

# CHENEY CHERRY PICKS INTELLIGENCE AGAIN

Greg Sargent [got a hold](#) of Cheney's [FOIA request](#) for the documents that will prove—he claims—that torture was effective. He's asking for two documents, both of which were stored in his "detainees" file in his files. They are:

- CIA Report, dated July 13, 2004
- CIA Report, dated June 1, 2005

(I'm a little confused about what the two different forms refer to, as they seem to refer to the same documents, though of different length.)

One thing is immediately clear from this request: Cheney is cherry-picking the documents that will prove his case (I know. You're shocked.)

Cheney doesn't request, after all, the roughly 6 pages of the CIA IG Report which directly addresses the efficacy of torture in collecting intelligence, which I [discuss at length here](#). He probably doesn't want that document because some of its conclusions—such as that "it is difficult to determine conclusively whether interrogations have provided information critical to interdicting specific imminent attacks"—really don't help his case. By not FOIAing this document, though, Cheney makes it clear that he is just trying to get two documents that do prove his case, while leaving the counterarguments buried as still-classified documents. Just like he did, you'll recall, with the intelligence that disproved the aluminum tubes and uranium acquisition claims he used to drag us into the Iraq War. (He's consistent, I'll give him that.)

It appears that one of the documents—the July 13, 2004 document—is referenced in detail in the

[May 30, 2005 Memo](#). Bradbury writes:

Prior to his capture, the CIA considered KSM to be one of al Qaeda's "most important operational leaders ... based on his close relationship with Usama Bin Laden and his reputation among the al-Qa'ida rank and file." [reference omitted] After the September 11 attacks, KSM assumed "the role of operations chief for al-Qa'ida around the world." CIA Directorate of Intelligence, *Khalid Shaykh Muhammed: Preeminent Source on Al-Qa'ida* (July 13, 2004)

Given the date, I believe this is one of the two documents Cheney is seeking. Bradbury later quotes the document saying,

KSM and Abu Zubaydah have been pivotal sources because of their ability and willingness to provide their analysis and speculation about the capabilities, methodologies, and mindsets of terrorists.

Such a claim, of course, seems to be contradicted by (and may be a response to) the IG Report's assertion that lower-level detainees have been critical in developing an understanding of al-Qaeda.

CTC frequently uses the information from one detainee, as well as other sources, to vet the information from another detainee. Although lower-level detainees provide less information than the high value detainees, information from these detainees has, on many occasions, supplied the information needed to probe the high value detainees further. ... [T]he triangulation of intelligence provides a fuller knowledge of Al-Qa'ida activities than would be possible from a single detainee.

As to the 2005 document, I'm a bit surprised that Cheney is not seeking the two documents created for Steven Bradbury to use as a prop for his memo, described as,

- Memorandum for Steven G. Bradbury, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, from [redacted], DCI Counterterrorist Center, *Re: Effectiveness of the CIA Counterintelligence Interrogation Techniques* (March 2, 2005) ["Effectiveness Memo"]
- Fax from [redacted], DCI Counterterrorist Center, *Briefing Notes on the Value of Detainee Reporting* (April 15, 2005) ["Briefing Notes"]

I find it particularly surprising since one of the torture apologists, Mark Thiessen, appears to have mentioned the "Effectiveness Memo" on Diane Rehm [the other day](#) and MiniCheney [seemed to make a reference to it](#) yesterday.

Given the timing, though, it appears that what Cheney is seeking may be a later version of the same Effectiveness Memo, invented to give Bradbury a way to claim the program was effective so he could use such a claim to get over the "shock the conscience" hurdle.

Update: See [Spencer's take](#) on this too.