

CRAZY PETE HOEKSTRA WANTS TO BE GOVERNOR TORTURE

I wanted to comment on Crazy Pete Hoekstra's torture apology in the WSJ. The WSJ doesn't mention it, but Crazy Pete is running for governor in Michigan in 2010. We've got our share of wingnuts in this state, but MI is increasingly blue, and our large population of Arab-Americans have historically been one of the swing voting blocks.

So Crazy Pete's torture apology should be looked at as an attempt by the current or former Gang of Eight member facing the toughest electoral campaign next year (save perhaps Jane Harman, given recent revelations, but she made written objections to the torture program) to minimize the damage his support for torture will have next year.

That said, Crazy Pete's effort to spin his own complicity in torture is a (surprise!) thoroughly dishonest effort. He pretends to want to expose to complicitly of both Democrats and Republicans by releasing a list of the briefing's Congress received.

Members of Congress calling for an investigation of the enhanced interrogation program should remember that such an investigation can't be a selective review of information, or solely focus on the lawyers who wrote the memos, or the low-level employees who carried out this program. I have asked Mr. Blair to provide me with a list of the dates, locations and names of all members of Congress who attended briefings on enhanced interrogation techniques.

So Crazy Pete wants to publish a list of briefings, much like the one released for the

illegal wiretap program several years ago. I'm all in favor of that, though we could pretty much construct such a list based on existing public information. But without the **content** of those briefings, what's the point? We know the CIA lied in at least two of those briefings. And Nancy Pelosi, at least, insists that the first briefing—in fall 2002—did not reveal one or two people had **already** been waterboarded. She also claims the CIA never informed the full Gang of Eight that they would or had used waterboarding (note, there's confusion in the reporting in this, which appears to be due to erroneous assumptions that BushCo briefed the full Gang of Eight on subjects that they actually only briefed the intelligence leaders on—we saw the same confusion with the warrantless wiretap program, where we know the intell leaders were the only ones briefed until 2004).

But a mere list of the briefings is even more pointless given Crazy Pete's own admission that there was a good deal of debate in these briefings.

After many long and contentious debates, Congress repeatedly approved and funded this program on a bipartisan basis in both Republican and Democratic Congresses.

I have no doubt that at least one or two Democrats approved of at least what the CIA represented to them—Pelosi, perhaps, Jello Jay Rockefeller and Bob Graham, probably, Harman, probably not. And I'd certainly like to know who approved what.

But a list isn't going to do that. Nor is a list going to absolve Crazy Pete of his torture taint.