

# CIA Torture and Khalid Sheik Mohammed

## The Sheikh and The Torture Senator

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Last week [mid March] senior al-Qaeda operative Khalid Sheikh Mohammed reportedly confessed during his Combatant Status Review Tribunal (CSRT) at the US prison in the US Naval Station, Guantanamo, Cuba to having planned virtually every al-Qaeda attack on the United States. But during the military tribunal proceedings, he also said he was tortured during his four year confinement in CIA secret prisons. Senators Levin and Graham viewed the Guantanamo proceedings over a special video link into the US Senate. Afterwards, Senator Levin said that Sheikh Mohammed's allegations of torture by US officials must be investigated.

Senator Levin, you don't have to go far to find someone who knows about Sheikh Mohammed's torture.

I was in the audience February 12, 2007 during the Washington, DC screening of the new HBO documentary "The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib." After watching the documentary, panelists Senators Lindsey Graham and Ted Kennedy discussed prisoner abuse and torture at Abu Ghraib.

To the amazement of the audience, Graham said, with a twinkle in his eye, that "Americans don't mind torture, they really don't." Then he smiled broadly, almost gleefully, and said that the US had used certain interrogation techniques on "Shaikh Mohammed, one of the "high value" targets," techniques that "you really don't want to know about, but they got really good results."

I firmly believe that Graham's statement acknowledged that US officials have tortured prisoners, and he, as a Senator, knew what was done and agrees with the torture because "it got results."

Except you don't know what the results are. In the case of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, it appears that with torture you can get someone to confess to masterminding the entire al-Qaeda attack on the United States. Senior FBI officials are questioning some of Sheikh Mohammed's assertions of guilt and remind us of the FBI's concern about torture techniques used by both the CIA and the US military on prisoners in Afghanistan, Iraq and Guantanamo, techniques that can elicit confessions just to get the torturers to stop.

In January, 2007, I was in the city of Guantanamo, Cuba with human rights activists calling for the closure of the US military prison on the fifth anniversary of the first prisoners being sent there. With us was former prisoner, Asif Iqbal, a 23-year old who told us that he had been beaten by US interrogators until he confessed to helping plan the 9/11 attacks. In

reality, he was a completely innocent young man who happened to be in Afghanistan when the U.S. attack began and was swept up with hundreds of other local people. He told us how prisoners in Afghanistan and in Guantanamo confessed to anything the interrogators wanted to prevent further torture.

*Ann Wright is US Army Reserve Colonel (Retired). As a 29 year US Army/Reserves Colonel and a 16 year former US diplomat, I am horrified that US Senators have been complicit in knowing of criminal acts of our intelligence agencies and doing nothing to stop them. Graham told 400 of us in the audience on February 22 he knew of the torture of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. Graham is a military lawyer and a civilian lawyer. He knew that the torture of Sheikh Mohammed was a criminal act and did nothing to stop it.*

Senator Levin, if you want to know about torture committed by US government officials, please put under oath your colleague Senator Lindsey Graham and ask him "what he knew and when he knew it."

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