

Letters to the Editor

Article published April 27, 2009

CIA terror memos are very scary

Thanks to some lawmakers of conscience on Capitol Hill and the ACLU's fearlessness, CIA misdeeds, scantily disguised under the so-called war on terror mantle, have been declassified. These clandestine "enhanced interrogation techniques" were concocted, authored, and executed by the notorious Ivy League-educated Bush-era gangsters in the Department of Justice. A cursory look at the 124 pages of these memos would send a chill up the spine of the horror maestro Stephen King.

The world witnessed the savagery that descended on innocent Americans on Sept. 11, 2001. But the savagery unleashed by the Jay Bybee-John Yoo-Alberto Gonzales trio is unparalleled. Inhuman techniques like sleep deprivation, nudity, exposure to intense light and loud music, and, worst of all, waterboarding, were used indiscriminately with utter disregard of the Geneva Conventions.

The memos mocked every thread of American justice. For example, while one memo declared waterboarding a threat of imminent death, in another section of the same memo the Justice Department's legal counsel concluded that because waterboarding does not cause severe pain or suffering, the use of these procedures would not constitute "torture."

Ironically, in 1901, the United States opposed waterboarding done to an insurgent during the Spanish-American War and even sentenced an Army major to 10 years of hard labor. Even John McCain said the technique should be outlawed.

President Obama's decision to make these horrific documents public, albeit under extreme duress and outcry, is a welcome departure from the secrecy preached, practiced, and condoned by the Bush-Cheney duo. Yet, how does the President expect Americans to forget this abominably dark chapter by granting immunity to the perpetrators?

Abdul-Majeed Azad