

ABU ZUBAYDAH'S DRAWINGS

Jason Leopold has a long article on Abu Zubaydah out that you should read in detail. It provides an update on AZ's torture diaries (which his lawyer now has, though in untranslated form). And the tidbit that one reason officials are so worried about information on AZ coming out is that it'll show the massive intelligence failure that resulted in the conclusion that he was a top al Qaeda officer.

These officials claim that while there is some concern within the Justice Department about the details of Zubaydah's interrogations prior to August 2002 being revealed and leading to renewed calls for an investigation, there is greater unease with the fact that if the case moved forward it would expose the massive intelligence failure that took place in the last months of the Clinton administration and during George W. Bush's first term that resulted in Zubaydah at one point being named the No. 3 official in al-Qaeda and one of the planners of the 9/11 attacks.

There's also further confirmation that Mitchell and Jessen were conducting a human experiment on AZ, including testing how long a human could go without sleep.

For example, one current and three former CIA officials said some videotapes showed Zubaydah being sleep deprived for more than two weeks. Contractors hired by the CIA studied how he responded psychologically and physically to being kept awake for that amount of time. By looking at videotapes, they concluded that after the 11th consecutive day of being kept awake Zubaydah started to "severely

break down." So, the torture memo concluded that 11 days of sleep deprivation was legal and did not meet the definition of torture.

But I'm particularly interested in the degree to which AZ's lawyer, Brent Mickum, seems to believe that John Durham is interested in AZ's drawings of the torture done to him.

During a recent meeting with Durham, Mickum said he learned that the special prosecutor had obtained drawings during the course of his probe that Mickum believed were Zubaydah's. In addition to the diaries, Mickum had previously sought from the Justice Department drawings Zubaydah made while in CIA custody. But the Justice Department told Mickum they could not locate the drawings.

"When I met with John Durham I discovered he had drawings, which, based on my review I believed were my client's," Mickum said. "The drawings were ultimately produced to us in late 2009."

The Justice Department would not discuss the drawings, diaries, or other issues related to Zubaydah's case.

Mickum said in lieu of the torture tapes, the drawings Zubaydah made contain the best description of the torture techniques CIA interrogators used against Zubaydah while he was being held at the agency's black site prison facilities. Mickum said he could not disclose how many drawings Zubaydah made nor could he discuss the content.

"These are a good group of drawings and he is a pretty good artist," Mickum said. "The depictions would be of interest. [Zubaydah] can draw and with great detail."

This suggests two things. First, that until some time last year, DOJ claimed not to be able to locate drawings that had already been turned over to Durham for his investigation. And that those drawings may be detailed enough to clarify precisely what the torturers did to him when.