

# Torture Does Work ..... For Some

by Doug Bennett

While there is rightly an outcry to stop torture which debases everyone and casts doubt on the American character, many may not have considered how the obvious byproducts of illegal detention and torture might be serving our current government. Most intelligence and law enforcement agencies have known for years that you can't get good intelligence or reliable evidence from people using torture. Even the Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency noted for its effectiveness, has policies against it. Yet the Bush administration has officials that not only endorse torture, but claim publicly that it works. Starting early in the "War on Terror", in January 2002, then White House Counsel, Alberto Gonzales, wrote a memo at the request of George Bush to brush aside several hundred years of civility and law by pretending the Geneva Conventions didn't apply to "their" war. That didn't make good sense to me at the time.

Then I thought, "Good sense to whom?" Let's assume for a moment that the people pub-

licly endorsing torture, prominent among them, Dick Cheney, are fairly intelligent beings and not engaging in torture for the sheer sadistic pleasure of it. How would locking away thousands of people in prisons around the world with no legal redress and contact with the outside world, and torturing them to death or to supply "bad" intelligence serve the United States in the "War on Terror"?

The answer is that it doesn't. In an attempt to understand what it does do, let's look at what has been "accomplished" since the adoption of illegal detention and "torture permissive" policies:

1. Thousands of Muslims and others have been detained as political prisoners and terrorized in police, CIA and military raids both in the U.S. and around the world (in more countries than we will admit).

2. Very few have been brought to "justice" or charged with terrorist acts. By reliable accounts approximately 80% are innocent.

3. Reams of bad intelligence have been "produced" to appease interrogators.

4. According to British intelligence and other official reports the number of terrorists and terrorist acts has nearly tripled.

The first two of these "accomplishments" serve very well if your goal is to terrorize the Muslim people of the world and to control information from those sources. The third allows "intelligence to be fixed around the policy" or

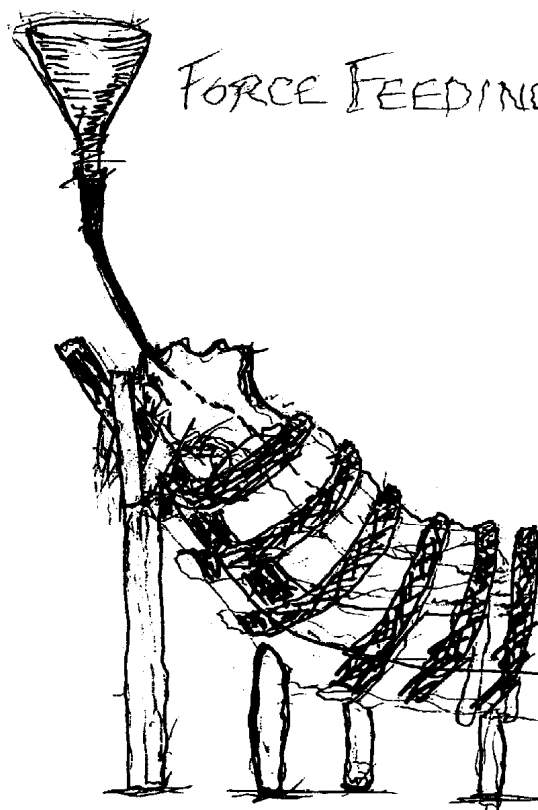
control of the flow of information or misinformation about terrorism. This is very handy if you want to, let's say, invade a country without a legally justifiable cause, or distort the truth about an illegal occupation and resultant resistance. Another "good" use of "bad" intelligence would be to foment a civil war in another country. The fourth "accomplishment", increased terrorism, falls into the category of self-fulfilling prophecy. Bush, Cheney, Condi, Rumsfeld and others in the Bush administration have said time and again that the "war on terror" will be a long difficult "war". By illegally invading Iraq, continuing the occupation of that country, and adopting torture and illegal detention as standard policy; they have virtually assured more terrorism and escalation of resistance by Muslim countries. Increased terrorism or the appearance of it, fear mongering, allows the continued usurpation of our "inalienable" rights at home and justification for the revocation of human rights around the world. So, you see torture does work, for some; a select few in the Bush administration. How long will we continue to empower them? How much more damage will we let them do to the world and our country? The answers to these questions remain in the hands of the American people.

## GUANTANAMO BAY

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