

THE NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE KNEW THEY WERE GOING TO GET FALSE CONFESSIONS FROM TORTURE

Jason Leopold [update: and Jeff Kaye] have an important article on a key document used to develop the torture program, but I think its title should be stronger. As his article shows, Condi Rice and several high level Bush officials were briefed at a key meeting in May 2002 and in several follow-up National Security Council meetings on a number of torture techniques the CIA would eventually (and had, to some extent—I'll have more to say about this in a follow-up) integrated into its torture program. The JPRA document used in the meeting makes it clear the the point of these techniques is to train students to resist "political exploitation" (see page 6; elsewhere the document talks about media exploitation).

As Leopold and Jeff Kaye have previously reported, "exploitation" has a specific meaning, including not just interrogation, but also recruitment as double agents and for propaganda purposes.

"The Jessen notes clearly state the totality of what was being reverse-engineered – not just 'enhanced interrogation techniques,' but an entire program of exploitation of prisoners using torture as a central pillar," he said. "What I think is important to note, as an ex-SERE Resistance to Interrogation instructor, is the focus of Jessen's instruction. It is exploitation, not specifically interrogation. And this is not a

picayune issue, because if one were to 'reverse-engineer' a course on resistance to exploitation then what one would get is a plan to exploit prisoners, *not* interrogate them. The CIA/DoD torture program appears to have the same goals as the terrorist organizations or enemy governments for which SV-91 and other SERE courses were created to defend against: the full exploitation of the prisoner in his intelligence, propaganda, or other needs held by the detaining power, such as the recruitment of informers and double agents. Those aspects of the US detainee program have not generally been discussed as part of the torture story in the American press."

As the examples of Ibn Sheikh al-Libi and Jabir al-Fayfi make clear, we used coercive methods for both of these purposes, in addition to whatever intelligence goals we had.

Thus, as Steven Kleinman notes for today's article, Condi and others were shown what amounts to a how to manual on false confessions before they approved techniques from it for use with Abu Zubaydah and other detainees.

Air Force Col. Steven Kleinman, a career military intelligence officer recognized as one of the DOD's most effective interrogators as well a former SERE instructor and director of intelligence for JPRA's teaching academy, said he immediately knew the true value of the PREAL manual if employed as part of an interrogation program.

"This is the guidebook to getting false confessions, a system drawn specifically from the communist interrogation model that was used to generate propaganda rather than intelligence," Kleinman said in an interview. "If your goal is to obtain useful and reliable information

■ this is not the source book you should be using.”

So it’s important that we know top Bush officials got this document not just because they approved these techniques for the war on terror, but because the May meeting took place between the two dates—February 22 and July 31—when DIA expressed doubts about al-Libi’s claim, made under torture, that there were ties between al Qaeda and Iraq.

Bush’s top advisors knew what they were getting when they approved torture. And they approved them knowing they could be used to get false confessions.