

TORTURE TAPE INVESTIGATION IN HPSCI

Last week we learned that John Durham asked a computer forensics expert to contribute to a legal declaration pertaining to whether or not the CIA Inspector General had—or had ever had—evidence pertaining to the interrogations of two Gitmo detainees.

Today we learn that two of the people involved in the Torture Tape destruction are current high-ranking Administration officials.

The [HPSCI] panel interviewed two “current, high-level government officials” in April, according to a congressional official, who declined to name the officials.

Both [Intelligence] panels have interviewed CIA Director Michael V. Hayden.

It’s not clear whether this passage means that Hayden (who just resigned from the military) is one of the two “current, high-level government officials” or not—he’d certainly qualify.

But that leaves another “current, high-level government official.” This is significant because several of the key players (like Jose Rodriguez, who remains under subpoena from HPSCI) are former officials. Two notable exceptions are John Rizzo, who works in CIA’s General Counsel office, and John Helgerson, CIA’s Inspector General. We also know that John Negroponte, currently at State, wrote a memo pertaining to the Torture Tapes when he was DNI. Finally, there’s always everyone’s favorite current high-level government official involved with the torture tapes, David Addington.

But I’m not holding my breath.

I’m just as intrigued by the news that Crazy Pete Hoekstra and Silvestre Reyes have gotten

into a spat over this investigation.

The House investigation has been riven by partisan disputes. In January, Peter Hoekstra of Michigan, the panel's ranking Republican, publicly took issue with Democrats over issuing a subpoena for Rodriguez, selecting witnesses and other aspects of the investigation. Democrats have maintained that they have been responsive to Republican input.

A spokesman for Hoekstra declined to comment Tuesday.

As I have said repeatedly, one of the people spinning hard to dissociate himself from the Torture Tape destruction is Porter Goss, who was head of the CIA when the Torture Tape was destroyed, and who received Negroponte's warning not to destroy the Torture Tape. I've long worried that an HPSCI investigation, handled badly, would work the same way Lee Hamilton and Dick Cheney's HPSCI investigation into Iran-Contra did—to immunize key players from prosecution. In particular, I've worried about Pete Hoekstra attempting to protect his former colleague, Porter Goss, from any incrimination.

So I consider it a good sign that Crazy Pete has his knickers in a twist about the investigation.