

Torture-Report Leaks Point to Rumsfeld, Cambone, and Boykin

by Edward Spannaus

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his top civilian aides, such as Stephen Cambone and Gen. William “Jerry” Boykin (now operating on the civilian side of the DoD), are caught deeper than ever in the growing prison torture scandal, by newly disclosed documents from military and civilian agencies involved in the so-called war on terrorism. The new disclosures totally undercut Rumsfeld’s contention that the torture abuses were the work of a handful of “bad apples” among low-level troops. The “bad apples” are actually to be found at the highest branches of the Pentagon.

After months of a lull in activity regarding the torture investigations, during the run-up to the U.S. elections and their immediate aftermath, there has now broken loose an extraordinary torrent of information concerning still-secret torture investigations; this includes both leaked documents, and an extensive set of documents obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) through litigation under the Freedom of Information Act.

Some of the leaks appear to be coming from military officials, disturbed that the White House and Rumsfeld are suppressing a number of investigation reports which had been scheduled to be released many months ago. The recent leaks include information from a report on U.S.-run prisons in Afghanistan, prepared by Army Brig. Gen. Charles Jacoby; and an investigation of interrogation techniques used in Guantanamo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, compiled by Vice-Admiral Albert Church.

An additional factor is likely in the reports involving Task Force 121, now renamed Task Force 6-26, a combined CIA and Army special operations unit, whose mission is to capture and interrogate “high-value detainees” in Iraq. Leaks to a number of “mainstream” media, concerning a report on Task Force 121 compiled by a respected retired Army Colonel, Stuart Herrington, may be intended to try to undercut an ongoing move by Rumsfeld to seize control of all paramilitary and clandestine operations which are now carried out by the CIA.

The *New York Times* reported on Nov. 23 that President Bush had ordered an inter-agency group to review options for transferring covert operations which are now conducted by the CIA, to the DoD, as was recommended by the 9/11 Commission; Bush gave them 90 days to come up with a plan. The *Times* cited unnamed officials as saying that civilians in the

Pentagon, mentioning Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Stephen Cambone in particular, are pushing for this. The next day, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that, to help push this through, the Pentagon has already drafted a not-yet-adopted order telling the military’s Special Operations Forces to be prepared to conduct clandestine operations against terrorist organizations in the Middle East and Asia.

A retired intelligence official told *EIR* that an Executive Order is now being drafted for the President to sign, under which this transfer of paramilitary operations from CIA to DoD would take place; most likely, these operations will be placed under the control of Cambone.

Lyndon LaRouche has pointed out the serious danger inherent in such a shift: that any covert intelligence operation, if conducted by U.S. military forces against another country, is implicitly an act of war; this is one of the primary reasons why clandestine operations were entrusted to a civilian agency.

CIA Kept Its Distance

The Herrington report, which predated the discovery of the photos of abuse and torture at Abu Ghraib, warned top military officials in December 2003 that Task Force 121 was abusing and beating prisoners captured in Iraq, and dumping them in Army-base prisons where the Red Cross could not find them. The CIA had ordered its personnel in Iraq to stay away from a military interrogation center operated by Task Force 121, because CIA officials feared that the military might be abusing prisoners, according to the Herrington report. As we have reported, Task Force 121, earlier known as Task Force 20, is an outgrowth of the “hunter-killer” teams that Rumsfeld set up shortly after the 9/11 attacks.

In his December 2003 report, Colonel Herrington stated:

- The mistreatment of the prisoners was probably illegal under international and U.S. law;
- Task Force 121 and the 4th Infantry Division imprisoned “hostages”—usually female relatives of wanted Iraqis—to compel the wanted men to turn themselves in;
- The units rounded up thousands without even knowing who they were, and then held them secretly;
- Prisoners of the Task Force were beaten;
- The Task Force’s activities were counterproductive, and would probably feed the resistance in Iraq.

Task Force Threatens DIA Officers

Perhaps the most damning document, among those obtained by the ACLU, is a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) memorandum, sent to Cambone on June 25, 2004—which is, of course, many months after the Abu Ghraib photos were disclosed to top military officials, and exactly two months after the Abu Ghraib scandal became public. The memo from DIA Director Vice Admiral L.E. Jacoby, tells of ongoing torture, beating, and abuse of prisoners in Iraq, and the routine cover-up of this conduct.

The June 25, 2004 memo reports that DIA interrogators were threatened by Task Force 6-26 personnel, and ordered not to talk to anyone about the abuse of detainees by TF 6-26 which they had witnessed.

DIA interrogators reported the following:

- “Prisoners arriving at the Temporary Detention Facility in Baghdad with burn marks on their backs. Some have bruises, and some have complained of kidney pain.”
- One of the two DIA interrogators “witnessed TF 6-26 officers punch a prisoner in the face to the point the individual needed medical attention. This record of treatment was not recorded by TF 6-26 personnel. In this instance, the debriefer was ordered to leave the room.”
- One DIA interrogator “took pictures of the injuries and showed them to his TF 6-26 supervisor, who immediately confiscated them.”
- “TF 6-26 personnel have taken the following actions with regard to DIA interrogators/debriefers:
 - Confiscated vehicle keys;
 - Instructed them not to leave the compound without specific permission, even to get a haircut at the PX;
 - Threatened them;
 - Informed them that their e-mails were being screened;
 - Ordered them not to talk to anyone in the U.S.”

Rumsfeld’s ‘Marching Orders’

More documentation, pointing directly to Rumsfeld and his top aides, came with the Dec. 6 release, by the Associated Press, of documents in which the FBI repeatedly criticized the “aggressive interrogation practices” being used by military personnel at Guantanamo, which involved physical and psychological pain, and the use of dogs to intimidate prisoners. The FBI subsequently “stepped out of the picture” and declined to participate in prisoner interrogations being conducted by military personnel.

Making it clear that the military’s order came from the top, one confidential FBI memo described an argument between FBI personnel and the two top Army generals running the interrogations, including the notorious Gen. Geoffrey Miller, who later went to Iraq to “Gitmo-ize” the detention and interrogation operations at Abu Ghraib. (And, as we have earlier reported, while in Iraq, Miller also reviewed the operations of Task Force 20—the predecessor of Task

Force 121 and 6-26.) An FBI letter to the head of the Army’s Criminal Investigative Division said that the FBI had complained to the military about the methods being used at Guantanamo, and that nothing was done. Two memos described a heated discussion between the FBI officials, and the two generals: “Both agreed the Bureau has their way of doing business and DOD has their marching orders from the Sec Def”—referring of course to the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld.

‘It’s Cambone and Boykin’

“From looking at these documents, there’s absolutely no question about who’s running this entire operation: it’s Cambone and Boykin,” a legal source who has been involved in the torture investigation told *EIR*, after reviewing the documents obtained by the ACLU. “Look at the insolent way the Navy SEALs behave: they’re not afraid of punishment, and they believe they have a right to do what they’re doing, and that’s probably because they *do*.”

This source described the latest documents as constituting “powerful confirmation of the report that Sy Hersh has had out there for months,” noting that at the center of the torture and abuse, are Task Force 20, Task Force 121, and Task Force 6-26.

Investigative reporter Seymour Hersh, in his book *Chain of Command*, traced the origin of the prison-torture scandal to the creation of a highly-secret program set up by President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and Rumsfeld, shortly after the 9/11 attacks. (See *EIR*, Sept. 24.) This program set up special hunter-killer teams within the military, originally to hunt down, and capture or kill, top al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Rumsfeld’s scheme encountered intense opposition among traditionalist military officers, who did not want to see the military’s Special Forces turned into assassination teams. In late 2003, Hersh reported that Rumsfeld had created Task Force 121 in Iraq, consisting of Army Delta Force members, Navy SEALs, and CIA paramilitary operatives, for the purpose of neutralizing Iraqi insurgents by killing or capturing them. In the book, Hersh described a top-secret “Special Access Program” which put Rumsfeld’s hunter-killer teams into the business of interrogating prisoners, using physical coercion and sexual humiliation, to try and generate intelligence on the insurgency.

Prior to the publication of Hersh’s account, *EIR* had been advised that a major reason for the Administration’s cover-up of the torture scandal, was to protect Boykin, the Muslim-hating, Christian-fundamentalist fanatic who is Cambone’s deputy, and who is also said to be close to Guantanamo’s General Miller. Now, as more documents are pushed out into the public record, the Administration’s cover-up is about to crumble to pieces.

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