

Umm Badr, one of the two mothers who attended the meeting with HRW officials, said she had not heard from her son since last April. "All his letters to us have stopped and we no longer know anything about him."

Kenneth Rose, executive director of HRW, said part of the delegation's mission here in the Kingdom was to receive information from the families of Saudi prisoners. He said the organization was pressuring the US government either to release the prisoners since no evidence against them exists - or to put them on trial.

Rose explained to the families of the Saudi detainees that HRW was not affiliated to any American or other government, and said: "We can criticize the US government."

He pointed out that their agenda in the Kingdom was to visit prisons and government institution as well as to talk to people who have been tried under the Kingdom's legal system. "Our success depends on the free access we are given," he said.

<http://www.arabnews.com> <<http://www.arabnews.com>>

Poland and Italy colluded on CIA detentions Poland and Italy colluded in the illegal detention of suspected terrorists by American agents, according to a report by the European parliament.

The report concludes that at least 1,245 flights operated by the CIA flew through European airspace or landed at the continent's airports.

The report expresses "serious concern" over what it claims were 11 stopovers at Polish airports made by aircraft operated by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The report was prepared by a committee examining the CIA's clandestine programme of moving detainees between third countries known as extraordinary rendition.

The document focuses on activities at Szymany airport in the north of the country, rumoured to be close to a "black site" where detainees were held in secret.

A Boeing 737 known to be used by the CIA for renditions flew from Kabul to Szymany on September 22 2003 and thence to the US detention centre at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba, the report claims. No customs controls were carried out.

This was when a number of senior al-Qaeda "high value" detainees were seized during and after the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and were transferred from US bases there.

During 2002 and 2003, six Gulfstream jets that were regarded as synonymous with the rendition programme landed at the Polish airport.

Border guards told airport staff not to approach the aircraft and that landing procedures should be handled only by military personnel, the report alleges, citing unnamed airport employees.

The registration numbers of the vehicles that greeted the aircraft are said to have matched those associated with the nearby intelligence training base at Stare Kiejkuty.

The report also claimed that Nicolò Pollari, director of the Italian security and intelligence services, "concealed the truth" when he denied to the committee that Italian agents had played an "active role" in the abduction of Abu Omar, an Egyptian cleric, in Milan on February 17 2003.

"If the EU's aspirations to be a 'human rights community' have any meaning whatsoever, there must now be a forceful EU response to this strong evidence that the CIA abducted, illegally imprisoned and transported alleged terrorists in Europe," said Baroness Sarah Ludford, MEP for the British Liberal Democrats and vice-chair of the committee that wrote the report.

Miami Herald.Com

Pentagon terror trial plans are premature OUR OPINION: GITMO COURTHOUSE COMPOUND NOT A GOOD IDEA Building a massive new compound for terror trials at Guantánamo Bay would be like erecting a house without a foundation. The Pentagon should have a court-approved legal foundation for trying terror suspects before Congress even considers authorizing a Guantánamo courthouse complex that could cost as much as \$125 million.

Top-secret materials

Miami Herald reporter Carol Rosenberg discovered the Pentagon's construction plans last week. An obscure notice posted on the Internet for contractors called for building a courthouse and accommodations for up to 1,200 people. The plan includes residential, dining and work facilities as well as a high-security area for handling top-secret materials. The Pentagon wants to have the first two courtrooms ready by July; and possibly build two more courtrooms before 2008.

The estimated price tag runs \$75 million to \$125 million. The Pentagon has no money or permission for the courthouse project yet, but may ask for congressional authorization and funds before the end of the year. That would be foolhardy. Money shouldn't be approved, much less ground broken, unless court-approved procedures for military tribunals are established first -- if, indeed, the Bush administration can craft a proposal that passes constitutional muster in the next two years.

The Supreme court struck down the Pentagon's original military-commission process for Guantánamo. Democrats, the majority in Congress come January, have signaled dissatisfaction with recent legislation setting new rules for the commissions. The Pentagon has yet to complete the new process, which surely will face lengthy court challenges.

Five years after the Guantánamo terror facility opened, hundreds of its 430 captives have pending habeas-corpus petitions in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., that challenge the detentions. Lawyers also are challenging a review process that the Pentagon thinks justifies the indefinite detention of captives held without charges.

Reexamine all policies

Given the legal uncertainties, the lame-duck Congress shouldn't bless the Pentagon's wishful courthouse plan. Indeed, next year's new Congress would do well to reexamine all current policies governing the treatment of 'enemy combatants.'

For years the U.S. government has tried to create a parallel legal universe for terrorism suspects -- a place where the rules need not conform to the U.S. Constitution or international legal standards. U.S. moral authority has been eroded by the questionable interrogations, detentions and judicial practices at Guantánamo Bay -- and U.S. allies in the war on terror have been alienated. Yes, it is time to change course.

<http://www.miami.com> <<http://www.miami.com>>

United Press International

Leahy aims at giving habeas corpus

WASHINGTON, Nov. 11 (UPI) -- A battle is shaping up between Democrats and the White House over the Military Commissions Act, signed into law last month by President George W. Bush.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., is expected to take over as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and The (Calif.) Daily Journal reports that Leahy is drafting a bill to undo portions of the new law in an effort to give habeas corpus rights for enemy combatants.

A spokeswoman for Leahy told the newspaper the bill would be intended to repeal portions of the law that prevent some detainees from pursuing federal court challenges to the government's authority to hold them indefinitely.

Spokeswoman Tracy Schmalzer told the newspaper the goal is to "try and do something to reverse the damage."

Scott L. Silliman, Director of the Center for Law, Ethics and National Security at Duke University School of Law, told the newspaper an attempt to amend the law could set up a partisan showdown in Congress, and possibly a presidential veto.

Civil rights attorneys filed a constitutional challenge to the act after Bush signed it Oct. 17, the Journal said.

<http://www.upi.com> <<http://www.upi.com>>

Senate Dems plan overhaul of military tribunals bill By Roxana Tiron
<<mailto:rtiron@thehill.com>> Gearing up for a major clash with the Bush administration and Republicans in Congress, several key Senate Democrats are planning to overhaul the newly minted legislation governing military tribunals of detainees.

Even before it was signed into the law last month, Democrats were criticizing the military commission bill as unconstitutional and a magnet for endless legal challenges.

Defense lawyers working on behalf of military detainees at Guantanamo Bay quickly filed suits with the U.S. District Court challenging the constitutionality of the tribunal bill because it suspends the writ of habeas corpus, a court order that would allow detainees to have the legality of their detention reviewed in court to determine whether they should be released from custody.

Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), who is running for president and who, come January, will be the second ranking Democrat on the International Relations Committee, introduced legislation today that would amend the existing law.

Dodd said he's expecting the legislation to be taken up early next year.

"The bill goes back and undoes what was done," Dodd told The Hill. Dodd was one of the top critics of the military tribunal bill the GOP hashed out with the White House and was signed into law last month.

Dodd's bill, which currently has no co-sponsors, seeks to give habeas corpus protections to military detainees; bar information that was gained through coercion from being used in trials and empower military judges to exclude hearsay evidence they deem to be unreliable.

Dodd's bill also narrows the definition of "unlawful enemy combatant" to individuals who directly participate in hostilities against the United States who are not lawful combatants. The legislation would also authorize the U.S. Court of Appeals for the armed forces to review decisions made by the military commissions.

Moreover, Dodd seeks to have an expedited judicial review of the new law to determine the constitutionality of its provisions.

Dodd is the first Democrat to take aim at the controversial military tribunals bill. But Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), the incoming Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, also said that he is in the process of drafting "major changes" to the legislation.

Among the planned changes are instituting habeas corpus rights for detainees and looking into the current practice of extraordinary rendition.

Leahy is among several other Democrats, including incoming Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), who are concerned about the practice of sending suspected terrorists to countries other than the United States for imprisonment and interrogation.

The incoming chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), said he is going to look into the rendition process.

"I'm not comfortable with the system," Levin said earlier this week. "I think that there's been some significant abuses which have not made us more secure, but have made us less secure and have also perhaps cost us some real allies, as well as not producing particularly useful information. So I think the system needs a thorough review, and as the military would say, a thorough scrubbing."

Another member of the Armed Services Committee, Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), said he expects Levin to look into the detainee tribunal legislation.

"That is an issue that Sen. Levin not only will think about but bring into a discussion of what can be done," he said.

Congress rushed through the terror-detainee legislation before its election break in response to a Supreme Court's ruling earlier this year that Bush exceeded his authority by establishing military tribunals to try detainees without congressional authorization.

Compromise legislation between the White House and a warring faction of Republicans led by Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and John Warner (R-Va.) passed the Senate by a vote of 65-34. Leahy, Dodd and Durbin voted against the bill.

<http://www.hillnews.com> <<http://www.hillnews.com>>

Dodd favoring prisoner reform Connecticut Post (Bridgeport) November 26, 2006 Sunday

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November 26, 2006 Sunday

Nov. 26--WASHINGTON -- Fresh from their midterm election victories, Democrats in Congress have put President Bush on notice that they intend to change the way terrorists are brought to justice.

Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., introduced legislation this month that would amend the controversial Military Commission Act of 2006 that Bush signed into law in October to prosecute unlawful enemy combatants.

"I take a back seat to no one when it comes to protecting this country from terrorists, but there is a right way to do this and a wrong way to do this," Dodd said. "It's clear the people who perpetrated these horrendous crimes against our country and our people have no moral compass and deserve to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. "But in taking away their legal rights, the rights first codified in our country's Constitution, we're taking away our own moral compass as well."

Following the Sept. 11 attacks, Bush authorized a system of military commissions to try foreign terrorists accused of war crimes. The Supreme Court, however, ruled that such commissions needed to be established explicitly by Congress.

Art Paulson, a professor of politics at Southern Connecticut State University, said that the president could have avoided the controversy if he had simply labeled unlawful enemy combatants as either criminal suspects, or prisoners of war.

"If they were POWs, then they would have rights under the Geneva Conventions. If they were criminal suspects, then they would be entitled to our court system," Paulson said. "His failure to do that created this whole controversy."

In signing the new Military Commissions Act into law as an answer to the Supreme Court challenge, Bush said they would provide "a fair trial, in which the accused are presumed innocent, have access to an attorney, and can hear all the evidence against them."

"These military commissions are lawful, they are fair, and they are necessary."

The bill also allows the Central Intelligence Agency to continue its program for questioning terrorist leaders and operatives.

Dodd voted against the bill, as did Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-3. Sen. Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., meanwhile, supported it, as did Rep. Christopher Shays, R-4.

Lieberman said he would have supported a Democratic alternative, but voted for the bill because "the nation and our military need a process under law to deal with a new category of enemies -- the foreign terrorists who are determined to kill innocent Americans."

Lieberman said the bill "sets clear military tribunal guidelines to try terrorist enemies of the United States charged with violating the laws of war." He also did not believe it altered the nation's responsibilities under the Geneva Conventions.

The Justice Department argues that the new law has stripped the federal courts of all jurisdiction to hear any habeas challenge by any war-on-terrorism detainee, no matter where that captive was taken prisoner. Attorneys for detainees say the law is an unconstitutional suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, because the narrow judicial review it affords fails to provide an adequate substitute.

Dodd's proposal would restore habeas corpus protections to detainees, narrow the definition of unlawful enemy combatant, bar evidence gained through coercion, and limit presidential authority to interpret the Geneva Conventions.

Congress is not expected to consider the bill in the month remaining in the 109th session, but the issue will not die. The 110th Congress will open in January with Democrats taking control of the House and Senate. They will likely attempt to change the law, as Dodd wants, but don't have the numbers to override a likely veto.

That will likely lead to the Supreme Court weighing in on the constitutionality of the law. If it strikes it down, Bush may be compelled to accept what the Democrats offer.

In challenging Bush, Dodd could draw some kudos from core Democrats and possibly gain at least some goodwill as he tests the 2008 presidential waters, said Gary Rose, a professor of politics at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Conn.

But, Rose concedes that the issue is personal for Dodd.

"This proposal is not purely political. Sen. Dodd is a great admirer of his father and an advocate of due process," Rose said. "Certainly, the proposal reflects his passion not only for prosecuting terrorists but doing it in a way that improves our image in the world."

Thomas Dodd was a prosecutor at the Nazi war crime trials in Nuremberg after World War II. At a time when some in Europe were clamoring for summary execution of Nazi leaders, the Nuremberg trials offered a different course.

In opposing the military commissions bill, Dodd explained that he could not support a proposal that would damage the rule of law or the image of the United States.

"It is not just my affection for my father; it is more the affection for what they did in a moment, against public opinion, to set the gold standard and set us apart," he said. "We have been known as the nation of Nuremberg. My fear is now we will be known as the nation of Guantanamo, and I worry about that."

The senior Dodd sent more than 400 letters home during his time in Nuremberg, the insights from those letters have been absorbed by his son.

Dodd shared some of them during a speech in October before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City.

"We decided that, if the judgments rendered at Nuremberg were to truly reflect the Allies' commitment to defeating tyranny and lawlessness, those judgments would have to come following a trial. Not a trial in name, but a trial in fact," Dodd said. "A trial that gave defendants certain rights -- such as the right to be represented by counsel, to know the charges brought, to present a defense, and to be judged by impartial finders of fact."

Rose said that he expects Democrats will rally around the proposal to restore the writ of habeas corpus to detainees swept up in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Habeas corpus, which is guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution, is a process designed to prevent the government from arbitrarily imprisoning an individual. It can only be suspended in cases of rebellion or invasion such that public safety requires.

The New Yorker

KILLING HABEAS CORPUS

http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/061204fa_fact

<http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/061204fa_fact>

Journal Inquirer

Dodd asks Bush to delay implementing 'detainee' law signed last month By Don Michak, Journal Inquirer

11/29/2006

U.S. Sen. Christopher J. Dodd is urging President Bush to delay implementing a law that permits permanent detention and aggressive interrogation of suspected "enemy combatants" until a new defense secretary has been confirmed and given time to review it.

In letters sent Thursday to Bush and the current Pentagon chief, Donald Rumsfeld, the five-term Connecticut Democrat said the latter's successor should thoroughly review the Military Commissions Act in direct consultation with members of Congress and military lawyers.

"I strongly believe that terrorists who seek to destroy America must be punished for any wrongs they commit against this country," Dodd wrote. "But in my view, in order to sustain

America's moral authority and win a lasting victory against our enemies, such punishment must be meted out only in accordance with the rule of law.

"It is my belief that the provisions of the Military Commissions Act run counter to these very aims, and may actually undermine the judicial system established by the Uniform Code of Military Justice," he added.

The law passed by the House and Senate in September and signed by Bush last month was drafted in response to a U.S. Supreme Court decision which held that military panels established to try detainees at Guantanamo Bay violated both the military code of justice and the Geneva conventions.

Critics charge that the law not only allows for torture but also the suspension of habeas corpus, a constitutional right to challenge detention.

Dodd, who says he is exploring a possible race for the White House in 2008, two weeks ago introduced the "Effective Terrorists Prosecution Act" to amend the military commissions measure and speed its review to determine its constitutionality.

The senator's bill would narrow the definition of enemy combatants and restore habeas corpus rights while making evidence obtained through coercion inadmissible.

Dodd wrote Bush that he remained convinced that the "hasty" implementation of the military commissions law "might leave U.S. servicemen and women unprotected by the safeguards of the Geneva Conventions and vulnerable to abuse overseas."

In his letter to Rumsfeld, Dodd said he believed a new defense secretary "has a good opportunity to make significant changes to our national security policy and renew our commitment to universally accepted principles of human rights."

"Prosecuting America's war on terrorism," he added, "in my view will require a fresh set of eyes to thoroughly vet the provisions of the Military Commissions Act."

The day after Democrats regained control of both the House and Senate, Bush announced that Rumsfeld was leaving the Pentagon and that he was nominating former CIA Director Robert Gates, now the president of Texas A&M, to replace him.

Meanwhile, the retired Army major general who since 2004 ran the Bush administration's effort to prosecute detainees at Guantanamo, John Altenburg, quit on Nov. 11.

No one has been named as the new "appointing authority," and the post could remain empty until Gates takes office, according to the Wall Street Journal.

<http://www.journalinquirer.com> <<http://www.journalinquirer.com>>

Access News

Lawyers for a Guantanamo Detainee Vent Frustration over Being Denied Access to Their Client

By Staff

(Access News) Washington - Friday, a federal judge denied attorneys access to their client, Guantanamo detainee Majid Khan, who was recently transferred to detention in Guantanamo after three years imprisonment in secret CIA black sites.

According to Mr. Khan's attorneys from the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), the court ruled that it could not order the government to allow Mr. Khan's attorney to meet with him until the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia decides whether federal courts still have jurisdiction over Guantanamo detainees' habeas cases after the passage of the Military

Commission Act of 2006. This question is before the Court of Appeals in the consolidated cases Al Odah v. United States of America and Boumediene v. Bush, litigated by CCR along with co-counsel. The jurisdictional question will be fully briefed before the Court of Appeals on November 20, 2006.

In its Order in Mr. Kahn's case, the District Court urged the government to address Mr. Khan's medical and psychological state: "While awaiting the District of Columbia Circuit's decision, the Court encourages the respondents to medically evaluate Khan to assess his mental and physical health, if this has not already been done, and to file with this Court a report of his condition and whether he is in need of and is receiving treatment for any physical or mental conditions, so that this information can be made available to putative counsel and Khan's family." CCR attorneys demand that the government comply.

CCR attorney Gitanjali Gutierrez said, "Majid Khan has been held for more than three years in secret CIA black sites in which the prevalence of torture and abuse is well-documented. The government has not charged him with a crime nor afforded him any hearing whatsoever in these three years. His state of mental and physical health is in serious question. The longer his access to a lawyer is denied, the more damage it will cause to his ability to remember details and facts necessary to challenge his imprisonment and torture. At a minimum, the government must heed the Court's warning and maintain transparency on the question of Mr. Khan's condition for the sake of his family and his ability to enforce his legal rights."

<http://www.axcessnews.com> <<http://www.axcessnews.com>>

EU Report Blasts U.S. Detainee Policy

Kenneth R. Timmerman

Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2006

A European Parliament commission issued a draft report in Brussels on Tuesday that vigorously condemned the United States for apprehending terrorists on European soil and transporting them to "secret prisons" around the world.

The report called for the closure of the U.S.-run interrogation and detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, "and for European countries to accept the return of their citizens and residents who are being held illegally by U.S. authorities."

Members of the European investigating commission have been publicly critical of the United States, but never before in such harsh terms.

Their draft report, released on Tuesday in Brussels, was a bald condemnation of the U.S.-led war on terror and of the European governments and officials who have assisted it.

It called on the European parliament to issue a resolution that "condemns extraordinary rendition as an illegal and systematic instrument used by the United States in the fight against terrorism," while chastising European countries for "the acceptance and concealing of the practice."

In a throwback to the policies of the Clinton administration, the European report insisted that "terrorism must be fought by legal means," and insisted that the United States "rethink the relationship between the need for security and the rights of individuals."

The Europeans also gave a nod to congressional Democrats, by "[welcoming] the announcement by the incoming majority in the U.S. Senate" that it intended to hold hearings on rendition and CIA secret prisons.

The European Parliament Temporary Committee on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transportation and illegal detention of prisoners was established in January, and

has sent delegations to Macedonia, the United States, Germany, Britain, Romania, Poland and Portugal to investigate CIA activities.

In a hearing earlier this year, the commission released detailed flight logs of hundreds of secret CIA flights, identifying the airplanes used for renditions and the CIA proprietaries that operated them.

Loose Lips

These are considered some of the Agency's most highly-valued secrets. Shell companies that own and operate aircraft "cost us a fortune to set up," a former CIA operations officer told NewsMax. "And now it is going to cost us a fortune to replace them."

The report revealed that since October 2001, the CIA has operated "at least 1,245 flights . . . into the European airspace," and chastised European governments for "relinquishing their control over their airspace and airports by admitting flights operated by the CIA."

The report called on all European countries that have not already done so to "initiate independent investigations into all stopovers made by civilian aircraft carried out by the CIA" since 2001, and called for a review of existing European anti-terrorism legislation "to avoid any repetition" of the CIA extraordinary renditions.

It revealed that 336 CIA aircraft were stopped in Germany, 170 in Britain, 147 in Ireland, 91 in Portugal, 68 in Spain, 64 in Greece, and 57 in Cyprus.

After the United States, the two countries singled out for the harshest treatment in the draft report - Poland and Romania -ironically had the fewest CIA stopovers, with just 21 in Romania and 11 in Poland.

The anti-American tone of the draft report was stunning, even to close observers of the European investigation.

Members of the investigating committee, headed by Italian parliamentarian Giovanni Claudio Fava, boasted that they had met "confidentially" with former CIA officers, who provided them with inside information.

"Not me," said former CIA Director R. James Woolsey, who met with the committee in Washington this May. "I refused to talk to them at all on these subjects," he told NewsMax on Tuesday. "I only talked on public intel issues."

"My whole meeting with them was in the presence of the press and on the record," he added. Woolsey is not mentioned in the European report, although the report heaps praise on reporters from the Washington Post and ABC News for helping to break the story.

The Europeans also lauded Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International for their role in the initial investigations into so-called "ghost detainees."

In addition to its harsh criticism of the Bush administration, the report also went after Bush allies in Europe, including former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi and British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Tight Lips

It singled out several European Union officials by name for stonewalling the investigation. Top EU official Javier Solana was guilty of "omissions and denials" in his declarations to the committee, the report said.

EU Counterterrorism coordinator Gijs de Vries was noteworthy for "the lack of credibility of his statements" to the commission, which suggested he be fired and his position be eliminated.

EUROPOL director Max-Peter Ratzel also incurred the commission's ire for his refusal to testify, "especially since it appears that liaison officers, notably from the U.S. intelligence services, have been posted to his office."

Current and previous NATO secretaries general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Lord Robertson took it on the chin for slighting the commission.

Particularly galling to Fava and his fellow commissioners was NATO's refusal to provide the classified minutes of the Oct. 4, 2001 NATO decision to activate the mutual defense clause of the NATO treaty at the request of the United States, thus triggering European assistance in the war on terror.

Helping the European investigation was an organization known as the European Organization for the Safety of Air Navigation, Eurocontrol, which coordinates air traffic control standards and airport security. Eurocontrol provided the detailed flight logs for the clandestine CIA flights. The report thanked Eurocontrol for its "excellent cooperation and the very useful information" it shared with the commission.

CIA Under Scrutiny

Fava and his fellow commissioners called on public prosecutors and judges throughout Europe to follow the lead of the Italian court that has handed down an indictment against CIA clandestine officer Robert Seldon Lady and 26 others for allegedly kidnapping an Egyptian Islamist in Milan.

Nasr Osama Mustafa Hassan, alias Abu Omar, was abducted off the street in Milan on Feb. 17, 2003. According to an eyewitness cited in the indictment, "two men in Western clothing" checked his identity papers, then "forced him to get into a white van and drove off immediately at great speed."

They took Abu Omar to the U.S. military airbase in Aviano, and then flew him to Egypt where he was jailed and interrogated.

The Italian court identified Robert Lady and the 26 others through credit card receipts and hotel bills. "If nothing else, they were guilty of incredibly poor tradecraft," two former CIA officers who were aware of the case told NewsMax.

Robert Lady and the others have been charged with kidnapping, a felony which could lead to stiff prison sentences if they are convicted, as observers believe they will be.

The CIA refused to comment on the case, calling it "a legal matter."

<http://www.newsmax.com> <<http://www.newsmax.com>>

ABC Newonline

Ex-Guantanamo inmate refused visa to promote film The Democrats have asked the Federal Government to explain why a British man has been banned from entering Australia.

Ruhul Ahmed is a former prisoner at Guantanamo Bay, but was released from the US facility without charge after pressure from the British Government.

A film has been made about his experience, but ASIO has refused to grant him a visa to travel to Australia to promote it.

Justice Minister Chris Ellison says he cannot discuss the reasons behind the ruling.

"Owing to the confidential nature of these security assessments, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on individual cases or specific information that underpins assessments," he said.

"Any person who believes ASIO has acted inappropriately may make a complaint to the office of the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security."

<http://www.abc.net.au> <<http://www.abc.net.au>>

Islamic Republic News Agency

German MPs urge probe of US military's illegal transport of terror suspects Germany
<<http://www.irna.ir/en/news/menu-234/key-11037/>> -US <<http://www.irna.ir/en/news/menu-234/key-12199/>> -Prisoners <<http://www.irna.ir/en/news/menu-234/key-13374/>>

German opposition lawmakers called for an inquiry into the role of the Germany-based US European military (EUCOM) headquarters in the illegal transport of terror suspects to the notorious American Guantanamo Bay prison camp, the daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reported Wednesday.

The legal affairs spokesman of the radical leftist Linke Party, Wolfgang Neskovic announced he would raise the issue in the parliamentary control panel.

A senior legislator of the Green Party, Hans-Christian Stroebeler said there have been 'strong indications' that EUCOM was involved in the transfer of alleged terrorists.

German television reported earlier that the EUCOM headquarters, located in the southern city of Stuttgart, played a major role in the in the 2002 transport of terror suspects.

Germany's ARD public television network said that the US European Command headquarter was used to organize the January 2002 transfer of six Algerian prisoners from Bosnia to the US air base in Incirlik, Turkey.

ARD quoted what it said was a secret EUCOM report.

German prosecutors announced Monday they were investigating a report that US officials used a military headquarter in Stuttgart to help coordinate the transfer of terror suspects.

The German government claimed earlier that it had 'no knowledge of such flights'. Deputy government spokesman Thomas Steg stressed that since EUCOM is a 'facility of the US government', Berlin could not provide information about individual activities of EUCOM.

Last month, the German Federal Prosecutors Office had announced it was looking into allegations that the US army had illegally detained and possibly tortured terror suspects at an American military base in the southwestern city of Mannheim.

A delegation of the European parliament visited Berlin last month to investigate the extent of the German government's complicity with illegal CIA activities in Europe.

Berlin has consistently denied any involvement in the CIA kidnappings of terror suspects.

<http://www.irna.ir> <<http://www.irna.ir>>

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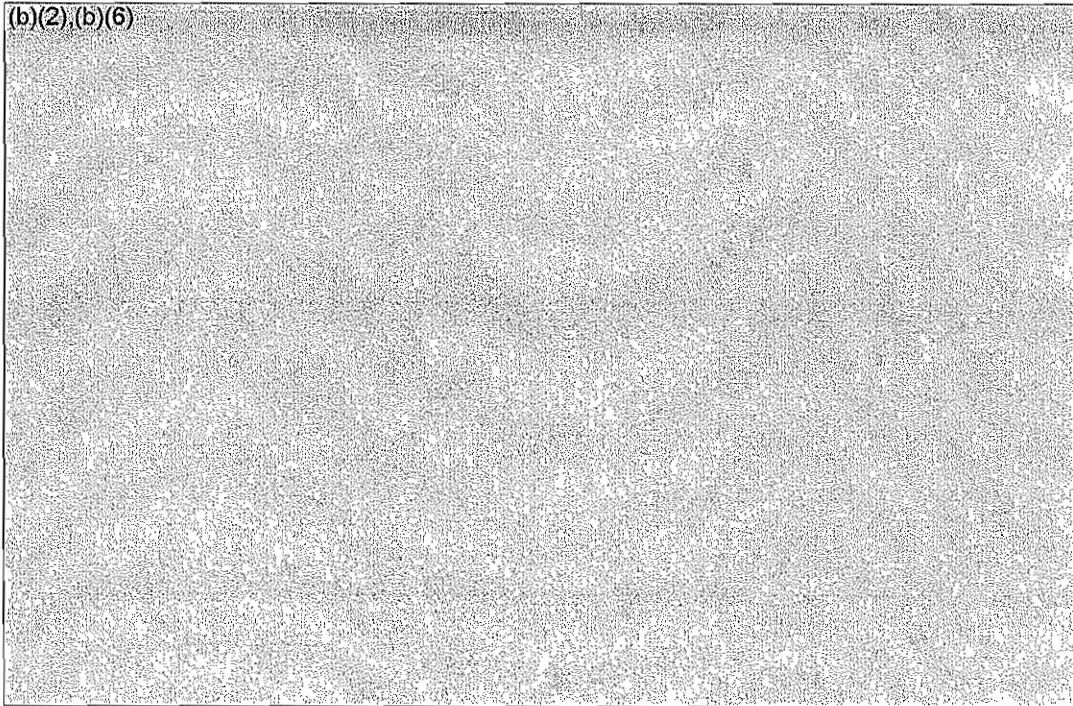
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Thursday, November 30, 2006 4:57 PM

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Subject: GTMO Bird: Abducted man seeks redress; Boeing is ravel agent for CIA; AP passed on terrorist propaganda; Padilla; GTMO justice; Begg speaks about time in GTMO

All:

Here is today's GTMO Bird.

Thanks,

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N.Y Times

Man Mistakenly Abducted by C.I.A. Seeks Redress RICHMOND, Va., Nov. 28 - A lawyer for a German man who was abducted while on vacation in Macedonia and said he was tortured while in C.I.A.

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/c/central_intelligence_agency/index.html?inline=nyt-org> custody in Afghanistan urged a federal appeals court on Tuesday to reinstate his lawsuit against the agency, which had been dismissed for national security reasons.

In May, a federal trial judge threw out the suit brought by Khaled el-Masri, who said he was an innocent victim of the Central Intelligence Agency's program of transferring terrorism suspects secretly to other countries for detention and interrogation. Judge T. S. Ellis III of Federal District Court in Alexandria said that although it appeared a great injustice might have been done to Mr. Masri, he was persuaded by the government that there was no way to even begin a trial without impermissibly disclosing state secrets.

Benjamin Wizner, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/a/american_civil_liberties_union/index.html?inline=nyt-org> , told a three-judge appeals panel on Tuesday that the government's position was absurd because what happened to Mr. Masri had hardly remained secret. He noted that the German government was openly investigating whether its officials had played a role in Mr. Masri's ordeal, and numerous news accounts have quoted unidentified American officials as confirming what happened.

Mr. Wizner said the government had not plausibly explained how national security interests might be harmed by a trial. He said President Bush acknowledged the C.I.A.'s program, known as extraordinary rendition, this summer, and it is widely known that other governments have been involved. A trial would not disclose state secrets but would merely involve "confirmation of a fact the entire world already knows," he said.

Gregory G. Katsas, a senior Justice Department lawyer, told the judges that courts must defer to the executive branch when it invokes the state secrets doctrine, which was first recognized by the Supreme Court in 1953.

Mr. Katsas said Porter J. Goss

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/g/porter_j_goss/index.html?inline=nyt-per , who was the C.I.A. director when the suit was brought, filed a secret statement with the court outlining the agency's case against a trial. Mr. Katsas said the statement provided a detailed account of how seemingly innocuous disclosures "will have a cascading effect that will have devastating consequences" for national security.

Mr. Masri sat stolidly in the first row of the courtroom during the 50-minute argument. A large man with graying hair cinched in a ponytail, he said in an interview later that he was infuriated with Judge Ellis's view that there might be no remedy for the injustice apparently done to him.

Mr. Masri, who was born in Kuwait, was arrested in Macedonia on Dec. 31, 2003, and flown to a prison in Afghanistan, where he was held for five months. During his incarceration, he has said, he was shackled, beaten and injected with drugs.

On Tuesday, he said through an interpreter that he was kept in deplorable conditions "not fit for a human being at all." Upon arrival in Afghanistan, he said, he was told that he was in a place where he had no right to recourse for what happened to him.

"I would like an explanation for what happened," he told reporters. "I would like an apology."

Mr. Wizner, his lawyer, said that although he believed Mr. Masri was entitled to financial compensation, he was not necessarily seeking anything beyond some official expression of remorse.

United States officials have been quoted anonymously in news reports as saying that Mr. Masri's case was one of mistaken identity; intelligence authorities may have confused him with an operative for Al Qaeda

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/a/al_qaeda/index.html?inline=nyt-org with a similar name.

The officials said Mr. Masri was released in May 2004 on the orders of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/r/condoleezza_rice/index.html?inline=nyt-per , then the national security adviser, after she learned he had been mistakenly identified as a terrorism suspect. He was freed in Albania, where he was left to make his way home to Germany, which he likened to being treated "like a piece of luggage."

Mr. Masri, who had earlier been denied permission to come to the United States to attend the hearing, said he has not been able to find a job since his return to Germany. "Both my Arab and German friends keep their distance," he said.

On Wednesday, he is scheduled to meet with some Democrats

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/d/democratic_party/index.html?inline=nyt-org on the Senate Judiciary Committee who are exploring the rendition

program and the Bush administration's increasingly frequent invocation of the state secrets doctrine to block lawsuits.

Seattle Weekly

Flog Is My Co-Pilot

Boeing is alleged to be a travel agent for torture.

By Rick Anderson <<http://www.seattleweekly.com/authors/rickanderson/>>

Since 2003, human-rights investigators and news media reports have described a Boeing Business Jet as one of the most-dreaded planes in the Central Intelligence Agency's clandestine air force. The modified 737-a model rolled out in Renton in 2001-was built for executive fun and comfort. But it is alleged to be the flagship of the CIA's "extreme rendition" squadron, ferrying suspected terrorists to secret agency prisons or countries where the U.S. is said to outsource torture.

The use of this jet, with a 6,000-mile flying range and plush customized cabin, has until now been Boeing's only connection to the prison airlifts. But a British author and an ex-prisoner's attorney say that records uncovered by Spanish investigators show Boeing has a more direct role-planning and organizing the flights through a unit of its Seattle commercial airplane division.

Boeing won't confirm or deny the claim. But the Spanish documents, and an investigation by Amnesty International and the Council of Europe, indicate Boeing was making arrangements for as many as 1,000 rendition flights through 14 countries by four CIA planes, including that notorious Boeing Business Jet.

"Travel agent for the CIA seems the right words," Stephen Grey says of Boeing's role. A British author, he has written about prisoner rendition and the CIA's global torture program in his new book, Ghost Plane, in which he has documented about 90 rendition flights. (Amnesty International estimates "hundreds of victims" wound up at CIA "black sites.")

The Bush administration has acknowledged transfers of Al Qaeda suspects to Guantánamo Bay but has denied the U.S. engages in torture-transfer flights. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in 2005 that the United States "does not use the airspace or the airports of any county" for such purposes. Senate Democrats, who take control in January, are promising a full investigation.

According to Grey and others, a wholly owned Boeing subsidiary called Jeppesen Inc. cleared the airways and runways for the CIA, providing landing and navigation assistance, scheduling flight crews, and booking hotels for them. Jeppesen is a unit of Boeing's Seattle-based Commercial Aviation Division.

The cargo of prisoners includes many who say they were tortured and others who claim to have been mistakenly abducted and abused. One detainee, Khaled el-Masri, a German of Lebanese decent who is suing the CIA and aviation companies under the Alien Tort Statute for alleged Fifth Amendment (due process) violations, says he now plans to add Boeing to his lawsuit.

Masri "was injected with a drug and chained to the floor of the plane," says his attorney, Ben Wizner of the New York ACLU. "I don't think anybody would hold Boeing responsible for manufacturing the plane. However, the emergence of [Boeing's flight-assistance role] changes all that."

The prisoner flights, launched by the Clinton administration to transfer foreign suspects to trial in the United States, became a darker undertaking following 9/11. George W. Bush approved what critics say amounts to the kidnapping of foreign nationals, some flown to countries such as Morocco or Egypt, known for abusive interrogation techniques. Others were

taken to a system of CIA prisons in Afghanistan and Europe, or the U.S. compound in Guantánamo, rights groups say.

In his book, Grey cites documents showing Boeing made travel arrangements for the CIA flights. He does not specifically name Boeing, but in a phone conversation last week with Seattle Weekly, Grey confirmed that Spanish government documents he obtained name Jeppesen's International Trip Planning unit as rendition flights planner.

Boeing bought the Denver-based company, then called Jeppesen Sanderson, in 2000 for \$1.5 billion from the (Chicago) Tribune Co., whose mixed portfolio includes the Los Angeles Times and the Chicago Cubs. John Hayhurst, then a Boeing vice president here, hailed Jeppesen as "another enduring global brand" for Boeing's business roster. Boeing later bought two related companies and expanded the Jeppesen unit, offering electronic mapping and navigation services to airline, general aviation, and government customers along with flight and trip planning.

Spain's largest newspaper, El Pais, last year reported that Jeppesen was named the CIA's flight arranger in investigative documents compiled by Spanish police. More recently, The New Yorker magazine noted the connection, reporting "it is not widely known that the [CIA] has turned to a division of Boeing, the publicly traded blue-chip behemoth, to handle many of the logistical and navigational details for these [rendition] trips."

On its Web site, Boeing boasts: "From Aachen to Zhengzhou, King Airs to 747s, Jeppesen has done it all."

But what, exactly, has it done? How deep is Boeing's involvement in the rendition flights? The company won't specifically say. From Chicago headquarters, Boeing spokesperson Tim Neale points out that flight planning is done for "thousands and thousands of customers each year. It's done on a confidential basis, and unless a customer authorizes us to comment, we can't."

He adds: "Jeppesen's flight planning process is to provide the route that is going to be followed, how much fuel is needed on board, where they will stop, and how many people will be on board, for weight reasons.

"We don't necessarily know very much about the purpose of a flight because that information isn't necessary to create a flight plan. What somebody's going to do when they get off is not part of that plan."

It's not publicly known how much Boeing, the nation's No. 2 defense contractor, earned from the flights. The CIA, a stand-alone agency, does not reveal its contracts and agency work can be billed through other government departments, including the Pentagon. Jeppesen has done \$7.7 million in defense contracting since Boeing bought it in 2000, based on a review of Pentagon records.

Grey says he plans to soon post on the Internet "assorted aviation documents including Jeppesen planning data" that confirm Boeing's role (Update: Grey posted the flight logs today at www.ghostplane.net <<http://www.ghostplane.net>> .). The documents include, he says, a 2004 Boeing-arranged flight on the Boeing jet from Morocco through Spain and on to Afghanistan, which coincides with the Masri case.

Masri was mistaken as an Al Qaeda suspect and arrested by Macedonia officials on New Year's Eve 2003. In a Virginia federal lawsuit filed against ex-CIA Director George Tenet and others, Masri says he was "forcibly abducted" in Macedonia and handed over to U.S. officials. He was beaten, drugged, and eventually flown to a CIA prison in Afghanistan, he says. Five months after his abduction, the suit notes, "Mr. El-Masri was deposited at night, without explanation, on a hill in Albania"-and that was two months after U.S. officials realized they made a mistake, the suit says.

The lawsuit was thrown out earlier this year, not because it lacked merit but because it could lead to disclosure of state secrets, a federal judge ruled. Masri is appealing and Wizner, his attorney, was scheduled to make his arguments this week before a Virginia appeals court.

"Obviously," says Wizner, "before we can add Boeing to the suit, we have to get it reinstated. It's a real hurdle-the CIA is, in effect, claiming immunity, that they're never liable in such cases." He's buoyed by three federal court rulings in recent months that rejected similar government-secrets argument-all of them cases involving challenges to warrantless eavesdropping authorized by President Bush.

"If the el-Masri suit can continue, we would try to develop evidence that people within Jeppesen were aware that detainees were being subjected to human rights abuses on these flights," Wizner says. "If we can show that, Boeing should by all rights be a defendant."

<http://www.seattleweekly.com> <<http://www.seattleweekly.com>>

AP Gets Caught Working For The Enemy

November 30, 2006: Two blogs, Gateway Pundit <<http://gatewaypundit.blogspot.com/2006/11/ap-is-busted-uses-bogus-source-for.html>> and Flopping Aces <<http://floppingaces2.blogspot.com/>>, have uncovered what appears to be a serious screw-up by the Associated Press in its coverage of Iraq. It appears that this American media outlet passed on terrorist propaganda, perhaps willingly. The mistake in question involves at least ten stories since April 27 in which a Captain Jemil Hussein was a source. Six of these stories involved alleged massacres of Sunni Arabs. Four others involved unknown victims. A second AP source in the Iraqi police, Lieutenant Maithem Abdul Rizzaq, is also proving to be nonexistent, according to Central Command and the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior. This is not the first time the media has been caught with bad stories and invented sources, but this is the most serious.

In 2005, media outlets ran with stories about the Koran being flushed by guards at Guantanamo Bay. These stories proved to be false - the flushing had been done by detainees. This had not come out until after a series of riots fanned by politicians across the Middle East led to several deaths. In another vein, claims of torture were made in public forums (most notably the floor of the United States Senate) and passed on. Later investigation not only failed to uncover such things, but discovered that in some of the very few cases where the line was crossed, there was provocation (such as spitting on a guard).

This also is bad when what the media omits is considered. For instance, the photos used by the media in various reports, as late as 2005, on the detainee camps, also took things out of context. The images used were of Camp X-Ray, a temporary camp that was replaced by Camp Delta in April, 2002. Camp Delta is on par with the latest correctional institutions in the United States. A detainee Time magazine profiled in 2005, was slated to be the 20th hijacker - the fifth person on Flight 93. Another detainee traveled to Pakistan in 1998 with an Iraqi intelligence officer to carry out an attack on the American and British embassies using chemical weapons. Nor has the media mentioned the fact that at least a dozen detainees that have been released have gone back to fighting with al Qaeda. The media has also neglected to point out that al Qaeda manuals instruct members to make false claims of being tortured if they are captured.

What makes this new AP case so bad is the fact that the phony source could have been easily exposed, had the AP bothered to contact Central Command. Central Command's public affairs office has its phone number listed - along with an e-mail address. An e-mail address for Multinational Forces Iraq is also available. Yet the AP failed to check for at least ten stories. Failing to check a source once might fall into the category of an understandable mistake, but failing to check up on sources more than ten times is an incredible stretch. Central Command has informed the AP of these phony sources, but the AP is standing by its

stories, claiming that they are using "a wide range of sources". This apparently includes phony sources.

Western media have long allowed themselves to be manipulated by Iraqi Sunni Arabs, largely because these media outlets opposed the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and the Sunni Arab dictatorship that Saddam ran. The Sunni Arab minority (about 20 percent of the population in 2003, closer to ten percent now) were not only running Iraq, but had long been the wealthiest and best educated segment of the population. Thus it was easy for pro-Sunni Arab Western and Arab journalists to find articulate (often English speaking) Iraqi Sunni Arabs to provide useful quotes and sound bites. With that experience, it was a short step to inventing Sunni Arab sources, which was more convenient. This is an old custom in journalism. For example, Time Magazine was long known for its invented sources, and some avid Time fans would keep track of the names of sources quoted in the magazine, until they found the latest invented one. This was easy to do, because the same name showed up in different parts of the country, or the world, and in very different situations.

The current use of phony sources by AP has led to multiple reports that not only paint what appears to be a distorted picture of what is going on inside Iraq, but also reflects poorly on Iraqi police and Army personnel who are fighting terrorists. These reports, based on phony sources, have also misled the American people. But then, many Americans already knew that, because troops in Iraq, usually reported a very different reality. The Associated Press is going to have some serious explaining to do. Those who want to get the straight scoop from Iraq should check out Central Command's newsroom website <<http://www.centcom.mil/sites/uscentcom1/Shared%20Documents/newsroom.aspx>> or the Department of Defense's website <<http://www.defenselink.mil/>> . - Harold C. Hutchison (haroldc.hutchison@gmail.com)

Courtroom Showdown

Accused terrorist Jose Padilla wants to describe how he was treated in a military brig. The government is trying to keep him quiet.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15958572/site/newsweek/>
<<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15958572/site/newsweek/>>

Washington Post

Gitmo Justice Is a Joke

By Andrew Cohen

Special to [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

Thursday, November 30, 2006; 12:00 AM

The same legal scholars who established beyond doubt earlier this year that the vast majority of Guantanamo Bay detainees are not threats to our national security after all are back with comprehensive new findings -- again from our own military's official records -- that obliterate the main premise of the White House's efforts to block judicial review for the terror suspects being held in Cuba.

The Bush Administration has argued for years that whatever due process rights to which the detainees are entitled have been and will be well satisfied by the rules set up by federal lawyers and military officials to evaluate and the try the men through military commissions. But a startling new report establishes that those procedures are a sham and inconsistent with the goal of vetting the detainees to accurately separate the truly bad guys from the poor Schmoes who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time when the war on terrorism began in 2001.

The first step in the legal process for the detainees is the Combatant Status Review Tribunal, which is supposed to act as a legal "triage" to determine which detainees merit which kind of treatment before the commissions. In February, Seton Hall University School of

Law professor Mark Denbeaux and his detainee defense attorney son, Joshua Denbeaux, culled through declassified Status Review transcripts and determined that hundreds and hundreds of the detainees (most held for years) had been determined by military officials as neither Al Qaeda nor Taliban members (and most had never taken up arms against America or her interests).

Now, the pair has determined through a new set of declassified material that the Review Tribunals are precisely the sorts of kangaroo courts that the Administration's most cynical critics have long suspected to be in use behind a veil of military secrecy down on Cuba. In their report, "No-Hearing Hearings: An Analysis of the Proceedings of the Government's Combatant Status Review Tribunals at Guantanamo," the Denbeauxs conclude based upon Defense Department documents that that "the Government did not produce any witnesses in any hearing and did not present any documentary evidence to the detainee in 96 percent of the cases."

The study found that "the government's classified evidence was always presumed to be reliable and valid" while each request by a detainee to "inspect" classified evidence was denied. And, even in those cases where the government relied upon unclassified evidence, such evidence was denied to the detainee. "The only documentary evidence that the detainees were allowed to produce was from family and friends," the analysts found, and in part because "detainees did not always participate in their hearings no evidence was presented on behalf of the detainee" an astounding 89 percent of the time. But when a detainee participated in his own hearing, and sought to introduce such documentary evidence, military officials denied the request 60 percent of the time.

Even more disturbing, the report determined, was that the government took "mulligans" against those few detainees who were actually found not to be an "enemy combatants." In each of the three (out of 102 documented cases) in which the Status Review Tribunals "found the detainee to be not/no longer an enemy combatant...the Defense Department ordered a new [proceeding] to be convened and the detainee was then found to be an enemy combatant." If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. And in one case, the Defense Department had to try three times -- three different tribunal proceedings -- before it got the "enemy combatant" classification it was seeking.

There is more in the Seton Hall report that ought to leave flushed and breathless every single Senator (Republican and Democrat alike) who just voted for the White House's "Military Commissions Act of 2006." If the actual trials of the detainees are as empty and shallow and pre-ordained as were the Status Review Tribunals there is every reason to be mortified at the prospect -- made real by the legislation -- that the federal courts will be frozen out of vital oversight functions. If a regular trial court proceeding were this shoddy, this unwilling to perform a truth-seeking function, this unable to achieve a fair process, the judge presiding over it would be impeached.

In February, when the Denbeauxs came out with their first startling report, reasonable people asked why the government would continue to detain men whom the government itself had determined not to be members of Al Qaeda or the Taliban. The White House never satisfactorily answered that question. And now a new question reasonably emerges from the smoke and fire of the latest survey: why is our military going through the motions of faux justice at Gitmo? What is the benefit -- legal, practical and otherwise -- of implementing adjudicatory procedures that do not by their very nature determine legitimate, verifiable, and honest facts about the detainees?

You can be sure that the Justices of the United States Supreme Court will get around to asking that question, too. And how the government responds will determine in large fashion how the rest of this sorry story plays out.

Andrew Cohen writes Bench Conference <<http://blog.washingtonpost.com/benchconference/>> and this regular law column for washingtonpost.com. He is also CBS News Chief Legal Analyst. His

columns for CBS can be found online here
<<http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/opinion/courtwatch/main15515.shtml>> .

<http://www.washingtonpost.com> <<http://www.washingtonpost.com>>

Bedford Today

Guantanamo Bay - the inside story

Former detainee will reveal all in Luton A former Guantanamo detainee is coming to Luton to talk about his time in captivity at the international-ally condemned US prison.

Moazzam Begg, from Birmingham, was finally released without charge last year after being illegally imprisoned for three years at the American government's Cuba-based internment camp.

Mr Begg and hundreds of other Muslims clothed in orange jumpsuits, hoods and shackled were portrayed by President George Bush as the officials and supporters of the Taliban and Al-Qaida.

Mr Bush said: "The only thing we know for certain is that these are very bad people."

Mr Begg and fellow British inmates were released without ever being charged as a result of the efforts of human rights groups and eventually the UK government.

Hundreds of prisoners from other, less powerful countries remain at the prison without hope of a fair trial.

The evening, titled The War On Terror - Where Will It End?, has been organised by the Luton Respect Party and will hear Mr Begg, along with other speakers, describe the effects of the US and UK-led war.

The event is being held on at 7pm, on Wednesday, December 6, at the Dallow Learning Community Centre.

30 November 2006

<http://www.bedfordtoday.co.uk> <<http://www.bedfordtoday.co.uk>>

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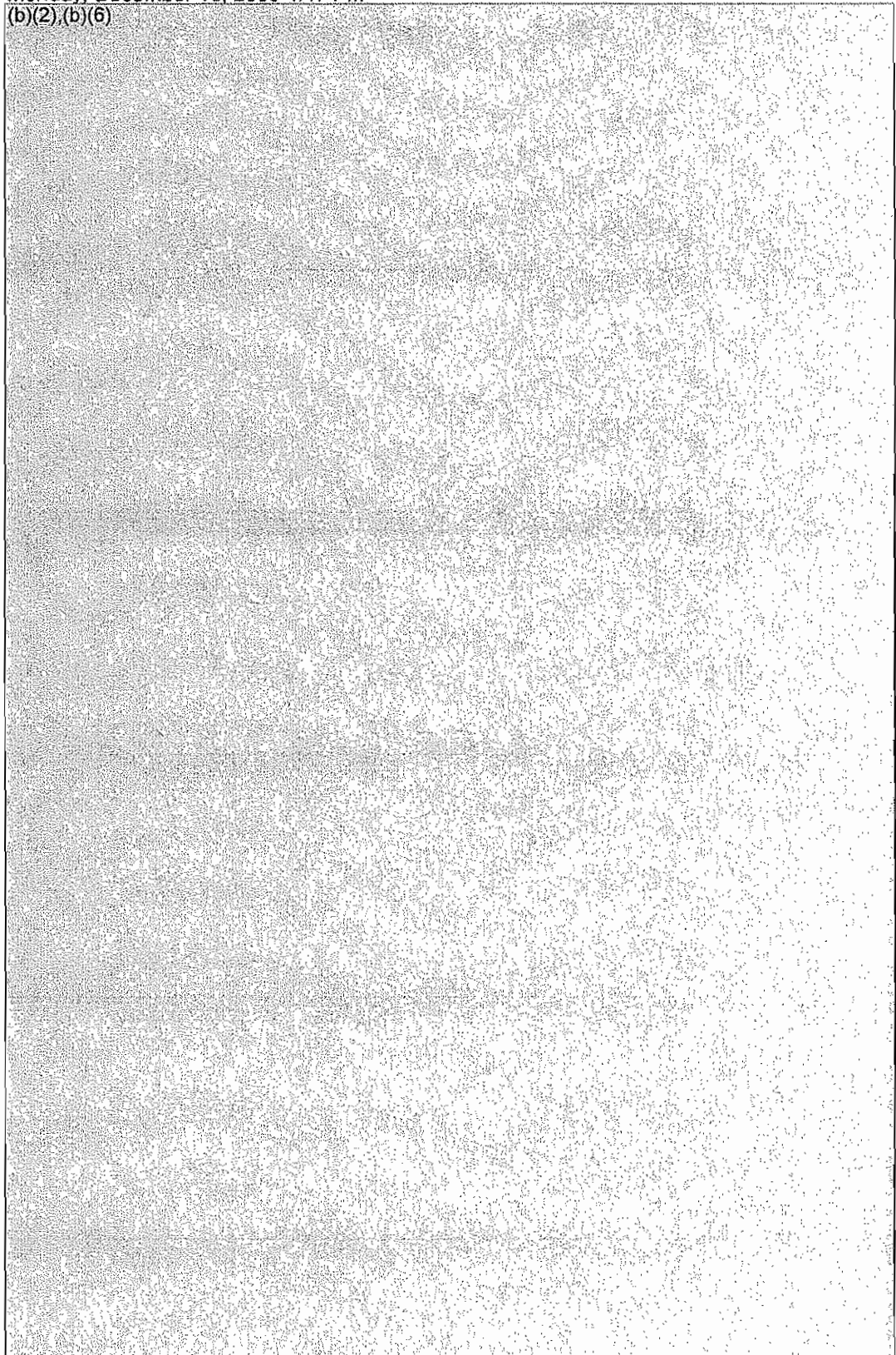
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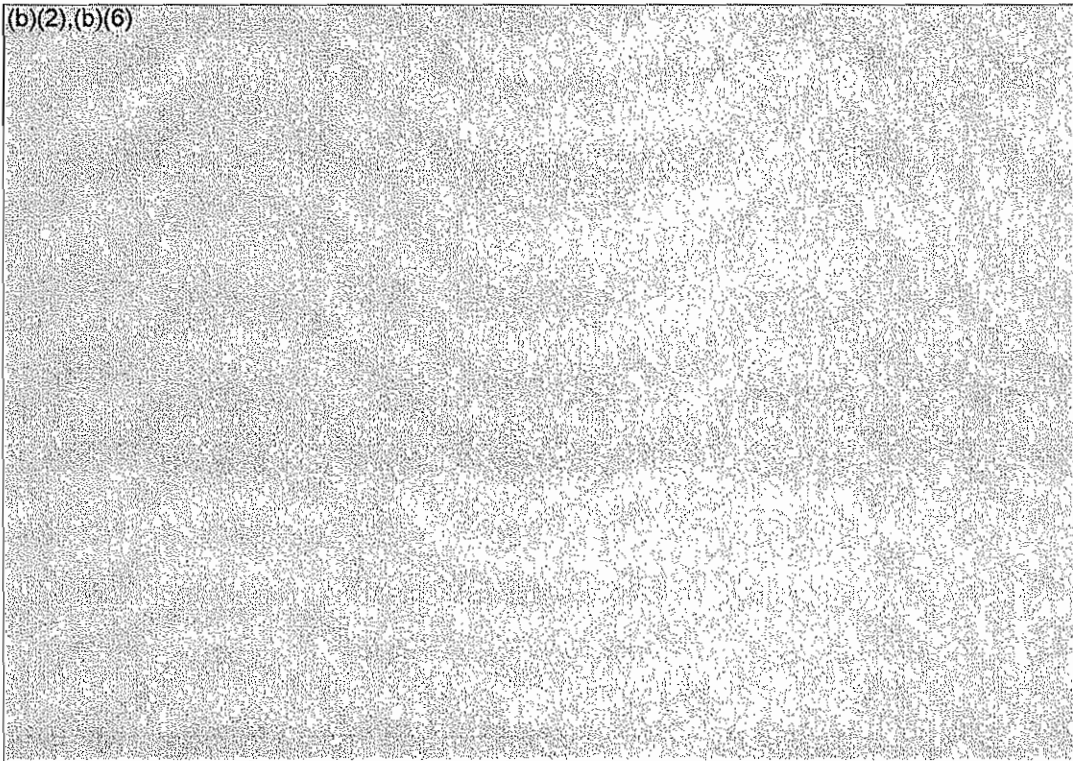
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Subject: GTMO Bird; Detainees returned; Investigation about administration's actions; GTMO clamp down; Hicks; Navy vet held in Iraq; Easy cases lingered; Blocking justice

All:

Here is today's GTMO Bird.

Thanks,

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The Daily Star
Guantanamo returnee put on remand
Staff Correspondent

Police yesterday took Mobarak, who was detained at Guantanamo Bay for five years for his suspected al-Qaeda connection, on a three-day remand to learn if he has any militancy links in the land.

Airport police showed him arrested under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code and placed him before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate with the remand prayer.

A special US Air Force plane on Sunday flew Mobarak Hossain, 30, son of Abul Hashem of Brahmanbaria in Bangladesh and handed him over to the Zia International Airport Immigration.

Mobarak went to Pakistan for studies in 1998 and taught in a madrasa in Karachi after completion of two-year study.

In 2001, Pakistan intelligence arrested him and suspecting his link with al-Qaeda, handed over to the US authorities who later took him to the Guantanamo Bay prison.

Mobarak need to be quizzed to learn his 'true' objective for going to Pakistan, if he was a member of any banned organisation in the country and if he had any criminal records, said Sub-Inspector Masud of Airport police in the remand prayer.

Police also revealed that Mobarak went to Kabul in Afghanistan to visit his friend Rafiq, whom he met while teaching at a Karachi madrasa.

Then he went to Jalalabad in Afghanistan from where Pakistan intelligence arrested him and kept detained for 32 weeks.

The Pakistan authorities later handed him over to the US authorities, who interrogated him at different camps in Pakistan and lastly sent to the Guantanamo Bay prison, Masud said in the police report placed before the court.

Mobarak's father Abul Hashem reiterated his claim that his son is innocent. "If they [US authorities] had found the slightest clue about his militancy link, they would not have released him," he told The Daily Star.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/12/19/d6121901149.htm>
<<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/12/19/d6121901149.htm>>

Washington Post
December 18, 2006
Pg. 19

U.S. Sends Home 33 Detainees From Guantanamo Bay

By Josh White, Washington Post Staff Writer

Thirty-three detainees who had been held at the U.S. military detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, were returned to their home countries over the past week, part of a government effort to reduce the facility's population to a core group of terrorism suspects who could be held indefinitely.

The Defense Department announced yesterday that it transferred 17 detainees to their home countries over the weekend: seven to Afghanistan, five to Yemen, three to Kazakhstan, one to Libya and one to Bangladesh. Military officials announced Thursday that 16 detainees were sent to Saudi Arabia last week.

With the transfer of the 33 detainees -- nearly 8 percent of the facility's population -- Guantanamo now holds about 395 detainees, almost none of whom have been charged with a crime. State Department officials have been working to significantly reduce the number of Guantanamo detainees through lengthy negotiations with other countries, although the United States is unwilling to release detainees into the custody of nations where they would likely be abused, tortured or killed.

A large percentage of the remaining population is from Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

According to Pentagon figures, approximately 380 detainees have departed Guantanamo for at least 29 countries since 2002, meaning the facility's current population represents slightly more than half of the suspects captured and transferred to U.S. custody in Cuba. An additional 85 detainees are slated for transfer or release to their home nations pending the outcome of diplomatic discussions. Their departure would leave the number of detainees at Guantanamo at about 310.

"Departure of these remaining detainees approved for transfer or release is subject to ongoing discussions between the United States and other nations," according to a Defense Department news release yesterday. "The United States does not desire to hold detainees for any longer than necessary."

Guantanamo did not accept new detainees from September 2004 to this past September, when 14 high-value suspects who had been in secret CIA custody were moved to Cuba.

Houston Chronicle

Dec. 16, 2006, 8:49AM

7 Afghans return home after imprisonment

By RAHIM FAIEZ Associated Press Writer

© 2006 The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan - Seven Afghan men on Saturday arrived in their home country _ weary, angry and proclaiming their innocence _ after years of imprisonment in the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

With long, unkempt beards and wearing blue numbered uniforms, the men appeared at a news conference beside Sibghatullah Mujaddedi, head of Afghanistan's reconciliation commission. The commission assists with the release of detainees from Guantanamo and another U.S. prison at the Bagram military base north of Kabul.

All seven men said they were wrongly arrested, but that they were not beaten or mistreated in any way during their imprisonment.

In interviews with The Associated Press, one claimed he was forced to join the Taliban, while another said he was arrested merely for being Muslim.

"We had to go with the Taliban. If we didn't go with them, they wanted money from us," said Abdul Rahman, 46, from Helmand province.

"I didn't have money to pay the Taliban, so I was forced to join them," he said. "I didn't want to."

Rahman swore he did not kill anyone or even fire any bullets. The Taliban sent him to northern Kunduz province, where he was arrested and again pressed for money.

He said he was told: "If you pay us money, we will release you, otherwise, we will sell you to the Americans." He claimed that American forces paid \$20,000 for him, presumably bounty for his capture.

The men were the eighth group released from Guantanamo and sent back to Afghanistan, said Mohammad Akram, an official with the independent reconciliation commission.

Akram said 47 Afghan prisoners have been released from Guantanamo since the establishment of the commission in 2004. Another 462 prisoners have been released from the U.S. prison in Bagram.

Many Afghans formerly held at Guantanamo claim that they were beaten, kept awake for days and treated like animals.

Mujaddedi, the head of the commission, said that 70 Afghans were still being detained in Guantanamo.

"We will try to release them, or bring them here to Afghanistan (for detention)," Mujaddedi said.

Alef Mohammad, 62, was also held for five years. He, too, denied involvement with the Taliban.

"I was just a simple farmer in Helmand province," Mohammad said. He said U.S. troops bombed the area where he lived and that 18 people were killed, including a nephew. Mohammad was arrested.

"I'm innocent, you can ask anyone in my village. They know me," he shouted angrily, waving his arms.

Reciting excerpts of the Quran, Mohammad claimed his crime was being a Muslim.

"The only fault that I had was that I read the holy word," he said.

<http://www.chron.com/dispatch/story.mpl/ap/world/4407074.html>

<<http://www.chron.com/dispatch/story.mpl/ap/world/4407074.html>>

International Herald Tribune

6 Yemenis released from U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay return home

SAN'A, Yemen: Six Yemenis released from the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay returned home and were being held by Yemeni authorities to determine if they have any terror ties, officials said Monday.

The Yemenis returned home over the past two days, an official with the Yemeni Interior Ministry said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Lawyer Khaled al-Ansi, who heads the Yemeni Human Rights Organization, said that the organization was in contact with Interior Ministry to find out how the ministry will handle the six detainees.

The U.S. military repatriated 18 detainees from Guantanamo Bay over the weekend to Afghanistan, Yemen, Kazakhstan, Libya and Bangladesh, a Pentagon spokesman said Sunday. The men, flown out of the U.S. naval base in southeastern Cuba on Friday, were all transferred to the custody of governments in their native countries except for one Yemeni detainee, who was released without conditions, said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Chito Pepler. Yemeni officials did not have any information about the detainee released without conditions.

Yemeni authorities last year received four detainees, who were released after a Yemeni judiciary found that they did not have terror connections.

About 100 Yemenis remain at Guantanamo, according to a list received by the Yemeni government from U.S. In June, a Yemeni and two Saudi Arabians committed suicide at Guantanamo, and their bodies were sent to their homelands

Yemen, the ancestral land of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, has largely allied itself with the United States in the war on terror.

Last week, 16 Saudis also returned home from Guantanamo and were being held by Saudi authorities. Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz said the government hopes to finish questioning the detainees and if no terror ties are found, release them.

But he warned that "we should not ignore the past of those people," according to remarks published in Saudi newspapers on Monday.

"We sympathized with them because they were in a foreign country and worked on getting them back to their country, we will treat them like we treat any other citizen, but this will depend on their cooperation with us, the kingdom law will be implemented," he said.

Some 759 people have been held over the years at Guantanamo, according to U.S. Defense Department documents released to The Associated Press in response to a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit.