

“Torture Was Vital to Getting Bin Laden”

By [Global Research](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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[**War Criminals Try to Evade Prosecution By Pretending Torture Was Vital to Getting Bin Laden ... When It Actually Delayed the Hunt for YEARS**](#)

Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and John Yoo were all instrumental in implementing the U.S. torture program.

So it is no surprise that they are now pretending that torture helped get Bin Laden. See [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#).

They're trying to [avoid war crimes prosecution](#).

As I [noted](#) in 2009:

Cheney was the main architect of the torture policy (according to [the number 2 man at the State Department](#) and others).

So of course he would defend torture – he's trying to [keep his behind out of the defense chair](#) at a war crimes tribunal.

Cheney defending torture is exactly like Charles Manson appearing on all of the news shows defending murder as a public policy.

Matthew Alexander – a former top Air Force interrogator who led the team that tracked down Abu Musab al-Zarqawi – [agrees](#):

“These guys are trying to save their reputations, for one thing,” Alexander said. “They have, from the beginning, been trying to prevent an investigation into war crimes.”

As does Colonel Wilkerson, the former number two man at the State Department:

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Indeed, as Dan Froomkin [notes](#) in a little-noticed essay, torture actually delayed by years more effective intelligence-gathering methods which would have resulted in finding Bin Laden:

Defenders of the Bush administration's interrogation policies have claimed vindication from reports that bin Laden was tracked down in small part due to information received from brutalized detainees some six to eight years ago.

But that sequence of events — even if true — doesn't demonstrate the effectiveness of torture, these experts say. Rather, it indicates bin Laden could have been caught much earlier had those detainees been interrogated properly.

"I think that without a doubt, torture and enhanced interrogation techniques slowed down the hunt for bin Laden," said an Air Force interrogator who goes by the pseudonym Matthew Alexander and located Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, in 2006.

It now appears likely that several detainees had information about a key al Qaeda courier — information that might have led authorities directly to bin Laden years ago. But subjected to physical and psychological brutality, "they gave us the bare minimum amount of information they could get away with to get the pain to stop, or to mislead us," Alexander told The Huffington Post.

"We know that they didn't give us everything, because they didn't provide the real name, or the location, or somebody else who would know that information," he said.

In a 2006 [study by the National Defense Intelligence College](#), trained interrogators found that traditional, rapport-based interviewing approaches are extremely effective with even the most hardened detainees, whereas coercion consistently builds resistance and resentment.

"Had we handled some of these sources from the beginning, I would like to think that there's a good chance that we would have gotten this information or other information," said Steven Kleinman, a longtime military intelligence officer who has extensively researched, practiced and taught interrogation techniques.

"By making a detainee less likely to provide information, and making the information he does provide harder to evaluate, they hindered what we needed to accomplish," said Glenn L. Carle, a retired CIA officer who oversaw the interrogation of a high-level detainee in 2002.

For Alexander, Kleinman and others, the key takeaway is not just that the torture didn't work, but that it was actually counterproductive.

"The question is: What else did KSM have?" Alexander asked. And he's pretty sure he knows the answer: KSM knew the courier's real name, "or he knew who else knew his real name, or he knew how to find him — and he didn't give any of that information," Alexander said.

Alexander's book, "Kill or Capture," chronicles how the non-coercive interrogation of a dedicated al Qaeda member led to Zarqawi's capture.

"I'm 100 percent confident that a good interrogator would have gotten additional leads" from KSM, Alexander said.

This new scenario hardly supports a defense of torture on the grounds that it's appropriate in "ticking time bomb" scenarios, Alexander said. "Show me an interrogator who says that eight years is a good result."

Indeed, Froomkin points out that the type of torture used is a special type focused on

obtaining false confessions:

Experts agree that torture is particularly good at one thing: eliciting false confessions.

Bush-era interrogation techniques, were modeled after methods used by Chinese Communists to extract confessions from captured U.S. servicemen that they could then use for propaganda during the Korean War.

And Froomkin notes that torture hurts national security:

“They don’t want to talk about the long term consequences that cost the lives of Americans,” Alexander added. The way the U.S. treated its prisoners “was al-Qaeda’s number-one recruiting tool and brought in thousands of foreign fighters who killed American soldiers,” Alexander said. “And who want to live with that on their conscience?”

For background, see [this](#).

Note: Cheney and Rumsfeld were [never very interested in capturing Bin Laden](#). Their focus was elsewhere. So their revisionist statements about the usefulness of torture for intelligence purposes must be taken with a grain of salt. In reality, their torture program was [crafted to justify the Iraq war](#), not to catch Bin Laden (and see [this](#).)

Read about Osama Bin Laden in Michel Chossudovsky’s international best-seller

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