

Red Herrings and The “War on Terrorism”

The ironclad bipartisan consensus

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A red herring is a fallacy in which an irrelevant topic is used to divert attention from the original issue. The [furor](#) over House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s knowledge of the Bush/Cheney administration’s use of torture is the latest Washington noise that conveniently diverts attention from the illegitimate “war on terrorism” that continues to serve as the justification for torture, murder and war.

Nancy’s clumsy tap dance

In a series of bumbling statements, Pelosi has denied her knowledge of the extent of the Bush/Cheney administration’s use of torture and other “enhanced interrogation techniques”.

Pelosi admits that she was aware, as early as September 2002, that “enhanced interrogation” techniques were being explored by the Bush/Cheney’s Office of Legal Counsel as legal options, but that she was not told that they were being used. A timeline from the CIA and statements from well-placed (but unnamed) Democratic Party sources refute Pelosi’s claim.

In response, Pelosi accused the CIA of lying about the degree of her knowledge, and covering up the fact that torture was already being used without congressional input. She admitted that, as House Speaker, she learned in February 2003 that “certain techniques,” including waterboarding, were being used, and that Congresswoman Jane Harman, Pelosi’s replacement as senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee sent a letter to the CIA’s general counsel with her support.

Essentially, Pelosi passed the buck to Harman, who was the “appropriate person to register a protest”, but did nothing else.

The Harman letter

But Harman’s letter to CIA General Counsel Scott Muller contains no language calling on Bush/Cheney/CIA to cease and desist torture. It is not a protest, but more of a fawning caress, that underscores the full support she and fellow Democrats have continuously lavished upon Bush/Cheney and the CIA.

[Jane Harman-letter to CIA General Counsel Scott Muller \(February 10, 2003\)](#)

In the letter, Harman states that she “realizes” that “we are at a time when the balance between security and liberty must be constantly evaluated and recalibrated in order to protect our nation and its people from catastrophic terrorist attack”. Obviously here,

Harman is an enthusiastic proponent of the fabricated pretext of 9/11, and the bogus “war on terrorism”.

Then Harman oozes that she “appreciates the obvious effort” that the CIA made to “address tough questions”, stating that Bush/Cheney lawyers had already assured those who attended the classified briefing (including Pelosi) that the torture methods were within the law, approved by the Attorney General, and sufficiently review by the appropriate lawyers at the CIA, the Justice Department and the National Security Council.”

Harman merely asks the CIA General Counsel if the senior levels of Bush/Cheney had determined that “the practices” are “consistent with the principles and policies of the United States”, and politely asks what “policy reviews” had taken place.

(In fact, Harman’s letter suggests that she was more immediately concerned with how to stage-manage the CIA’s plan to destroy tapes of the capture of alleged terrorist Abu-Zubaydah than with torture. Harman urges the CIA to reconsider the destruction of the Abu-Zubaydah tapes, in order to prevent a political scandal: “The fact of destruction would reflect badly on the Agency”.)

In other words, the Harman/Pelosi position, the overriding bipartisan consensus position shared by the majority of Washington’s functionaries, is that there was no problem with torture, as long as the sufficient cover had been created for it, and the appropriate parties have concocted the appropriate legal opinions to justify them. As long as “everyone’s rear ends were covered”, torture gets the green light.

Pelosi’s own words at her recent news conference further bear this out:

“We were not told that waterboarding or any of these other enhanced interrogation methods were used. What they did tell us is that they had some...Office of Legal Counsel opinions, that they could be used, but not that they would.”

This fallback position itself is damning enough. Torture is the definition of barbarity, an atrocity that goes against moral and ethical laws stretching back to the beginning of human history. It is impossible for Nancy Pelosi, or any coherent human being on the planet, not to know this.

Yet, upon first learning that Bush/Cheney/CIA were “exploring” torture, Pelosi did nothing. She expressed no outrage, expended none of her extensive political power to oppose or stop any of it. Then, one full year later, she again did nothing, except pass the buck to Jane Harman, whose letter that, in fact, adds to the evidence of their complicity.

And now, after years of silence, Pelosi supports a “truth commission”, and only because she is under fire.

Republicans and Bush/Cheney apologists, who are themselves directly responsible for the all of the worst atrocities and war crimes, have accused Pelosi and other Democrats of only expressing outrage about torture when it became politically expedient to do so, while aggressively pushing “anti-terrorism” when mass fear makes it popular to do so. This accusation is politically on target, if transparently hypocritical.

It is also another crop of red herrings.

The ironclad bipartisan consensus

What must be realized, however, is that the political theater surrounding Pelosi distracts from the larger crime: the Washington “war on terrorism” consensus that continues to provide the pretext for the US government to commit torture, and other atrocities, within US borders and around the world.

The “war on terrorism” is a product of an elite [bipartisan consensus deception](#), supported and nurtured equally by Republicans and Democrats. The “war on terrorism”, itself, is a massive fabrication and cover-up built entirely upon the false-flag operation of 9/11, resting squarely on the perpetual threat of an outside enemy.

The endless criminal abominations begun by Bush/Cheney—from the Patriot Act to the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and throughout the world, illegal surveillance, militarization, and torture—continue under the management of the equally deceptive, equally criminal Obama administration, and Nancy Pelosi.

The Obama administration and the Democratic Party leadership continues to [block torture investigations](#), while deepening and expanding the “war on terrorism” across Central Asia, continuing a host of other Bush/Cheney atrocities, such as military tribunals, illegal surveillance, and covert operations.

The “war on terrorism” continues unabated. Therefore, so will torture, and the false confessions needed to keep it all going.

It is no surprise, then, that the same Nancy Pelosi who has almost singlehandedly prevented investigations and prosecutions of the Bush/Cheney administration (taking it “off the table” years ago), also goes along with the idea of “legal” torture.

Of course Pelosi knows.

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