

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

Antiwar.com

America's Shame

By: *Eric Margolis*

4/28/2009

Nations that use torture disgrace themselves. Armed forces and police that torture inevitably become brutalized and corrupted. "Limited" use of torture quickly becomes generalized. "Information" obtained by torture is mostly unreliable.

I learned these truths over fifty years covering dirty "pacification" wars, from Algeria to Indochina, Central and South America, southern Africa, the Mideast, Afghanistan, and Kashmir in which torture was commonly used.

In spite of all the historical evidence that torture is counterproductive, the Bush administration encouraged torture of anti-American militants (aka "terrorists") after the 9/11 attacks. The full story has not yet been revealed, but what we know so far is revolting and shameful. Britain and Canada were also complicit as they used information derived from torture and handed suspects over to be tortured.

Many Americans and human rights groups are now demanding that the Bush administration officials who employed and sanctioned torture face justice. President Barack Obama hinted his new attorney general, Eric Holder, might investigate this whole ugly business. But the Obama White House clearly wants to dodge this issue.

Republicans, who have become America's champion of war and torture, are fiercely resisting any investigation, and lauding torture's benefits. Just when it seemed impossible for the dumbed-down Republican redneck party to sink any lower, it has by endorsing torture as the American way.

So, too, some senior intelligence and Pentagon officials including, dismayingly, Obama's new CIA chief, Leon Panetta. He should know better. Many senior Congressional Democrats who sanctioned torture, or did nothing to stop it, are equally reluctant that the torture scandal be further investigated.

Torture is a crime under US law. It is a crime under the Third Geneva Convention, and the UN's Anti-Torture Convention, both of which the US signed. Kidnapping and moving suspects to be tortured in third countries is a crime. Torture violates core American values.

In 1945, the US hanged Japanese officers for inflicting "water-boarding" (near-drowning) on US prisoners, which were deemed war crimes. Yet this is exactly what the CIA inflicted on its Muslim captives. FBI agents rightly refused to participate in the torture of al-Qaeda suspects, warning that it violated US law and could make them subject to future prosecution.

Republicans and even Obama's intelligence chief, Adm. Dennis Blair, claim some useful information was obtained by torture. That depends on what you call useful. Al-Qaeda is still in business. Osama bin Laden remains at large. Iraq and Afghanistan became monstrous fiascoes costing \$1 trillion. US military and intelligence personnel who fall into hostile hands may now face similar tortures.

In 2004, CIA's inspector general reported there was *no proof* that use of torture had thwarted "specific imminent attacks." This comes from a recently declassified Justice Department memo.

The director of the FBI, Robert Muller, one of Washington's most upright, respected officials, also declared that torture had not prevented any attacks against the United States. Both findings directly contradict claims by America's own Torquemada, Dick Cheney, that torture prevented major attacks.

Torture did not protect America from a second major attack, as Republicans claim. In fact, it appears 9/11 was a one-off event, and al-Qaeda numbered only a handful of extremists to begin with, not the worldwide conspiracy claimed by the White House after it was caught sleeping on guard duty. Bush administration claims about imminent threats from dirty bombs and germ weapons such as anthrax were untrue.

CIA "useful" torture information came from two suspects: Khalid Sheik Mohammed was tortured by near drowning 183 times – six times *daily* for a month; and Abu Zubaydah, 83 times in August, 2003.

Use a power drill (a favorite "investigative" tool of America's Iraqi Shia allies) on Dick Cheney, and it would take only minutes to get him to admit he's Osama bin Laden.

A shocking US Senate report just revealed that after the Bush administration could not find the links it claimed existed between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, it tried, in best Soviet style, to torture its captives to admit that such links did, in fact, exist. That, of course, would have been a much better excuse for invading Iraq than the lies about weapons of mass destruction pointed at America.

The Senate also reported CIA and Pentagon torture techniques were adopted from torture methods North Korea used in the 1950's to compel American prisoners to confess to lies about germ warfare.

In fact, North Korea learned its torture techniques from Soviet KGB instructors. KGB's favorite tortures in the 1930's and 40's were merciless beatings, confinement in refrigerated cells, week-long sleep deprivation, and endless interrogations. I have seen the torture cells at KGB's Lubyanka HQ in Moscow.

The CIA and US military copied these North Korean/Soviet torture methods, but also added contorted positions, and nakedness and humiliation, techniques learned from Israeli interrogators who used them to blackmail Palestinian prisoners into becoming informers. Hence all the naked photos from Abu Ghraib prison.

American doctors and medical personnel supervised torture and devised and supervised techniques to mentally incapacitate prisoners through isolation, terrifying sensory deprivation, and injections of potent psychotropic drugs.

Torture was authorized by President George W. Bush, VP Dick Cheney, Secretaries Don Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice, and carried out by CIA chief George Tenet and the Pentagon's secretive Special Operations Command.

Four lickspittle lawyers and two bootlicking attorney generals provided sophistic legal briefs sanctioning torture. All should be disbarred and face an independent judicial commission. Not a whitewash, like the 9/11 Commission, but a real, independent legal body. Better, send the case to the UN International Court in The Hague.

President Obama actually told CIA personnel that he does not want to prosecute the torturers because they were only following proper legal advice and orders. So did Nazi officials who killed millions.

Nazi lawyers legally dismembered Germany's Weimar democracy and imposed Nazi dictatorship in only two months after the "terrorist attack" on the Reichstag in Feb. 1933. Imposition of Hitler's dictatorship followed proper legal channels.

When I served in the US Army, I was taught that any illegal order, even from the president, must be refused and that mistreating prisoners was a crime.

President Obama must show the world that America upholds the law, rejects torture of all kinds, and that no officials are above the law. Otherwise, there is no other way to prevent the recurrence of torture in the future.