

THE CIA'S COMEDY OF BRIEFING LIST ERRORS

Now that we know of another problem with the CIA's briefing list, I thought I'd collect all the known problems with the list in one place so those trying to claim the CIA has any credibility on this issue can see just how wrong CIA has been on this issue.

CIA has made errors on at least seven different briefings, there are at least two briefings for which some of the attendees contest the CIA's version, and CIA claims to be unable to provide full details on seven other briefings. [Update] Crazy Pete Hoekstra also notes the CIA is missing a few briefings. [Update, h/t sailmaker] And the CIA consistently uses the term "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques" in the list, even though it did not use that term until 2004. No wonder Leon Panetta continues to say that "it is up to Congress to evaluate all the evidence and reach its own conclusions about what happened." The CIA's own version of when it briefed and whom is riddled with errors.

April 2002 (two briefings), September 2002: When Bob Graham first asked the CIA when they had briefed him on torture, they gave him a list of four dates, two in April 2002, and two in September 2002. However, when Graham reviewed his famously detailed notes, he discovered he had not attended any briefing on three of those dates (both April dates and one September date). The CIA conceded he was correct on the issue.

September 4, 2002: According to the CIA, it briefed Nancy Pelosi and Porter Goss on the "use of EITs on Abu Zubaydah" and "the particular EITs that had been employed." While that description does not say clearly that the CIA told Pelosi and Goss they had already used these EITs, including waterboarding, on Abu Zubaydah, it implies it. However, both Pelosi's and Goss's description of the briefing indicates they were told torture might be used in the future, not

that they were told it had already been used. And now Crazy Pete Hoekstra, after having reviewed the CIA notes, admits that, "when [those documents] are made public it won't be crystal clear as to exactly what went on in the briefing."

September 27, 2002: According to the CIA, it briefed Bob Graham and Richard Shelby on the "use of EITs on Abu Zubaydah" and "the particular EITs that had been employed." Bob Graham does not remember anything like this and finds it implausible that they discussed torture techniques themselves, given that the briefing occurred in the Hart Office Building, not the White House (where highly classified briefings occurred), and two staffers were included in the briefings. Richard Shelby, however, was less clear about what was said. In a formal statement, he says they were briefed on "what was purported to be a full account of the techniques." Only in a follow-up does Shelby say this included mention of waterboarding specifically. In addition, Graham says they were briefed by Stan Moskowitz of the Office of Congressional Affairs, rather than by the briefers from CounterTerrorism Center the CIA claims conducted the briefings.

February 4, 2003: The CIA claims that, along with Pat Roberts and two staffers, it briefed John Rockefeller on EITs "in considerable detail" including "how the water board was used." Rockefeller says, however, that he "was not present and was not later briefed individually by anyone in the intelligence community."

July 15, 2004: CIA claims Christopher Mellon, Democratic Staffer, attended briefing. But Mellon left the Senate in April 2004 and did not attend the briefing.

March 7, 2005; March 8, 2005; October 18, 2005; Late October 2005; November 1, 2005; November 8, 2005; September 19, 2006: CIA claims information on who briefed Congress for all seven of these briefings is "not available." Public reporting

suggests the "Late October, 2005" briefing of John McCain included Porter Goss (as Director of CIA) and Dick Cheney. And David Obey reports that Michael Hayden briefed on September 19, 2006.

March 8, 2005: CIA claims someone ("not available") briefed the following Members of Congress: Pat Roberts, Jay Rockefeller, Porter Goss, and Jane Harman. That's impossible. Porter Goss was not a member of Congress on that date. Rather, he was the Director of the CIA. In fact, Crazy Pete Hoekstra, who insists these records are accurate, was the Chair of HPSCI at the time, and so probably attended the briefing. I have called CIA three times to inquire whether they mistook the role Goss had in that briefing (that is, whether he was the briefer, rather than the briefee), but have received no response.

September 6, 2006: After Michael Hayden first briefed the full Senate Intelligence Committee, Senator Feingold wrote a letter to Hayden objecting to the program on several counts, including the inadequate briefing CIA had given the intelligence committees. A year later, however, Hayden claimed, "the techniques that we use have been fully disclosed to appropriate members of the United States Congress," even though Feingold had objected on precisely those grounds in his letter the year before. In support of a July 20, 2007 OLC memo, John Rizzo claimed that no Members "expressed the view that the CIA detention and interrogation program should be stopped, or that the techniques at issue were inappropriate," thought John McCain, Dianne Feinstein, and Russ Feingold objected to aspects of the program, particularly the use of sleep deprivation.

September 19, 2006: CIA claims that, in addition to Bill Young and John Murtha the latter of whom did not stay for the torture part of the briefing), it also briefed Appropriations staffer Paul Juola. According to Appropriations Chair David Obey, however, Michael Hayden and

"Mr. Walker" told Juola he could not attend the briefing.

Update: Added 7/15/04 briefing on 5/20/09.

Update: Updated 9/6/06 briefing on 9/1/09.