

The “Spanish Inquisition” Made in America

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Torture is now an official US government policy.

The orders to torture POWs in Iraq and Guantanamo emanated from the highest levels of the Bush Administration.

An Executive Order confirmed in a secret FBI email, suggests that the President directly authorized the use of torture including “sleep deprivation, stress positions, the use of military dogs, and sensory deprivation through the use of hoods, etc.” (See ACLU at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/ACL412A.html>).

The incriminating FBI email dated 22 May 2004, indicates that president Bush “*personally signed off on certain interrogation techniques in an executive order.*” (See original at http://globalresearch.ca/articles/FBI.121504.4940_4941.pdf).

Another FBI email dated December 2003, describes how military interrogators at Guantanamo impersonated FBI agents, “to avoid possible blame in subsequent inquiries”, and that this interrogation method had been approved by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz.

“[The email] describes an incident in which Defense Department interrogators at Guantánamo Bay impersonated FBI agents while using “torture techniques” against a detainee. The e-mail concludes “If this detainee is ever released or his story made public in any way, DOD interrogators will not be held accountable because these torture techniques were done [sic] the ‘FBI’ interrogators. The FBI will [sic] left holding the bag before the public.”

The document also says that no “intelligence of a threat neutralization nature” was garnered by the “FBI” interrogation, and that the FBI’s Criminal Investigation Task Force (CITF) believes that the Defense Department’s actions have destroyed any chance of prosecuting the detainee. The e-mail’s author writes that he or she is documenting the incident “in order to protect the FBI.” (ACLU at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/ACL412A.html>)

A third incriminating FBI email dated June 25, 2003 entitled “Urgent Report”:

“showed that the Sacramento field office warned the FBI director that it had received testimony of ‘numerous physical abuse incidents of Iraqi civilian detainees,’ including ‘strangulation, beatings, and placement of lit cigarettes into the detainees’ ear openings.’

Other documents reported incidents such as detainees being dropped onto barbed wire, having Israeli flags wrapped around them, spat on and knocked unconscious, and shackled until they defecated on themselves.” (Boston Globe, 23 Dec 2004)

The evidence also confirms that the US Military was also involved in “mock executions” and the application of burning and electric shocks to detainees (Washington Post, 23 December 2004).

Moreover, while several dozen detainees died in US custody, the records of these deaths were tampered with and the autopsy reports in many cases were not conducted, with a view to concealing the acts of torture. (Ibid)

War Criminals in High Office

The Abu Ghraib [Taguba investigation](#) (as well as two other reports) commissioned by the Military into “inhumane interrogation techniques” had exempted Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and of course President Bush of any wrong doing or involvement. (see also: [Army Report](#) , [DoD August 2004 Report](#))

Despite significant evidence to the contrary, the reports placed the blame on lower rank servicemen and commanders in Iraq:

Several US Army Soldiers have committed egregious acts and grave breaches of international law at Abu Ghraib/BCCF and Camp Bucca, Iraq. Furthermore, key senior leaders in both the 800th MP Brigade and the 205th MI Brigade failed to comply with established regulations, policies, and command directives in preventing detainee abuses at Abu Ghraib (BCCF) and at Camp Bucca... “.

(Taguba Report, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/reports/2004/800-mp-bde.htm>)

The conclusion of the report was that command directives to prevent the occurrence of torture were not followed.

In other words, the reports not only deny the existence of official US policy guidelines on torture (e.g.. the August 2002 and March 2003 memoranda), they assume that there are explicit directives “not to torture POWs” and that the latter were disregarded. Their conclusions should come as no surprise, since the conduct of these investigations had been approved by Defense Secretary Don Rumsfeld.

Following the investigation, Brigadier General Janice Karpinski in command of the military police unit at Abu Ghraib was suspended, whereas several lower rank servicemen and women were subjected to court martial procedures.

Court martial procedures were initiated on the orders of Donald Rumsfeld, when in fact it was Donald Rumsfeld and the President who had issued the Executive Order to torture POWs.

In other words, war criminals in high office ordered the holding of show trials, which essentially served to camouflage a systematic policy of torturing POWs in violation of the Geneva convention, while also exempting officials in high office from prosecution.

Will the court martial judgments involving these lower rank servicemen and women be reviewed and/or reversed following the release of the incriminating FBI memo?

If the judgments are in any way questioned, will those who issued the Executive Order be prosecuted for ordering torture?

In a judicial procedure, new evidence on a crime which has been committed, can be used to initiate a new trial. Although in the case of military courts, this process is by no means straightforward.

If indeed the judgments pertaining to lower rank servicemen are reviewed or reversed, (i.e. they were following orders from higher up), one would expect -based on this new evidence from the FBI- that criminal procedures be initiated, directed against the "suspects", in this case the President and the Secretary of Defense. In fact, the FBI should be acting upon the evidence which it has in its possession and which was made public in December 2004.

Torture is "Un-American"

President Bush "apologized" following the release of the Abu Ghraib photos in May 2004.

"People in Iraq must understand that I view those practices as abhorrent... They must also understand that what took place in that prison does not represent the America that I know.... There will be investigations, people will be brought to justice."

(President Bush, 5 May 2004, interview for the US-funded al-Hurra network and the al-Arabiya satellite channel, 5 May 2004)

[For complete Video-transcript of Bush's May 5 interview](#)

Rumsfeld also apologized in a statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee:

"We didn't, and that was wrong," ... So to those Iraqis who were mistreated by members of the US armed forces, I offer my deepest apology."

(Transcript of Donald Rumsfeld's Statement: Senate Armed Services Committee, 6 May 2004)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A8098-2004May7¬Found=true>)

The FBI memos suggest that the President and the Secretary of Defense were lying. They ordered the torture of POWS.

In other words, will justice prevail or are we also dealing with the criminalization of the US Judiciary?

The Legalization of Torture

The matter is in fact more complex. Torture is permitted "under certain circumstances", according to an August 2002 Justice Department "legal opinion":

"if a government employee were to torture a suspect in captivity, 'he would be doing so in order to prevent further attacks on the United States by the Al Qaeda terrorist network,' said the memo, from the Justice Department's office of legal counsel, written in response to a CIA request for legal guidance. It added that arguments centering on "necessity and self-defense could provide justifications that would eliminate any criminal liability" later.

(See Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A23373-2004Jun7.html> , June 7, 2004):

"Even if an interrogation method might arguably cross the line drawn in Section and application of the statute was not held to be an unconstitutional infringement of the President's Commander in Chief authority, we believe that under current circumstances [the war on terrorism] certain justification defenses might be available that would potentially eliminate criminal liability."

([Complete August 2, 2002 Justice Department Memorandum in pdf](#))

A subsequent Department of Defense Memorandum dated March 2003 drafted by military lawyers, leaked to the Wall Street Journal, follows in the footsteps of the August 2002 "legal opinion":

"Compliance with international treaties and U.S. laws prohibiting torture could be overlooked because of legal technicalities and national security needs." ([See complete text pdf file](#))

In an utterly twisted logic, what these "legal opinions" -which are casually presented as a surrogate for *bona fide* legislation- suggest, is that the Commander in Chief can quite legitimately authorize the use torture, because the victims of torture in this case are "terrorists", who are said to routinely apply the same methods against Americans.

New "Legal Opinion"

Coinciding with the release of the incriminating FBI memos in mid December 2004, the Justice Department ordered the drafting of a new "legal opinion" on so-called "permissible U.S. military interrogation techniques" for year end, to replace that of August 2002.

In all likelihood, the new legal opinion now being drafted will go much further in upholding torture as a humanitarian instrument than the previous August 2002 memorandum, which had been commissioned by Alberto Gonzalez, Bush's nominee to head the Justice department in his Second term:

"Gonzales "commissioned" the infamous Justice Department memo of 2002 that asserted President Bush's right to order torture, even redefining the meaning of torture not to include any pain short of organ failure, death or permanent psychological damage. This prompted other legal decisions approving such interrogation practices as "stress positions" and intimidation with dogs, leading then to the abyss of abuses at Abu Ghraib." (Observer-Dispatch (Utica, NY), December 9, 2004)

Criminalization of Justice

“Legal opinions” drafted on the behest of war criminals are being used to “legalize” torture and redefine Justice.

War criminals legitimately occupy positions of authority, which enable them to redefine the contours of the judicial system and the process of law enforcement.

It provides them with a mandate to decide “who are the criminals”, when in fact they are the criminals.

In other words, what we are dealing with is the criminalization of the State and its various institutions including the criminalization of Justice.

The truth is twisted and turned upside down. State propaganda builds a consensus within the Executive, the US Congress and the Military. This consensus is then ratified by the Judicial, through a process of outright legal manipulation.

Media disinformation instills within the consciousness of Americans that somehow the use of torture, the existence of concentration camps, extra judicial assassinations of “rogue enemies”, all of which are happening, are “under certain circumstances” “acceptable” and perfectly “legal” because the Justice department’s Office of Legal Counsel (OLC), says “it’s legit”.

The existence of an illusive outside enemy who is threatening the Homeland is the cornerstone of the propaganda campaign. The latter consists in galvanizing US citizens not only in favor of “the war on terrorism”, but in support of a social order which upholds the legitimate use of torture, directed against “terrorists”, as a justifiable means to preserving human rights, democracy, freedom, etc.

The Spanish Inquisition

In other words, we have reached a new threshold in US legal history. Torture is no longer a covert activity, removed from the public eye.

War criminals within the State and the Military are no longer trying to camouflage their crimes:

“We’re sorry for the torture, we didn’t do it. We’re against torture. Those responsible will be punished.”

The logic is now entirely different, reminiscent of the Spanish Inquisition.

Under the Inquisition: no need to conceal the acts of torture.

In fact, quite the opposite. Torture is a public policy with a humanitarian mandate.

“yes we did order torture, but it isn’t really torture, its not really war, because these people are terrorists and “we must fight evil”. And the way to uphold democracy and freedom is to “go after the bad guys”, “wage war on the terrorists”. “Its in the public interest.”

Moreover, anybody who questions our definition of “fighting evil” (which of course includes torture, political assassination and concentration camps directed against “the bad guys”) is by our definition also “evil” and can be arrested, tortured and sent to concentration camps.

The Inquisition which started in the 12th century and lasted for more four hundred years was built precisely on this logic.

It was a consensus imposed by the ruling feudal social order, its purpose was to maintain and sustain those in authority.



(Monty Python)

The Inquisition had a network of religious courts, which eventually evolved into a system of political and social control.

The great Inquisitor was similar to the Department of Homeland Security.

The underlying principles governing the courts were straightforward, and apart from the rhetoric, similar to today's procedures: *“You find them and take 'em out”*:

“heresy cannot be destroyed unless heretics are destroyed and . . . their defenders and [supporters] are destroyed, and this is effected in two ways: . . . they are converted to the true catholic faith, or . . . burned [alive].” (See http://www.crf-usa.org/bria/bria9_1.htm)

Needless to say, those who refused to recant, which means give up their heresy, were burned alive. Moreover, no lawyers were allowed, because it was considered heresy to defend a heretic.

“A bishop came out and shouted out the names of the condemned. then the heretics were led out, wearing black robes decorated with red demons and flames. officials of the government tied them to the stake.

“do you give up your heresy against the holy church?” a priest would challenge.

Anyone who repented would be strangled to death before the fires were lit. most, however, stood silent or defiant. the fires were lit, and the square echoed with the screams of the heretics and cheers from the crowd.” (Ibid)

In other words, under the Inquisition, anybody who dared to question the validity of the “war on terrorism” was himself branded a terrorist and subjected to the anti-terrorist laws, which at the time was death.

The Road Towards Fascism

Today's World is far more sophisticated. The CIA torture manuals developed under successive US administrations are more advanced.

Today's anti-terrorist legislation (Patriot Acts I and II) and bureaucratic apparatus although built on the same logic, are better equipped to deal with large population groups.

In contrast to the Spanish Inquisition, the contemporary inquisitorial system has almost unlimited capabilities of spying on and categorizing individuals.

People are tagged and labeled, their emails, telephones and faxes are monitored, detailed personal data is entered into giant Big Brother data banks. Once this cataloging has been completed, people are locked into watertight compartments. Their profiles are established and entered into a computerized system.

Law enforcement is systematic. The witch hunt is not only directed against presumed "terrorists" through ethnic profiling, etc., the various human rights, affirmative action, antiwar cohorts are themselves the object of the anti-terrorist legislation and so on.

Needless to say, converting or recanting by antiwar heretics is not permitted.

Meanwhile war criminals occupy positions of authority. The citizenry is galvanized into supporting rulers, "committed to their safety and well-being", "who are going after the bad guys."

Historically, the Inquisition (in Spain, France and Italy) was carried out at the neighborhood level in communities across the land. Today in America, the mission of the Citizens Corps operating at the local level is to:

"make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism".

The Citizens Corps in liaison with Homeland Security are establishing "Neighborhood Watch Teams" as well as a "Volunteer Police Service" in partnership with local law enforcement. (see <http://www.citizencorps.gov/pdf/council.pdf>):

"When the inquisition came to a suspected area, the local bishop assembled the people to hear the inquisitor preach against heresy. He would announce a grace period of up to a month for heretics to confess their guilt, recant, and inform on others.

if two witnesses under oath accused someone of heresy, the accused person would be summoned to appear. opinions, prejudices, rumors, and gossip were all accepted as evidence. the accused was never told the names of the accusers, nor even the exact charges.

The inquisition would collect accusations, where neighbors can be denounced." (http://www.crf-usa.org/bria/bria9_1.htm*)*

Under an inquisitorial system, The Executive Order personally signed by the president to torture becomes a public statement endorsed by the citizenry. It is no longer a secret FBI memorandum.

No need to conceal acts of torture.

The practice of torture against terrorists gains public acceptance, it becomes part of a broad bipartisan consensus.

It is no longer Un-American to torture “the bad guys”.

Under the Inquisition, people firmly believed that torture and burning was a good thing and that torture served to purify society.

We have not quite reached that point. But we are nearly there.

Since the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and the 2001 war on Afghanistan, the US led-war has been given a humanitarian mandate under UN auspices supported by “the international community”. We are referring to the so-called “Just War”, which at the time, was firmly supported by Western public opinion, including quite a number of progressive organizations.

With regard to the Executive order to torture, several media in the US including the Washington Post, have condemned Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, calling for his resignation.

They have not, however, acknowledged the fact that torture has for some time been a routine practice of the Military and Intelligence apparatus, since the days of “Operation Condor” and the US sponsored Central American Death Squadrons, which at the time were overseen by John Negroponte, who currently serves as America’s “ambassador” to Iraq.

What comes next?

When the Justice department emits a legal opinion stating that the Executive order to torture is “legit”, that means that a legal and political consensus is being built.

In which case, the war criminals in high office, have “the right” to commit atrocities in the name of democracy and freedom, etc. It is no longer necessary for them lie, to hide their actions or to “say sorry” if and when these actions are brought to public attention.

Under this logic, torture is no longer seen as “Un-American”, as stated by President Bush when the Abu Ghraib photos were first released.

In other words, under an inquisitorial system, the public does not question the wisdom of the rulers.

Citizens are compelled into accepting the political consensus. They must endorse the acts of torture ordered by those who rule in their name: political assassinations are no longer conducted as covert operations, the intent to assassinate is announced, debated in the US Congress, the terrorists are sent to concentration camps and this information is public.

Why is Camp X-Ray in Guantanamo, Cuba, public knowledge?

Precisely, to gradually develop, over several years, a broad public consensus that concentration camps and torture directed against “terrorists” are ultimately “acceptable” and in the public interest.

When we reach that point of “acceptance”, of broad consensus, there is no going back.

The lie becomes the truth. “Democracy and freedom” are sustained through State terror. The police state and its ideological underpinnings become fully operational.

Unseat the Inquisitors

And that is why at this critical juncture in our history, it is crucial for people across the land, in the US, Canada, Europe and around the world, to take an articulate stance on President Bush’s Executive Order to torture POWs.

But you do not reverse the tide by firing Rumsfeld and putting in a new Defense Secretary or by asking president Bush: “please abide by the Geneva convention”.

How do you break the inquisition?

Essentially by breaking the consensus which sustains the inquisitorial social order.

To shunt the American Inquisition and disable its propaganda machine, we must “unseat the Inquisitors” and prosecute the war criminals in high office, implying criminal procedures against those who ordered torture.

If the Judicial system supports torture, that means we have to dismantle the Judicial.

It is not sufficient, however, to remove the Inquisition’s high priests: George W. Bush or Tony Blair, who are mere puppets.

Increasingly, the military-intelligence establishment (rather than the State Department, the White House and the US Congress) is calling the shots on US foreign policy. Meanwhile, the Anglo-American oil giants, Wall Street and the powerful media giants, not to mention the Washington think tanks, operating discreetly behind the scenes, are setting the next stage in this ongoing militarization of civilian institutions.

“Fear and Surprise”

To break the Inquisition, we must break its propaganda, its fear and intimidation campaign which galvanizes public opinion into accepting the “war on terrorism”.

Osama bin Laden, Al-Zarqawi: Repeated ad nauseam, day after day, in official statements, commented on network TV and pasted on a daily basis across the news tabloids.

We must break the big lie.

Fear and Disinformation constitutes the cornerstone of Bush’s propaganda campaign.

Without fear, there can be no inquisitorial social order.

“Code Orange Terror Alerts.” “The terrorists are preparing to attack America.”

A terrorist, massive, casualty-producing event [will occur] somewhere in the Western world – it may be in the United States of America – that causes our population to question our own Constitution and to begin to militarize our country in order to avoid a repeat of another mass, casualty-producing event.” (former CENTCOM Commander Tommy Franks)

"If we go to Red [code alert]... it basically shuts down the country," (Former Secretary for Homeland Security, Tom Ridge)

"You ask, 'Is it serious?' Yes, you bet your life. People don't do that unless it's a serious situation." (Dick Cheney)

Wake up America... Break the Spanish Inquisition

"Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition! Our chief weapon is surprise...surprise and fear...fear and surprise.... Our two weapons are fear and surprise...and ruthless efficiency.... Our three weapons are fear, surprise, and ruthless efficiency...and an almost fanatical devotion to the Pope...."

I didn't expect a kind of Spanish Inquisition.

... Nobody expects the...um...the Spanish...um... Inquisition.

I know, I know! Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition.

Our chief weapons are... ..um...er... Surprise...

Okay, stop. Stop. Stop there – stop there. Stop. Phew! Ah! ...

Our chief weapons are surprise...blah blah blah. Cardinal, read the charges.

You are hereby charged that you did on diverse dates commit heresy against the Holy Church.

Now, how do you plead? We're innocent.

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

[DIABOLICAL LAUGHTER]

(Monty Python. See complete transcript and images at <http://www.ai.mit.edu/people/paulfitz/spanish/script.html>)



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