CIA's biggest fuck-ups and crimes.

One is this discussion of the CIA Inspector General's report on "erroneous" renditions.

> While the inspector general was investigating the mishandled el-Masri case, congressional investigators discovered several other CIA renditions that seemed to rest on bad legal footing, a U.S. intelligence official said. The CIA looked into them and conceded that, yes, the renditions had been based on faulty analysis.
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> But the agency said the renditions would have been approved even if the correct analysis had been used, so nobody was disciplined.

Now, we've heard of this investigation before. References to it (but no details) appear in a lot of the documents or Vaughn Indices released as part of the torture and ghost detainee FOIAs (often in the form of Congress nagging the CIA for the results of the study). The most detailed early description of the investigation comes from a 2005 Dana Priest article that was also one of the earliest detailed description of Khaled el-Masri's treatment.

> The CIA inspector general is investigating a growing number of what it calls "erroneous renditions," according to several former and current intelligence officials.
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> One official said about three dozen names fall in that category; others believe it is fewer. The list includes

> several people whose identities were offered by al Qaeda figures during CIA interrogations, officials said. One turned out to be an innocent college professor who had given the al Qaeda member a bad grade, one official said.
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> "They picked up the wrong people, who had no information. In many, many cases there was only some vague association" with terrorism, one CIA officer said.

Priest reviews several of the people rendered by the CIA but ultimately dumped in Gitmo which served—one of Priest's sources explains—as the dumping ground for CIA's mistakes.

> Among those released from Guantanamo is Mamdouh Habib, an Egyptian-born Australian citizen, apprehended by a CIA team in Pakistan in October 2001, then sent to Egypt for interrogation, according to court papers. He has alleged that he was burned by cigarettes, given electric shocks and beaten by Egyptian captors. After six months, he was flown to Guantanamo Bay and let go earlier this year without being charged.
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> Another CIA former captive, according to declassified testimony from military tribunals and other records, is Mohamedou Oulad Slahi, a Mauritanian and former Canada resident, who says he turned himself in to the Mauritanian police 18 days after the 9/11 attacks because he heard the Americans were looking for him. The CIA took him to Jordan, where he spent eight months undergoing interrogation, according to his testimony, before being taken to Guantanamo Bay.
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> Another is Muhammad Saad Iqbal Madni, an Egyptian imprisoned by Indonesia authorities in January 2002 after he was

> heard talking — he says jokingly — about
> a new shoe bomb technology. He was flown
> to Egypt for interrogation and returned
> to CIA hands four months later,
> according to one former intelligence
> official. After being held for 13 months
> in Afghanistan, he was taken to
> Guantanamo Bay, according to his
> testimony.

Note Habib is one of the former detainees whose
treatment at the hand of Omar Suleiman has come
under new scrutiny given Suleiman's role in a
post-Mubarak Egypt.

Now, the AP piece doesn't provide many new
details, but two are worthy of note.

First, apparently Congress identified the
erroneous renditions, not the CIA. That suggests
the CIA was not forthcoming in admitting its
mistakes to Congress (which is about par for the
course).

But I'm interested too in the conclusion:the
renditions had been based "on faulty analysis"
but they would have been approved even if "the
correct analysis" was used.

That suggests Inspector General John Helgerson,
not long after CIA had finagled a way to limit
his conclusions about torture, focused on just
the analysis—presumably, the approval
process—that went into the rendition. I'm not
sure what that means, but looking back at
Priest's description of the problem behind
"erroneous" renditions—notably, its reliance on
torture-induced evidence from al Qaeda
detainees—I wonder whether Helgerson assessed
the actual facts behind the rendition, or just
whether the rendition, using those faulty facts,
would have been approved according to the right
decision process. That is, I wonder whether the
CIA decided that the disappearances that even it
considers were wrong didn't matter so much
because they didn't evaluate the lies and
misinformation their torture program had

introduced into the process by which they chose
people to disappear.

That is, it appears CIA has labeled its
disappearances simply a matter of flawed
bureaucracy rather than a clear example of the
problems that result when you eliminate due
process.