

HELGERSON'S REPORTS WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED

Since I've been talking so much about Helgerson, and since we now have proof that Helgerson's investigation was always central to discussions of the torture tape destruction, I would be remiss in ignoring this bit from the LAT (h/t Laura).

The CIA has completed a controversial in-house probe of its inspector general and plans to make a series of changes in the way the agency conducts internal investigations, according to U.S.

HARMAN'S LETTER

Jane Harman's letter to Scott Muller verifies something I had speculated—that CIA IG John Helgerson's inquiry into the interrogation practices of the CIA, and his conclusion that those practices constituted cruel and inhuman treatment—were at the center of the torture tape debates.

DURHAM'S PREVIOUS RUN-IN WITH TRIBALISM

My favorite new detail on John Durham is the one that describes him negotiating the “tribal political and law enforcement interests” of Boston.

MUKASEY'S STATEMENT

The most interesting detail from Mukasey's statement is that the USA for ED VA, Chuck Rosenberg, asked to be recused from the investigation into the CIA.

9/11 COMMISSION DECRIES OBSTRUCTION

Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton start the New Year by going aggressively after the Administration for obstructing the 9/11 Commission's investigation.

POLAND'S TORTURE PALACES

My supposition that one reasons Dana Priest's black site article precipitated the torture tape destruction is because the tapes were dangerous to the country on whose territory the CIA tortured Abu Zubaydah led to me to read something I should have already read—the COE report on European participation in the US HVD program. This post lays out what it says about Poland.

MARY MCCARTHY AND THE TERROR TAPES

Remember Mary McCarthy, who was fired from the CIA for allegedly leaking details on European black sites to Dana Priest? This post looks at what details of her firing might reveal about the destruction of the terror tapes.

THE CIA SOLIDIFIES ITS TERROR TAPES STORY-OR TRIES TO

Mark Mazzetti and Scott Shane have done good reporting on the terror tape story. But their latest installment reads like an attempt on the part of the CIA to get its story straight. While it appears to present a nice coherent narrative people with CIA officers acting rationally, it raises more questions than answers.

One thing it does appear to support, though, is that the tapes were destroyed, in addition to an effort to prevent the tapes from coming out as Congress was trying to outlaw torture, because they were trying to protect the European ally on whose soil the torture took place.

THE “OTHER” PROVISION OF THE RECORDS ACT

It appears the fluid and constantly evolving rationalization of the Bush Administration for

their destruction of the torture tapes may be starting to congeal in an operative theory relying, at least in significant part, on a provision of the Federal Records Act allowing destruction of certain records located outside of the United States during wartime. Does it hold up?

TORTUROUS LOGIC

I agree with Jeff. Given the news that the torture tapes never entered the US, given Porter Goss' apparent command not to destroy the torture tapes "in Washington," and given the terms of the Federal Records Act, I think the CIA and the Administration stretched logic with each and every request for the torture tapes so as to claim they never were required to hand over the tapes.