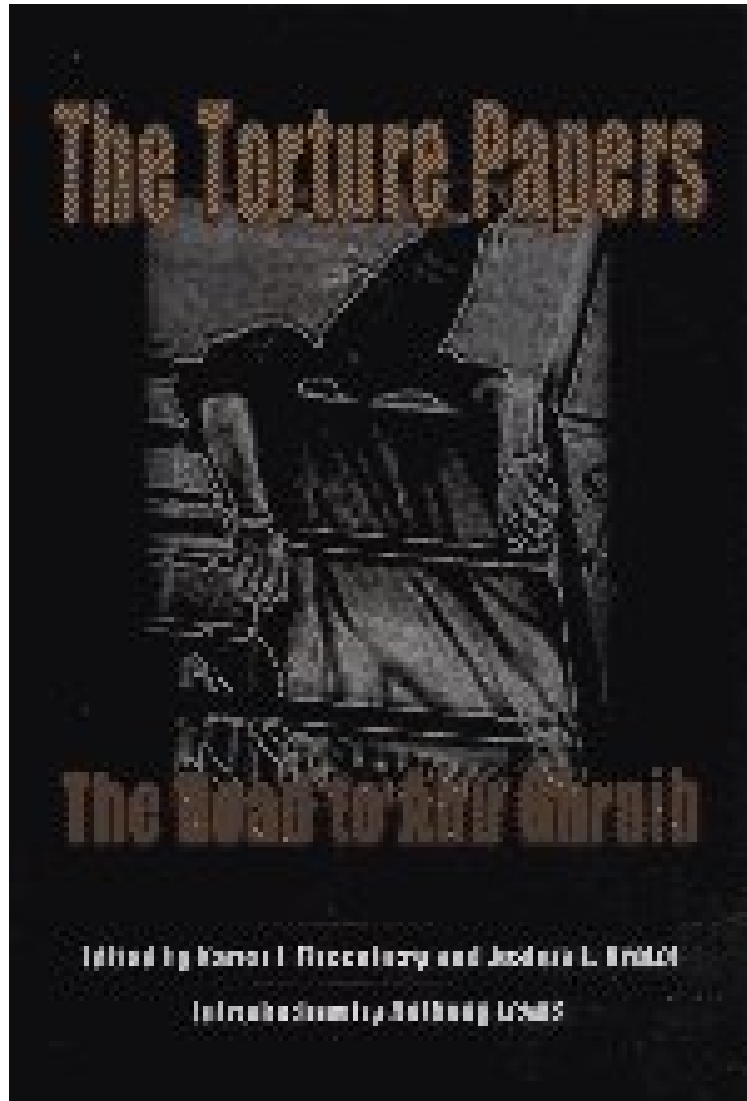


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The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib

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From Brand: Cambridge University Press : The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An Extremely Timely Resource By Ronald H. Clark This very substantial (over 1242 pages) book is a treasure trove of information given all of the current attention (including Supreme Court decisions) being devoted to Gitmo detainees and issues of possible torture of alleged terrorist detainees. The book consists for the most part of government memos and reports that were written to authorize and document

coercive interrogation and torture in Gitmo, Afghanistan, and Abu Ghraib among other locales. Some 28 memos are included in their entirety that cover the period from Sept. 25, 2001 into 2004. A number of reports are reproduced as well, written by the Bar of the City of New York, The American Bar Ass'n, former defense secretary Schesllinger's report on DoD detention operations, some briefing papers, DoD responses to AP reports, and the Fay/Jones report on Abu Ghraib. There simply is nothing like having the original documents at your fingertips. The book also includes a list of pertinent documents that at the time of publication had not been publicly released; most if not all of these are now available on the internet (e.g., the key John Yoo March 14, 2003 memo). There are also helpful introductions (including a short one by Anthony Lewis of the NYT); a list of interrogation techniques; recommended readings; a listing of torture related laws and conventions; biographical sketches of the key players (except David Addington for some reason); a timeline; and some cases relevant to the incidence of torture. Also included is an afterword with some additional documents which had been released just as the book was going to press. The book nicely complements any of the current volumes out on this issue, such as Goldsmith's "The Terror Presidency" (also reviewed on). An indispensable resource in this important area.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. TORTURE AT ABU GHRAIB By Nigell I know this report is a lot of information to plow through, but it is well worth the effort like reading War and Peace, Les Miserables, Tale of Two Cities, Heart of Darkness, 1848, Crime and Punishment, The Handmaid's Tale, and other, political powerful and insightful masterful novels. However, if this report were fiction it would be in the horror genre. What I don't believe is this was sanctioned and is documented in such detail that I find it unbelievable that the US military would conduct themselves in such a barbaric fashion, and then, document it. What happened to these military thugs who participated in all of this torture and humiliation and their bosses (Rumsfeld)? 36 of 41 people found the following review helpful. A recorded history of sadism, incompetence, and cowardice By Dr. Lee D. Carlson The editors of this book have done a fine job, and the publisher should be commended for bringing this sizable collection to print. Due to the size of the book, long periods of time would be required to read all of the memorandums in it. A great deal of information can be gained however from the perusal of even a small number of these memorandums. They give an inside view of the workings of a collection of individuals who are far from the combat sands of Iraq and Afghanistan, and whose goal is to make sure that they will be insulated from any legal consequences of their actions and recommendations. Joshua L. Dratel, one of the editors of the book, states this clearly when he asserts that the implicit message in the memoranda is that the policy makers who wrote them actually detest the American system of justice and find it impractical as a tool for fighting terrorism. This reviewer is in full agreement with Dratel's commentary. Indeed, the memoranda definitely support the notion that its authors consider it axiomatic that the Constitution, the Geneva Convention, and other bodies of law are impotent in the face of international terrorism. They have let the events of 9/11 lower considerably their confidence in rational, legal procedures for the resolution of conflicts. Dratel states it concisely and correctly when he states that the events of 9/11 "cannot serve as a license - for our government in its policies, or for ourselves in our personal approach to grave problems - to suspend our constitutional heritage, our core values as a nation, or the behavioral standards that mark a civilized and humane society." Some insight, however limited, can be gained from Memo 11, which is one of the memorandums that Bush put forward regarding the treatment of detainees and the prisoner-of-war status of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. After reading Memo 11, the question immediately arises: Why did the memorandums and discussion continue even after Memo 11 (the Bush memorandum to the Vice President, et al)? After all, in this memo, Bush explicitly states that the Geneva provisions do not legally cover Al Qaeda and the Taliban. But Bush emphasizes that even though he accepts the legal conclusions of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice regarding the inapplicability of the Geneva convention to Al Qaeda and the Taliban, and that he therefore has the "authority under the Constitution" to suspend Geneva, he nevertheless decides to "decline to exercise that authority." However, Bush is careful to note that he "reserves the right" to exercise this authority in future conflicts. In addition, he orders that detainees be treated humanely, according to the principles of Geneva, "including those who are not legally entitled to such treatment." Thus it appears that any further legal argumentation by anyone in the administration regarding the use of torture should be viewed as purely academic. But as this book clearly shows, there was still much discussion on these matters after Memo 11 was sent (February 7, 2002). The need for further discussion is not clear even after reading the memorandums that were sent between various individuals after Memo 11. Torture has been practiced by many different individuals, political and religious groups, and regimes throughout history. Whether it is the Catholic Church in the Inquisition, the Chinese government under Mao ZeDong, or American military personnel in Iraq, the practice of torture is not exclusive to "leftist" or "rightist" political groups. The use of torture though to gain information is an implicit admission of the inability to collect real intelligence, either because of laziness or incompetence. Those individuals who practice torture for this reason no doubt understand this. They fully understand that torture is useless in gaining helpful information from prisoners. Therefore their decision to engage in the torture of prisoners is no doubt a result of their sadistic nature, which can be brought out not only in the theatre of war but also under the protection of religious and governmental institutions. These institutions, despicable and contemptible as they are, deserve every legal penalty available against them. Of course, legal penalties presuppose the existence of institutions that have the legal authority to carry them out. Considering the status and jurisdiction of international law in the last few years, the

number of these institutions is in rapid decline, leaving the practical application of torture open to any country that desires to carry it out.

The Torture Papers document the so-called 'torture memos' and reports which US government officials wrote to prepare the way for, and to document, coercive interrogation and torture in Afghanistan, Guantanamo, and Abu Ghraib. These documents present for the first time a compilation of materials that prior to publication have existed only piecemeal in the public domain. The Bush Administration, concerned about the legality of harsh interrogation techniques, understood the need to establish a legally viable argument to justify such procedures. The memos and reports document the systematic attempt of the US Government to prepare the way for torture techniques and coercive interrogation practices, forbidden under international law, with the express intent of evading legal punishment in the aftermath of any discovery of these practices and policies.

From Booklist*Starred * Bush administration officials and top military brass continue to maintain that the well-documented abuses of prisoners at Abu Ghraib were the isolated actions of a few rogue guards. Not so, say the editors of this book. Greenberg is the executive director of the Center on Law and Security at the New York University School of Law, and Dratel is a prominent defense attorney currently assisting in the defense of detainees at the Guantanamo base in Cuba. As their introductory essays make clear, they believe the abuses at Abu Ghraib and the claimed abuses at Guantanamo are the direct result of administration policies. They do not prove their case conclusively, but their compilation of administration documents is still riveting, chilling, and infuriating. They clearly reveal that, at the highest levels, the Bush administration sought legal justification to circumvent both the Geneva Convention and other international accepted norms regarding the interrogation and treatment of military detainees. We have top Justice Department officials claiming "non-state actors" are not protected by the Geneva Convention. We have Department of Defense officials approving "non-injurious physical contact," which, of course, opens the door to a wide variety of abusive and degrading practices. This vitally important book reminds us that the pursuit of intelligence by "unorthodox" means is a dangerous and slippery slope. Jay Freeman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "The book is necessary, if grueling, reading for anyone interested in understanding these wartime prison abuses." -Register-Guard "It will chill your bones." -Village Voice "The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib thoroughly documents repeated and shocking perversions of justice. The torture of prisoners became standard practice as the internationally accepted tenets of the Geneva Convention were bypassed and ignored. This is not a collection of complex legalese but pages where a clear episodic story unfolds free of bias and spin. The documents and their authors speak for themselves; key individuals approved torture as a coercive interrogation technique while others, namely Secretary of State Colin Powell, strongly opposed it. This is required reading for everyone concerned with fairness, justice, and difficult choices made under the pressures of our post 9/11 world." - Nadine Strossen, President, American Civil Liberties Union "The Torture Papers may well be the most important and damning set of documents exposing U.S. government lawlessness ever published. Each page tells the story of U.S. leaders consciously willing to ignore the fundamental protections that guarantee all of us our humanity. I fear for our future. Read these pages and weep for our country, the rule of law and victims of torture everywhere." -Michael Ratner, President, Center for Constitutional Rights "The minutely detailed chronological narrative embodied in this volume..possesses an awful and powerful cumulative weight.[...]The book is necessary, if grueling, reading for anyone interested in understanding the back story to those terrible photos from Saddam Hussein's former prison, and abuses at other American detention facilities." -New York Times Book "This vitally important book reminds us that the pursuit of intelligence by "unorthodox" means is a dangerous and slippery slope." - Booklist (starred review) "This is a commendable, timely, and useful collection of key documents. The material goes far in helping us to understand the logic and advice that led to Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. From awful advice spring awful events." - Philippe Sands QC is a practising barrister in the Matrix Chambers and a professor of international law at University College London. He is the author of Lawless World: America and the Making and Breaking of Global Rules. "Not since the Pentagon Papers have we seen such an important set of classified documents as the memoranda, reports and orders on detention and interrogation that began emerging into public view in the United States. Cambridge University Press is serving an important need in providing these papers in one authoritative and well-organized collection." - Mary Ellen O'Connell, William B. Saxbe Designated Professor of Law Fellow of the Mershon Center for International Security, The Ohio State University "With this superb collection of documents, we can begin to see the contours of our new post 9-11 world: from the reinterpretation of laws and treaties that once seemed immutable, to the pressure on soldiers and CIA officers in the field to set aside old rules in the hunt for useable intelligence. The papers speak for themselves and readers can decide whether the trade-offs are worth it or not." - Dana Priest, National Security Reporter, The Washington Post. "The Torture Papers then, is no historical artifact. It's why we do what we're (still) doing. It's a monument to denial, arrogance and hypocrisy. It's why they hate us." - Ted Rall, San Diego Union-Tribune "Let us hope this book will have a wide readership and will embolden our supine mass media to engage in more research and expose the machinations of the far-right Republicans and their allies." -Political Affairs, Thomas Riggins "...this should

interest the new secretary of state, Hillary Rodham Clinton, the indispensable 1,249-page thoroughly documented "The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib" (Cambridge University Press) adds that our State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices "have expressly characterized as 'torture' or 'other abuse' tying detainees in painful positions; incommunicado detention; depriving detainees of sleep ... long periods of imprisonment in darkened rooms ... and instilling detainees with the false belief that they are about to be killed." --Nat Hentoff, WorldNetDaily Commentary

From the Publisher

Timely in its publication and extremely disturbing in its implications, The Torture Papers consists of the "torture memos" and reports which US government officials wrote to prepare the way for, and to legitimize, coercive interrogation, including techniques many would label as torture, in Afghanistan, Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. These documents present - for the first time - a compilation of materials that, prior to publication, have not been collected in one source. The authors of these memos and documents include President George W. Bush, Deputy Assistant Attorneys General John Yoo, Jack Goldsmith, and Patrick Philbin; Counsel to the President Alberto Gonzales; Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld; Department of Defense General Counsel William J. Haynes II; Department of Justice Assistant Attorney General Jay S. Bybee; and Secretary of State Colin Powell, among others. The volume also contains the investigative reports of the International Committee of the Red Cross, The Taguba Report, the Mikolashek Report, the Schlesinger Report, the Fay-Jones Report and the American Bar Association Report to the House of Delegates. Taken together, these incredibly shocking memos and reports document the systematic attempt of the US Government to prepare the way for torture techniques and coercive interrogation practices, forbidden under international law, with the express intent of evading legal punishment in the aftermath of any discovery of these practices and policies. As the editors' introduction points out, "Ultimately, what the reader is left with after reading these documents is a clear sense of the systematic decision to alter the use of methods of coercion and torture that lay outside of accepted and legal norms. Not only did the lawyers and policymakers knowingly overstep legal doctrine, but they did so against the advice of individuals in their midst, notably Secretary of State Powell and William H. Taft, Legal Advisor to the the Secretary of State."