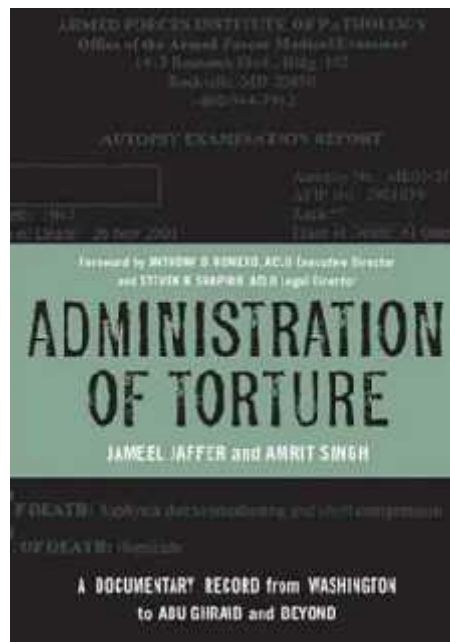


Dunlavey: Guantanamo Mission Came Straight From Bush, Rumsfeld

by Lisa Thompson via rialator - Erie Times News (Pennsylvania) *Saturday, Nov 3 2007, 10:31pm*
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When military investigators questioned Erie County Judge Michael E. Dunlavey about reported prisoner abuse during his tenure at the Guantanamo Bay camp for suspected terrorists, Dunlavey told them he got his “marching orders” from President Bush, according to a new book about U.S. policies regarding torture.



The book, “Administration of Torture: A Documentary Record from Washington to Abu Ghraib and Beyond,” relies on government documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act to trace the development of what the authors claim was prisoner abuse and torture that emerged in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The book uses Dunlavey’s words to place him, a retired two-star general in the U.S. Army Reserve, at the advent of the development of what have become disputed interrogation policies.

In a statement Dunlavey provided to a U.S. Air Force lieutenant general investigating FBI reports of detainee abuses at Guantanamo Bay, Dunlavey explains that as leader of interrogations at Guantanamo, he reported directly to President Bush and then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

He acknowledged the use of loud music and dogs and shackling prisoners in the fetal position during interrogations, but stressed repeatedly that the standard was to treat detainees humanely. The military investigation into the claims of abuse at Guantanamo Bay found no reason to reprimand Dunlavey.

In the statement to U.S. Air Force Lt. General Randall Schmidt, as summarized and sworn to by Schmidt, Dunlavey said:

* Rumsfeld summoned him to a meeting on Feb. 21 or 22, 2002, attended by Rumsfeld, then-Deputy

Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and others. The date was two weeks after Bush had issued a directive denying al-Qaida and Taliban prisoners protections under the Geneva Conventions.

* Dunlavey said at the meeting, Rumsfeld told him that the Department of Defense had “accumulated a number of bad guys.”

Rumsfeld wanted these prisoners interrogated to identify senior Taliban leaders and other operatives and obtain information about future plans, Dunlavey said.

“Our mission was to stop Americans from being killed,” Dunlavey said, according to the report.

* Dunlavey, an intelligence specialist, said he had interrogation experience dating back to the Vietnam War and had conducted more than 3,000 interrogations. Rumsfeld needed a “common sense way to do business,” Dunlavey said.

“The SECDEF (Secretary of Defense) said he wanted a product and he wanted intelligence now. He told me what he wanted; not how to do it.”

* Dunlavey said he was first directed to report to military officials, but then ordered to work more closely with President Bush. “The directions changed and I got my marching orders from the President of the United States,” Dunlavey said. “I was told by the SECDEF that he wanted me back in Washington, D.C., every week to brief him.”

The new book also includes the now well-known October 2002 memo in which Dunlavey asked for permission to use more-aggressive interrogation tactics at the camp, including the use of dogs and extreme cold.

ACLU’s role in book

Authors Jameel Jaffer and Amrit Singh, lawyers with the American Civil Liberties Union, seek to link official military and civilian policies to the emergence of alleged prisoner abuse, torture and death in places such as the Guantanamo Bay camp in Cuba, the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and elsewhere.

They base their argument on documents the ACLU obtained from the government through a Freedom of Information Act request.

“The Bush administration has professed a commitment to democracy and human rights and claimed solidarity with those who struggle against tyranny. But these documents show unambiguously that the administration has adopted some of the methods of the most tyrannical regimes,” the authors write.

The Erie Times-News currently has an appeal pending over the Department of Defense’s refusal to release to the newspaper documents relating to Dunlavey’s tenure at Guantanamo.

The summary of Dunlavey’s statement about practices at Guantanamo in the new book provides the first detailed account from Dunlavey, who has repeatedly said policy prevented him from commenting.

Dunlavey, an Erie County Court judge, agreed Thursday through a spokesperson in his chambers to review questions about the book from the Erie Times-News and answer them if he felt they were “appropriate.”

He had not yet responded Thursday night.

He previously told the Erie Times-News that detainees at Guantanamo were “not prisoners of war the way we were trained for, or the (kind the) Geneva Conventions envisions.” However, he has said he believes the tactics developed for their interrogations were “consistent with the Geneva Conventions.”

‘I treated them as human beings’

Rumsfeld called Dunlavey from his seat on the Erie County Family Court bench in February 2002 and placed him in charge of interrogations at Guantanamo in March 2002. Dunlavey, 61, was elected judge in November 1999.

Portions of Dunlavey’s role in the development of interrogation practices after 9/11 have been well-publicized.

After the images of abuse and torture of prisoners emerged from the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, the government released a series of documents to explain the development of interrogation policy in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The government maintained, and many refuted, that what happened at Abu Ghraib was not the result of government policy.

The Department of Defense released documents in June 2004 showing that while Dunlavey was commander at Guantanamo, he sought permission from Southern Command to use more extreme interrogation tactics, including convincing detainees that they and/or their families faced imminent death, scaring them with dogs, and exposing them to cold temperatures or water.

Most of Dunlavey’s proposed methods, excluding the most severe, were approved by Rumsfeld in late 2002, but then retracted in early 2003. Dunlavey stepped down from his post at Guantanamo in early November 2002.

For the first time in the new book, “Administration of Torture,” military documents that purport to show Dunlavey’s view of the mission at Guantanamo have been released.

In the statement, as summarized by Schmidt, Dunlavey said the camp was in disarray when he arrived.

“The facility consisted of literally a dangling fence,” he said.

The detainees were not in control, he said.

“They were shaking out their blankets and throwing food,” he said.

Some threw feces on guards, fashioned weapons, even urinated on female interrogators, he said.

The guards, he said, were living no better than the detainees were.

Dunlavey also said most of the interrogators had little experience.

“The linguists were worthless. They came out of school and could order coffee, but they were getting

smoked by the detainees," he said.

Dunlavey acknowledged loud music, shouting, dogs, and shackling were used to intimidate or control detainees. But he denied they denied the prisoners food or water or allowed female interrogators to taunt the detainees with their bodies.

He said he clearly communicated his task force rules.

"The Geneva Conventions applied. I treated them as human beings, but not like soldiers. They had significant culture. The rugs and beads were significant to me. I let them practice religion," he said.
The Book

"Administration of Torture" (2007, Columbia University Press), is not available in local bookstores.

What Dunlavey said

Excerpts from a summarized witness statement Erie County Judge Michael E. Dunlavey provided on March 17, 2005, to U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Randall Schmidt, who was investigating FBI complaints about abuse at Guantanamo.

The document is published in the new book "Administration of Torture: A Documentary Record from Washington to Abu Ghraib and Beyond," by Jameel Jaffer and Amrit Singh.

"The SECDEF said he wanted a product and he wanted intelligence now. He told me what he wanted; not how to do it."

"Initially, I was told that I would answer to the SECDEF and USSOUTHCOM ... The directions changed and I got my marching orders from the President of the United States."

"The mission was to get intelligence to prevent another 9/11."

"Virtually no one had a degree of expertise to deal with these people. They do not subscribe to our values legally and morally."

"The detainees were treated humanely. They had a high status of care. ... Humane is who we are as the American military."

"My first lesson was in Vietnam. I went out in the field and the South Vietnamese had two POWs. They got screamed at and kicked around. I watched what was going on. ... There was a big plate of boiled rice with flies on it. I asked one of the POWs when he had last eaten. He said, 'Four days ago and water two days ago.' ... I had a canteen. I drank and gave him a drink. It worked. I got his name."

"Keep in mind, they don't like dogs. Unless dogs are on patrol, they would be in an interrogation room. Using dogs is equal to the Fear Up technique. It breaks their concentration in their response to the interrogation techniques. They would be thinking about that dog. Is that dog a real threat? Absolutely not."

"We physically removed an FBI agent when he went across the desk at a detainee."

<http://www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071102/NEWS02/711020374/-1/NEWS>

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-767.html>