

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson (Secretary of State Colin Powell's former chief of staff)

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A: I was just in Germany doing one for...there is a group of Germans who are...well their superficial effort anyways is a documentary on the same issue, intelligence failure, looking particularly hard at their own intelligence efforts and I think there is an underlying theme there that's very political. I sensed that it had a political dimension to it that they were trying to hide from me, I am not that up on German politics right now to understand exactly what they were doing but I kind of backed away from it a little bit, I tried doing that.

Q: Yeah well we're probably going to stick with domestic issued except to the extent that they have implications for foreign policy. Some little bit of biographical information, can you tell me about your career in the military before you served the state.

A: Well I was 31 years in the army from enlisted man all the way up to Colonel O6 and my, the unique aspect of my career, if you will, is that in the last twelve or so years before it became fashionable I was what we call Joint, which meant I served with all the services either in a combatant command overseas or in the Pentagon here in Washington. The ultimate of that was of course the four years with Colin Powell when he was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And about six months with him before that after he left the Reagan white house, gotten his four star and was Commander of all US army forces inside the United States. And then as director, the only one I know of, Commandant used to ask me 'why do I have a soldier in charge of my war college', of the Marine Corp War College. Happened because my boss, a Marine, died at the moment I reported, of a very virulent form of cancer, so I was made the acting director and stayed the director for some time till they found a Marine. So, if there is a unique aspect to my career it is that I've spent twelve years in what the 1947 National Security Act was trying to achieve and didn't until the order Nicholson gave in 1985 forced it, the joint communion of all the different services. And then I was a private consultant to Powell, working for him from after I left the war college for couple of years until December 2000 and then he asked me to join the transition team at state. I first went to work for Richard Haass on the policy planning staff and then Powell, in August of 2002, asked me to be his Chief of Staff. That's how I finished in January of 2005.

Q: A couple of questions about the War College, did you teach any subject at the college related to the treatment of detainees?

A: In the sense that we fashioned our curriculum around simulations and exercises and did those simulations and exercises in places like Cristina, Sarajevo, Israel, in the West Bank , other places where we postulated U.S. forces may in the future be deployed some presciently, some not. In the course of those operations yes, we dealt with the Geneva Conventions, the ICAP , what we called the Law of Land Warfare, the treatment of prisoners of war, and other detainees and so forth. Not as a major focus, but it was a part of what we were doing because it is always a part of military operations.

Q: Did you have any experience in your military career with SERE? Counter-resistance training?

A: Yes, went through it several times myself.

Q: I suspected from the biography you might have. Obviously its linked up to what eventually took place in the administration but I want to ask you about the SERE training you went through, just describe it.

A: Well the first couple or so sessions I had with it were just routine within the Army, that is to say Survival Evasion Resistance Escape training comes to everyone at one time or another. The most vigorous and rigorous session I had with it was Ranger school. Army Ranger school. I parachuted into the Florida area of operations , at night, and was captured and spent, god, it seemed like three days and three nights, I think it was only two days and two nights, in a Prisoner of War camp being treated as abusively as American's could treat other American's and get away with it. So that was my most rigorous experience with it as a 32 year old captain at the time.

Q: Okay. You're uniquely positioned because you've been involved in teaching law of detention and experiencing SERE, do you believe that the techniques used during SERE training you experienced would be torture or cruel and inhuman treatment?

A: Wow. I'd have to say if taken to the length where their trying to frighten you, you were taken to, probably yes at least the former if not the latter. At least cruel and unusual if not torture. Most of the time they stopped just at the point where you would be taken to that environment and made a teaching point with you in some way or another.

Q: so they took you out of the exercise...

A: Well they didn't take you out of the exercise; they just sort of smiled and said you get the point, or something similar. And then the next person came into the room. You got to go out for a while. The worst thing that happened to me was E-7 slapped me across the face and broke a tooth. Actually, cut the tooth diagonal. And I don't think he meant to hit me quite as hard as he hit me. But, you know, that's cruel and unusual punishment in my view, slapping somebody across the face hard enough to break a tooth. But as I said I don't think he was, I think he was...I suspect he was counseled after that, because I was bleeding and I was his senior officer, even though there is no rank in ranger school, I was the senior hand in the room.

Q: Was there any explanation given to you before or after the SERE training as to what its purpose was?

A: Only in the opening of Ranger school. And to a certain extent the closing. There was nothing that attaches itself to it at the time because they want you to be in shock. They want you to roll your parachute up and suddenly be captured in the middle of the night and we thrown on the back of a truck, hauled into the depth of the jungle and not know where the hell you're going or who's got you or what else. So that's part of the scenario.

Q: What did they tell you, mentioned, at the beginning?

A: That you would go through some experiences that most of us probably, which was the case with us, ninety percent of it, been through before involved with teaching us principles about how to survive prisoner of war environment and that it would not be to the extent that...were we would actually suffer physical damage but it would be as much as possible that could be done to American's by American's to simulate an environment where we might someday be in. And they also, this is an important point, or it was for me anyway, they made a point of emphasizing the fact that there are rules for us when we're captured. For example, as a senior guy I was supposed to be trying to ferment unrest or find a way to escape or dig tunnels or communicate with the other people, you know, keep the morale up and all that sort of thing. So the other officers, I'm sure, were told the same things. So that was part of it too, just so you the short time you were there you tried to do some of those things.

Q: Okay. Were you told anything along the lines of some of the techniques of the SERE training or SERE experience would simulate the violations of the Geneva Conventions, law of war?

A: No, not in those terms. No we were told that they would simulate conditions that we might confront in the future, but not in those terms.

Q: Were you ever interrogated as part of SERE training?

A: Yes. And that was Manchurian Candidate type stuff. There's actually no bodily contact during that part, it was just light on light off, you're in the dark the interrogators in the light, you're in the light the interrogators in the dark, Mutt and Jeff, hard guy easy guy, 'you wanna cigarette', 'no I don't smoke'. [laughs] That sort of thing.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't remember being touched during any of that.

Q: But outside of the interrogations?

A: Yeah, what I...where he hit me was when I was dragging my feet to talk to another Ranger candidate and he, 'no talking', and reached out and probably I was moving in a way that he didn't think I was moving and he hit me pretty hard.

Q: Do you have any suggestions as to other people we may want to talk to about the SERE experience because obviously it has a relationship to some of the techniques that were used during the Bush administration.

A: Well I'm sure you can talk to the people at Bragg who do it for various groups and who actually develop the curriculum. Or as I understand it, that was the way it was when I was there. My understanding...my son is in the Air Force, and my son has told me, and I went through one Air Force, I can't remember exactly where I did this, I think it was in Washington state, and it was as a result of my wanting to see something that the Air Force was doing when I was assigned in a different position, but I noted for the few hours I was exposed to the Air Force, and I was just a visitor, that it seemed a little

rugged, and my son has told me that Air Force SERE training is extremely rugged. My son's not the kind of person to say that if it isn't, so I ...I just offer that, maybe the air force has got and even... that's kind of counter intuitive but [laughs]. My son calls the Air Force the alternative to military service. [laughs] But they do have a real problem, the servicemen face all the time, pilots going down.

Q: Moving to your work at state, our focus is on detainee treatment policies during the Bush administration and reading through some of what's been written and your interviews about it the first thing that I saw chronologically, and maybe you could fix me if I got this wrong is you mentioned a situation where Secretary Powell came into your office and asked you to get paperwork together, to get the ICRC reports together, this is going to be a real mess, I don't know if that rings a bell.

A: Yeah. Hard to forget that.

Q: Well what I wanted to do maybe is take you back and just have you chronologically walk through how you found out about detention practices that you thought were questionable and what you did and basically what the background was on all that.

A: Well by the time I became Chief of Staff in August of 2002, and began to sit in on all the meetings that the Secretary had, particularly the ones with, some 55 or so, undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, office directors, every morning at eight. I immediately began to detect problems. This was before 2004, when the occasion you were referring to, Abu Ghraib, broke. Those problems ranged the gamut, everything from our Ambassador at large for war crimes, never being able to tell the Secretary why Jack Straw, for example, couldn't have his people back from GTMO, why the British citizens there couldn't be repatriated. It grew to the point where, and you didn't see the Secretary do this very often and I'd been with him for some time I knew he didn't do this, it was out of character, he grew very angry. And he grew angry with Pierre, who was the messenger more or less. And he knew that was not the way to do it but it was so frustrating for him that Pierre kept saying 'well Rumsfeld, well Rumsfeld, well Rumsfeld', there isn't a problem with repatriation in and of itself, it's not a problem with these people, there's not a problem with GTMO, there is a problem with the Secretary of Defense, he will not let us do anything. And that became a very frustrating regurgitation each morning when it got around to Pierre's turn, Pierre would, you know after a week or two, started hiding, he didn't want to the Secretary to see he was there, because he knew that the Secretary would say next. Same thing with Uighurs, same thing with 12 year olds, 14 year olds, maybe a 16 year, a 97 or a 98 year old, and so forth, Powell could not understand how we could have these people, especially given the images we were seeing on the television of orange jump suits and shackles and all this sort of thing. And not be able to decide, rather quickly, whether or not they should be released repatriated or whatever the case might be. So that was my first inclination that we were not necessarily doing things according to law, the way that for example I as a soldier, he as a soldier, or citizens, things should be probably coming down. It was particularly frustrating I think to both of us too that we were getting nothing out of the Pentagon. We could not find out any details about some of the people we were being asked by foreigners or others to repatriate or look at more closely or...one country for example said 'why the hell can't you trust us to do what we would do with these people if you gave them back to us because we have more experience with

terrorism than you do, how come you can't give him back to us, we assure you that they will get justice, they will walk if they're not guilty of anything but they're going to get what they ought to get if they are guilty of something'. And these arguments or this discussion would take place every morning, so I reiterate that only to show that I had some concerns even as we built up, even though this wasn't my portfolio, I'm not looking at this.

Q: Did this come up only in reference to Guantanamo or also in reference to people held in other countries?

A: Well, it came up in other contexts too. For example, one morning we did this little dance around Dostum, General Dostum and his having air raided some conex's with people in them, in Afghanistan and did Pierre know anything about that. A cable had come in as I recall that reported there might have been some problems with this sort of thing and worse there may have been some U.S. Special Forces, at a minimum, maybe even some others present while this went on. And Pierre was never able to get, I think Pierre actually, if I remember right and I have to go back and check my notes, but I think Pierre was actually dispatched to Kabul to investigate. And went and came back and in essence could not find enough people to talk to or anyone who could confirm that anything egregious had happened and so it kind of dropped, but it would raise its head from time to time as reporters came in and asked questions about it or reported rumors and what, not just about Dostum but other Northern Alliance or Northern Alliance affiliated forces had done when we had very few people on the ground in Afghanistan and they were essentially doing what they normally did, you know shooting their prisoners or whatever, selling them, whatever they were accustomed to doing. That sort of thing happened, other things would happen like we'd hear about and individual that some foreign minister or the countries leader had brought up in a discussion with the President, that he had brought up with the Secretary, they wanted to know again why this person was being held, was there a case against this person, if there was a case against this person could they share it, did we see what the case was, there was some disbelief from some governments I recall Australia in one case having disbelief about a particular individual, we wouldn't share anything, could we...very frustrating for the Secretary because this was injuring our relations with these countries. So that sort of thing, yea.

Q: So just to clarify, you didn't have any way of getting information about these individuals?

A: Apparently from what Pierre was telling the Secretary and others too as it would come up in Secretary for Europe and Asian Affairs, it'd come up in their daily wik maybe, it would come up in Latin Americas daily wik. It would come up with all the Assistant Secretaries at one time or another because someone was complaining to them as well having found Pierre not a very good person to complain to in terms of effectiveness. And so you get all these questions around the table at various times and the answer from Pierre was that the Defense Department was not forthcoming. Couldn't answer their questions with anything other than 'no' because there was no data coming out of the Defense Department. You got the very distinct impression too that there was no desire from the Defense Department to share information even if they had it.

Q: So, it sounds like...

A: Let me say one other thing. Powell has said to me in a number of occasions when I have surfaced specific details with him that he has talked to Pierre and refreshed his memory and Pierre says either that didn't happen the way I thought it happened or they resolved that. And in each case I have sort of set in front of my computer reading his email and said to myself 'mm, okay, we killed that one'. So you know, there's not a lot of memory of these things because people don't want to remember.

Q: Is your perception then that the issue really was solely at the Department of Defense?

A: That was my perception but remember I'm just sitting there, Chief of Staff, listening to this conversation every morning and I didn't really start probing into it until the event you cited there, until he walked through my door and gave me an informal order to do so, we had adjoining offices and he walked in there and he said 'we are going to have some really bad photographs from a place called Abu Ghraib, and its going to be really damaging, and I want to know how we got here. I've got Will Taft' Will Taft was his legal advisor, 'I've got Will Taft working on the legal aspects of it so don't worry about that, I want you to work on chronology, I want you to work on the political aspects, I want to know how we got here, and I want you and will to work together. And Don is appointing an Admiral, I think his name is Church, to be his man doing the same thing', Powell was still acting at this point, and he and I have had some discussion about this, as if we were in a normal government. As if the Secretary of Defense was going to cooperate and was going to look into this just as hard as he was going to, and by that time I damn well knew that wasn't the case. And I can give you chapter and verse on why I knew that. And I'd been telling him that too, but it wasn't penetrating. So Will and I, as I recall, immediately made sure to assemble everything we had in the way of messages, cables, whatever and gave it to Church. We made an initial contact with the Pentagon with regard to their committee, their group, headed by this Admiral, Vice Admiral as I recall, and we never heard from them again. We offered them full cooperation; we gave them a trench, our initial trench. We never heard from them again, I don't know if Will did, Will and I have discussed this once or twice and Will didn't want to talk about it much either so I didn't press him. But I never heard from them, I never got a telephone call, a piece of data or information shared with me. And see I already knew, from my experience in policy planning, what this was going to turn out to be with defense so, hell I spent thirty one years with defense, so I went and did my own thing. I couldn't get anything out of defense so I went and got it myself. I had contacts at the Defense Department and I wanted something and I got it. I didn't go through Rumsfeld, didn't go through Wolfowitz, didn't go through Fife, didn't go through any of those people, I went through my own contacts and I thought by the time a month had gone by I'd built a pretty good case for what I thought was happening. And interestingly, my case was most substantially built on open sources, New York Times, several reporters at the New York Times were very cooperative with me and gave me documents I couldn't even get from the system. In one case a classified document which I just said 'mm, please.' [laughs] He gave me a good summary of it though. Newyorker. Other people were very willing to share with me what they had discovered both on the scene in Afghanistan and Iraq and back here doing their own research and so forth. I told Powell, probably 90% of the stack I have in my corner which went to the ceiling of documents, was not in my safe because it was not classified, it's all open source stuff.

That's 90% of what I built my case on was open source stuff. The stuff in the safe is classified, but you know it doesn't add a whole hell of a lot to what's here, the story's right here. And at that point of course, the election had occurred, or the election was imminent as I recall, the last time I told him where I was, and things sort of, political things sort of took over and he never asked me, he never asked me for the final results.

Q: Did you do a report?

A: I did a sort of one, which is as far as I know, shredded and gone. Unless it's in the archives somewhere at State because I classified it.

Q: Okay, so it's a classified, or at the time it was classified.

A: Yeah.

Q: If we wanted to ask for that document with some specificity, what would we ask for? Obviously you'd be the author right?

A: Yup.

Q: And it would be in 2004 sometime.

A: Yeah it would probably be about August of 2004.

Q: I mean, was it all about Abu Ghraib or...?

A: It was a little more expansive than that, yeah.

Q: Iraq generally?

A: Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo. And you know, it never got beyond being a draft working paper. So I just don't...My memory is, I had the Chief Administrative Officer come in because I had a question about emails, you won't believe this but Powell and I communicated about 85% of the time with emails on his aol account. Back and forth. I mean he's there, I'm here, we are eight feet apart but we are sending each other emails all the time. [laughs]

Q: We do that too.

A: So anyway I had this question of the administrator and she blew me away with her response. I have about 16,000 emails, they're not classified, they're not sensitive, they're not SVU, at the time we were calling it SVU, their not on ---the secret system their unclassified but their very important to me when I write my book and they may be important to Powell if he writes one, so I would like to take them with me and she said 'well, if you'll pay for the copying costs, paper and copying costs, you can take them with you'. We don't really have a protocol for that and so I did. I'm still going through them for my work. The rest of what I had in my safe at that time, which included this working paper, as far as I know was destroyed.

Q: Why do you think that?

A: Because my instructions were, to them, that there was nothing in there worth archiving. That it was all duplicate, or duplicative of CIA documents or INR documents or whatever.

Q: So you covered the CIA in your analysis?

A: There were some things in there, not much.

Q: How long was it, if you remember, just an estimate.

A: Well, the summary sheet was about a page. The text of was about twenty, twenty-two pages. There were lots of attachments.

Q: Who told you that it had been destroyed?

A: No one did, it was just my instruction. My instruction was haphazard and I probably shouldn't have done it but you know they asked me 'is there anything in your safe that needs archiving?' and I said 'no, it's all duplicative, you know, you can do whatever you do with that'. I just assumed that what they did with that was shred it. I don't know that that's the case. They might have archived it. Knowing them, they probably did. [laughs] I shouldn't say that, they shredded things too.

Q: Question for you going back, when you began to discuss this process where the Church investigation was going on and state investigation was going on, you said something along the lines of, you pretty much knew that the Department of Defense ...

A: Here's what had happened early on. Since I was the only one on the policy planning staff of about thirty-five or so who had military experience, Richard called me in early, late February 2001, and he said 'I want to do what George Marshall did and George Cannon did, I want to have joint staff policy planning talks.' And I said 'wow, that's a good idea'.

Q: Richard?

Q: Haass, Ambassador Richard Haass, director of policy planning. I said 'that's a great idea, let me get on it'. So I went over to the Pentagon, and General Casey was a J5 at the time and later in Iraq and Chief of Staff in the Army, and I met with General Casey's exec as I recall, who was a Army Colonel, and I said 'we'd like to do this' and he said 'great idea, great idea' and so, long story short, we started it. We had the first meeting, as I recall, at Foggy Bottom, at the State Department and we had an agenda that you could probably detail yourself. It was China, Japan so forth, we wanted to talk about these things from a military, political-military perspective, and we had a great meeting, lasted about an hour. He brought his experts over, we brought our experts in. I said lasted about an hour, it lasted about three hours. And the Army Colonel who had been put in charge of it, mechanistically speaking, said 'hey, this is great, when are we going to do a second one?' And we did a second one over at the Pentagon. Then after the second one, here comes the bomb shell, Rumsfeld issues his directive to all outlying military inside the Beltway, in Congress, at State, you name it, wherever there were military working for someone other than the

Pentagon, come home. Everybody come home. And so, out of political military affairs for example, where we had military people who were essential to basing rights agreements and such, they all went home.

Q: When was this?

A: This was early summer, 2001. Now, Rumsfeld later said 'I did that because when I called them all in to see what I had out there, and then I was going to dispatch those back who were profitable to defense'. So he spent the guys back to Congress fairly soon. We had to fight to get our people back. But at the same time this Army Colonel calls me and says 'we can't meet anymore'. And I said 'what are you talking about'. And he said 'we can't meet anymore, Rumsfeld has forbidden ...forbade us to deal with you'. I said 'oh'. So this Army Colonel was a sharp dude. He calls me about two days later and he says 'let's meet in Crystal City, I'll take a chance'. I said 'I'm not taking any chance, I'm with you, let's meet in Crystal City'. So he said 'we've got a meeting with the grey beards', which is all the old retired admirals and generals and everything, 'to critique the national military strategy'. I said 'wow, you got...

Q: When was this?

A: This was probably July of 2001. I said 'that's interesting; you've got the national military strategy, we don't have the national security strategy yet, how you doing with that'. He said 'we're betting one will come, we're trying to get ahead of the power curve'. I said 'okay, I'll come'. So I brought my people whom I thought would be expert in critiquing the national military strategy to Crystal City and we sent down with Admiral Joe Prueher, Joe McCaffrey, Admiral Bill Crowe, and a host of other, older retired military guys who they were bringing in to critique their efforts. And we did that. That was going on for about four or five hours and the colonel had gotten a telephone call. And he called me out into the hallway and he said 'look, I've just been selected for Brigade command'. I said 'congratulations, that's great, wonderful'; He said 'you know what that means?' I said 'no, what? It's wonderful'; 'He says 'It means I can't keep taking this chance, so we got to stop'. So, although he and I both tried to do it once or twice later, he got cold feet. Of course I wasn't showing any courage, no one was preventing me from doing it, but I understood his position and we canceled those and we didn't do any joint staff talks, period. So that plus lots of other things. When I'd go over to the Pentagon for briefings for example, treated like dog shit, and I'm a retired soldier with 31 years in the Army and I wouldn't be allowed into briefings, when I did get into briefings when they found out where I was from things would shut down and the openness would cease. I did manage to slip into a couple of briefings where they didn't know who I was quickly enough to where I learned some things that helped my boss considerably, I think. It was just a nasty, nasty relationship.

Q: And this is before September 11th?

A: This was before 9/11. We had a pool at the State Department; the pool was who would be the first Cabinet officer to go. And we all, we all bet on Donald Rumsfeld. Because he had made such a mess, he pissed off the Congress. He made the uniformed military furious. He was firing them left and right. He had fired, or was getting ready to fire Thomas White, the Secretary of the Army. He would, it was later

of course, but was already treating Shinseki like dirt. Get rid of Shinseki, not get rid of him but tell him who his replacement was eighteen months in advance. So you know 'General sorry, you're out'. It was really a bad environment, so we thought he'll be the first cabinet officer to go because he doesn't know what the hell his doing, if he has been a Secretary of Defense before, he really is making a mess of things. And Paul didn't help him at all. I've known Paul for some time, Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense. Paul's a thinker, Paul's a conceptual guy and the Deputy Secretary of Defense is the guy who makes the trains run on time. He's the guy who makes the building work in the largest not for profit organization in the world. And he just couldn't do it. And so it was a mess. Paul used to call Rich, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, would call him to find out what was on the agenda for deputies meetings, cause his boss wouldn't tell him. Or nobody in the building would tell him. I mean it was just dysfunctional. And then 9/11 occurred and Rumsfeld became the sexist man in America.

Q: What do you think the reason, to go to a specific instance when the Department was shut out, and that's Abu Ghraib...[multiple people speaking] was there a case where the State Department said let's do this jointly and you were told 'no'?

A: It was, I think it was principally a fanatic drive for secrecy. And the conception, and I was guilty of this when I was in the Pentagon too, the two elements of the bureaucracy we hated with a passion: the CIA and the State Department. And it was easy for Rumsfeld and others, Cambone for example, to rub this prejudice in the Pentagon and shine it and burnish it and to get everybody on that same sheet of music. And I think that's, not to leave this point, I think that's one of the reasons why Rumsfeld and Cambone felt they needed an alternative system to the CIA because they didn't trust the CIA so they started their own operation underneath the same office of legal counsel rough legal guidance, to do things differently with regard to interrogation and such and so forth. Sometimes the CIA was involved, sometimes it wasn't. But there were, in my assessment that I did for Powell, there were two distinctly different operations. And I assessed one of them as having been, although I couldn't even get Powell to tell me this, I still don't know this, as having been sanctioned by Presidential finding. Or some document that the President, you know, actually created and signed, somebody had created for him and he had signed it, that authorized George Tenet on a very selective basis to do differently. Enhanced interrogation techniques whatever you want to call it, but to do differently.

Q: Under the CIA.

A: Yeah. And probably George had to come back on a case by case basis and rehearse this with the President or the Vice President to get additional permissions or whatever. That was my perception of one side of it. The other side of it, the Rumsfeld side of it was partly based on this, we don't trust the CIA, we need our own deal, we're fighting terrorists all across the globe, we're going to be in the Philippines, we're going to be in the Maghreb, we're going to be everywhere in the world and we need our own effort, and we need our own actionable intelligence, we need delta out there killing people or capturing people, and we need to interrogate these people. And we need to interrogate people so they can go out and capture more people and kill more people. And so you got this bifurcated effort, you got this CIA doing it and then you go Defense doing it. And of course the money line runs that way too,

Rumsfeld is sitting on 2/3 or ¾ of the intelligence budget and he got the DIA he got lots of assets in the services and elsewhere and the CIA is over here doing its thing, ostensibly for the President and everybody else who needs its information, so you've got these two programs going on at the same time under roughly the same kind of legal counting angels on a pin that John Yoo and Jay Bybee and others dreamed up and they're all just riding to the horses, I mean, that's what I thought I saw anyway was two distinct programs.

Q: And that's what you described in the memo?

A: Yeah and my question, for example, one of my questions was did the president sign a finding and another one of my questions was did it cover the _____, because this is Defense Department policy, they're doing these things.

Q: Now, in addition to your factual findings, this memo that you drafted proposed some questions to be asked?

A: Yes. Well actually, the questions I asked eyeball to eyeball.

Q: To whom?

A: Powell. And I still don't know, as I said, I still don't know if there is a finding. If the President actually signed a finding. Just like there is no national security decision document as far as I know saying the President decided to go to war in Iraq. These things just happened.

Q: What did you perceive the chain of command to be on the Pentagon side in so far as you were able to determine it?

A: Wow.

Q: Or just who besides Rumsfeld.

A: For some things, Rumsfeld or Feith, with Paul occasionally darting in and out of it.

Q: I mean on the detention side.

A: Oh the detention. I think there were two people who were at least from my analysis there were two people who were very integral to the operations. One was Cambone and one was Doug. And from a legal point of view, Bill Haynes. William J. Haynes who was the general counsel.

Q: Were you connected to any of them? Did you...

A: Well I was, through this analysis their names kept popping up everywhere and of course the ultimate name that popped up, that didn't surprise me at all because I'd known him when he was working for Cheney when Cheney was Sec Def and I was special assistant to Powell, is David Addington. And he was at the top, he was grey beard eminence, he was always correcting people in their legal opinion, in their legal views, in what they were doing on behalf of the vice-president. Although sometimes you'd get the

idea that David was doing it on behalf of David. When he was at the Pentagon, we called him Weird David. Strange guy. Very strange guy. But he was very very firmly attached to the Vice-President and therefore empowered in ways that one wouldn't have been otherwise.

Q: And is this part of what you discussed in the memo?

A: No, this was pretty much personal stuff. And I didn't want to, at that point, want to point fingers that I couldn't corroborate with some concrete evidence.

Q: I want to take you back, I want to continue with this but before we get too along go back to what you described in the beginning this whole repatriation process. It sounds like it came up earlier.

A: It probably came up right away. Remember I didn't become Chief of Staff until August 2002. And that's when I went into, as Chief of Staff I went into all the meetings. I don't recall encountering it in my position in policy and planning. But I can say that Richard was often, in our morning meetings in policy and planning, Richard was often apprised of things that I was surprised he was apprised of. Not so much because he talked the Secretary all the time, because he did, but because he talked to Condi all the time. I think he talked to Condi everyday if not multiple times. And so he'd be a person to talk to about that period, I would think, if he'd talk to you.

Q: Email him? Put in a plug for us?

A: Yeah, sure. But he is looking right now to be brought back in to somebody's administration, so.

Q: Did you, you now you mentioned Stephen Cambone and Doug Feith, did you know at the time or did you and the Secretary know in 2002-2003 what the discussions were down at GTMO about how to handle detainees and how to interrogate them?

A: I can't answer for the Secretary and I have to say that some of the investigation and investigators that have been working on this, like ABC's team in New York and others, who have just offered me stuff has led me to believe that the Secretary knew more about it than I thought he did. Even led me to believe, they have and have shown me a transcript that actually has Tenet, Condi, Powell, Rumsfeld, the President, talking about, I may be wrong about this but I think it was, Abu Zubaydah and they're actually talking about the things they are doing to him. Powell never shared any of that with me. I'm not sure he shared it with anybody at the State Department. That's one of the reasons I wanted to find out if there were a finding. Because if there were a finding, my experience with that in the past is that it's always done on a case by case basis. And the number of people who know about it are extremely limited and it's for a number of reasons: you don't want a leak and you don't want the President to be in a position if he chooses, to be able to deny it. So usually the only people who are going to know about that are persons executing it and to a certain level of detail, the person overseeing its execution of the person or persons who are actually overseeing it. So I would not even expect, well... let's put it this way, I wouldn't have been surprised if Powell had been left out and that the only people who were in it were Condi, maybe the Vice-President because he was so powerful, and the President and Tenet, and then beneath

them the people executing it. So that really shocked me when the ABC team showed me a transcript with Powell in the room. From two perspective, that one that I just described and the fact that he never said a word to me about it and I don't think he said anything to Rich, that'd be somebody to talk to and he would talk to you probably, Rich Armitage, about it either. Rich had real long tentacles out to John McLaughlin at the CIA. He went to basketball games at Georgetown with George Tenet, reveled under the basket together. They were very close and so Rich might have had his own way to knowing about these things, again, he may talk to you. I fully expect he will talk to you, whether he'll be forthcoming or not.

Q: I want to ask about this ABC transcript, do you know if that's been made public or were you shown that...

A: They called me to New York. Paid my way up there and wanted to show me this. They called themselves the ABC News investigative team. I went into their chambers in New York and sat down with them and they showed me this stuff, and I said 'wow, are you guys going to run with this story, this is big stuff'. I saw a couple of hits on it, maybe on with Blitzer on CNN and then it just died, went away, and they never said anything to me again. They imputed that they wanted me to do what I'm doing with you, and that they had other people doing the same thing and trying to build this story and to achieve some sort of, through the media at least, accountability for what had happened. But it just died. I did a four hour interview with Dan Rather. Four hours orchestrated by two of, what in my view, were the best producers in this area of American television. Totally went away. Dan Rather was offered a job H, this new HDTV thing and I was told Summer Redstone from VIACOM actually probably made a phone call and as far as I know that was destroyed. This was right after I left the State Department. I think it was probably destroyed. One of the producers called me and said 'well, we're not doing anything anymore, it's just gone.'

Q: I want to do a couple of follow ups on this repatriation just to get a sense of the numbers and people and places. If you had to estimate the number of detainees who were involved in these controversies about whether they should be repatriated, could you do that?

A: If I went back and looked at my notes. I can tell you there were about sixteen or seventeen Uighurs, that was a big issue. Of course that one was complicated by the fact that we thought if we gave them back to China they'd kill them. There were a handful of Brits. Australian.

Q: Just one Australian or two?

A: I don't remember exactly how many. If memory serves, various countries, including those, maybe 35. And if you threw in the youngsters and the old people and the deranged people, maybe 40 or something like that.

Q: Do you remember who any of the British?

A: No. And I am not even sure if I have names in my notes. I have numbers I think but I'm not sure I have names. Because this was all just, you know, I'm scribbling down what Pierre and Powell and Feith, and the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs is saying 'can you believe this'.

Q: There was talk about military commissions early on as well, did that ever come up in the course of these kinds of discussions?

A: I do remember on one occasion or two, Pierre bringing up that that was a possibility that he was looking into and we were, we were, somewhere in the State Department, maybe it was Richard in policy planning was looking at what we had done post WWII, and what we had done in other time/place that might be applicable. But they were particularly focused on WWII because they knew what MacArthur had done in the Pacific, they knew about Nuremberg and other things like that, so they were trying, we hadn't done this in a long long time, and so they were trying to get some kind of precedent that they could look at and you know how do we critique this or how do we talk about this. Is this something we should be doing? Is it something we are going to have a hard time explaining to our allies and friends? That sort of thing.

Q: While you were there, were there any...was this every discussed with the allies? This option, military commissions?

A: I'm sure it was but I wasn't privy to it. Generally speaking, when Powell met Straw, met with Yasser Fisher from Germany or even the Chinese foreign minister. And if these kinds of issues came up, it was very limited to the room. It was in the Secretary's office.

Q: It sounds like these repatriation problems were creating some friction with international relations.

A: Yes. Yes. Even with our friends.

Q: Could you explain that?

A: Well, I remember vividly because he was the person who Powell talked to all the time, almost every day, was Jack Straw, Tony Blair's foreign minister. And it was extremely frustrating to have Jack constantly calling and saying 'what's the status' and Powell couldn't report anything except, and I doubt he ever said this, hey 'our Secretary of Defense is an obstreperous ____ I can't get him out, I can't get him out for you'.

Q: Kind of a related question, I was looking at the affidavit in the Hamad case that you gave and you talked about repatriation issues and I wanted to hit a few things and ask you some follow up questions on that and one of the things you mentioned is that many of the prisoners detained at Guantanamo were taken into custody without any regard as to whether they were enemy combatants or enemies at all. And I wanted to ask what the basis was for that conclusion.

A: The massive amount of information that was coming into us as to the incompetence of battlefield vetting in Afghanistan, as to the mal administration of Guantanamo Bay in general, as to the Defense

Departments inability to do Prisoner of War or detainee operations in a reasonably efficient and effective way was awesome. But it was all rumor, but it was the kind of stuff that when you hear it you know there is a grain of truth if not a lot of truth in it. When I started listening to the Secretary's querying of Pierre and others, like Beth Jones in Europe and others, I began to understand that not only were we dealing with an obstreperous Secretary of Defense with regard to giving information or allowing some of these people to be repatriated, we were also probably dealing with quite a few people who were swept up on the battlefield, not properly vetted, there were no Combat Status Review Tribunals that were set up in order to determine under Geneva who these people were and so forth and what should be their disposition, and it didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that this had produced a real mess at Guantanamo especially when I had people at the Pentagon tell me is had made a real mess at Guantanamo. At the same time, I gotta say cause I did my own research for my book over the last four or five years, I stumbled on what I'd call flaming proof of all this, I stumbled on people who would sit across the room from me and tell me that not only was I not speaking enough...that it really was terrible. That one of the reasons, for example one person recently told me, that President Obama couldn't move out fast on his promise to close Guantanamo because you can't do anything with people you don't have any evidence on. Or if the evidence you have is utterly contaminated and wouldn't stand up even in a Kangaroo court, certainly not in a military court. I mean I have a lot of respect for the UCMJ. I would personally rather be tried in a military court than a civilian court, most civilian courts anyway, by twelve members of my...[laughs] I'd rather be tried in the military court. So anyway, by my own research, and I'll probably have two maybe three chapters of my book on this, my own research of talking to people in the FBI, the CIA, the DIA, people who were just guards at Guantanamo and so forth has corroborated everything that I was suspecting and hearing at the time. I don't know how you take, when I was looking at it last it was 172 or something like that, I don't know how you take those people and you say 'okay I'm going to process you', if you have absolutely no way to process them. I mean you gotta hold them forever. My memory of the summary of conclusions of an NSC meeting, I think I've got this somewhere, but my memory is it went like this, Will Taft said 'what is the final disposition?' and Rumsfeld said 'we'll cross that bridge when we finally get t it'. Well, President Obama got to that bridge, George W. Bush had gotten to that bridge too, and the question was a legitimate question from Will. What's the plant with these people? You plan to keep these people...parenthesis, you plan to keep these people in jail for the rest of their natural life? Close parenthesis. If so, where? Under what regime?

Q: Just out of curiosity, what would your, what is your reaction, I don't know if you encountered these people, to people who are in a position to know who say that who maintain that a large percentage of the individuals we have held, they would go so far as to say most of the individuals we held, at Guantanamo were in fact terrorists.

A: Well, the first answer I would give them is 'how do you know?' Because you've got to show me the evidence. There's no evidence. The second thing I would ask them is, or the second statement I would make is 'you're full of it, you're doing the same thing Dick Cheney did of believing the people beneath you'. I don't fault Dick Cheney for believing that intelligence produced through enhanced interrogation techniques thwarted thousands of terrorist attacks or ten or fifteen or whatever, that's what the CIA

was telling him, that's what the people who were doing this were telling him. I mean the Vice-President didn't go down to Guantanamo and watch an interrogation, he didn't go down to Guantanamo to see if evidence was actually extracted which led to some al-Qaeda operative being stopped in the middle of an act, he believed what the CIA was telling him, he believed what DoD was telling him. Rumsfeld, to a certain extent, the same way. They believed what their third and fourth and fifth and even tenth and eleventh level executors were telling them. So I mean you know, you say they were awfully gullible, they were awfully credible, they were...you know they believed this stuff.

Q: I'm thinking of a really great panel to put together of people we've talked to, people I would love to see talk about precisely this question.

Q: You mentioned in the Affidavit Foreign Service officers, military officers, from whom you got information such as...

A: Would any of them talk to you?

Q: Well I wanted to see if you 'd tell us who any of them where and if any of them would talk to us.

A: Well, I don't know. Those who are still serving, I can't imagine that they would.

Q: I'll put that in the think about it category. If you think there are any people who would be interested in knowing who our panel is and what our purpose is, we'd obviously be delighted to talk to them.

A: One of the most interesting people I have met of late, I don't know if you've got him on your list, is Glen Carl. You have him on your list?

Q: We've talked to him. But we need to talk to him again.

A: Okay. Glen sent me his sort of galley proofs of the Interrogator some of it was...I gleaned that some of it was before some of the later redactions were done. And then he sent me the later version and of course I got the book. But that...when I read these things, you know like Ali Soufan's book which I'm reading right now, when I read these things it's like 'Jesus, I knew that!' [laughs]

Q: Do you know, this is probably an area of State, do you know who at State would have been responsible for obtaining or evaluating diplomatic assurances on ...

A: Diplomatic?

Q: Diplomatic assurances on, after prison of transfer.

A: I would have though ultimately it would have been Pierre and Will. I mean Will from the perspective of international law and any implications thereof and Will, or Pierre from the perspective of his job.

Q: Where is Pierre now?

A: Somewhere out in Texas I think. With aspirations to join Romney I think. At least someone told me that. [laughs] And when those aspirations occur people dry out.

Q: He'd be on our list too as somebody we'd be glad to talk to.

A: Pierre had a very selective memory. I asked him, essentially I asked him, 'Jesus, don't you remember how you used to be harangued?' ;'What? I don't have any memory of that, I was never harangued'; 'wow, that's what it looked like to me and also the guys sitting beside me'.

Q: You mentioned a couple of times that as to these Guantanamo detainees the problem was that there just wasn't any evidence about them. How did you find that out?

A: I had a number of occasions to look at a particular case and to ask people who should have known and who really didn't have a political dog in the fight, they were technicians if you will, and the answers that I got back were answers that told me either 1. Whatever evidentiary trail there was was entirely corrupt, it was not just hearsay, it was third, fourth, fifth say, I mean it was just...never stand up 'some Pakistani said that a friend of his said that this guy was a member of this group which has had some affiliations with this group which has some affiliations with al-Qaeda.' Or the direct statement was made that there's no evidence, this guy was simply swept up on the battlefield.

Q: So you looked at the case files and there was either an admission that there was no evidence or when you ...

A: Found the individual to talk to who knew the most about that particular case, whether it was 'I tagged him in Afghanistan, put a tag on him that said blah blah blah, date and time and so forth and so on'. The other thing I found that I thought was astonishing, and I don't know how I'm going to corroborate this because I can't get any figures that I really trust, I was told that there was, in the initial group, and then I found out there were more than one initial group, I don't know how there can be more than one initial group, there was not a single detainee detained by an American. They were all detained either by the Pakistani's, many of them under the bounty program, or they were detained by the Northern Alliance or its allies and turned over to US forces. And US forces whisked them out as fast they could. I assumed in my little assessment for Powell that the reason there was no vetting at that point was because we didn't have anybody there. A couple of green berets on the ground, that was about it.

Q: How many case files did you look at?

A: Oh jeez, I don't remember.

Q: Ballpark?

A: I don't even remember if we called them case files as much as you would just call them pieces of case files that were purloined or in some way gotten out for our perusal for a moment or two. Maybe thirty.

Q: What was your knowledge of the bounty program at the time?

A: Just that it was wide spread, it was widely publicized, to the extent that helicopters went over and dropped leaflets and so forth, and that at one point it was as high as \$5000 US for an al-Qaeda or and al-Qaeda like you know whatever however it was expressed most of the things I saw, most of the things I'd accumulated were in Pashtun, Arabic, or I saw some in Farsi, I saw some in Hindi, Hindu. I think that's about it.

Q: Was there ever a discussion about the effectiveness of the bounty program?

A: Well there was amongst us who had been on the battlefield and said 'oh, I'd turn in my best friend too for five thousand dollars'. I mean it was that kind of talk, this doesn't sound like its very well incentivized program. Especially those whom you would talk to who are experts in the region they would say 'they don't understand Afghanistan, they don't understand the tribal affiliations, I'm going to get rid of my enemy, I'm going to get rid of my enemy y claiming his al-Qaeda and they're going to give me \$5000 for doing it'. So those, I&R for example were probably the best expertise in the US intelligence community, I&R at State. They'd talk about these sorts of things in meetings I'd go to, we'd talk about them in the corridor, and we'd talk about them actually in the context of a meeting, about how they thought this was crazy. The reason I say that about I&R is that I&R is, you look at their stats it's just incredible. Average time on the job 12 years. PhD. Three languages. These are real smart people originally, and also there's a functionality like terrorism or whatever they're looking at these things. And that's one reason the rest of the intelligence community doesn't like them too much because they're constantly being ensconced at the picnic. 'No he doesn't have a nuclear program, why are you saying he has a nuclear program? Look, we can show you that he doesn't have a nuclear program, or we don't think he has a nuclear program'. And these guys, Tom Finger for example, who became assistant D&I for Jon Negroponte was in my office literally every day. And a brighter more competent intelligence professional I've never met. And we had long conversations about this. We had long conversations about detainees, about interrogation techniques, about what Afghanistan was really like, about what Iraq was really like, about what it really meant to be in a country of 25- 27 million people the median age of which was nineteen and to be destroying their universities. Be de-Bathefying their universities and so on, I mean we had some long midnight type conversations about some of these things.

Q: When you reached the conclusion that there wasn't evidence, well, let me ask another question before the one I was about to ask, and that is you mentioned evidence that may be tainted by coercion or torture, did you find any cases where you thought that that was the case, that the evidence relied on was elicited through torture or other illegal methods?

A: Only in the sense that I discovered, I think, that what happened at Abu Ghraib was widespread and had started at Bagram in Afghanistan for example. And so the implication there was for me 'hey, if we're getting information this way, some of it has got to be contaminated , if not in terms of its actionability, that is good intelligence for action, but also in terms and certainly in terms of its use in court. It's been contaminated in the way it was gained. My first shock, someone walked into my office and said 'do you know we murdered two people in Afghanistan as early as I think it was 10 December 2002 or something like that?' I think it was even 2001 but I think it was 2002 though. And I said

'murdered him?' and he said 'yeah, we got the coroner's report'. It's homicide. And I looked and one of them was of course DiAar, it became a celebrated documentary, *Taxi to the Dark Side*. And about a week after that I discovered that there had been a death in Iraq that had been judged, at least preliminarily, as a homicide and shoved over to the CIA because a CIA contractor was responsible for it as I recall. And so that one dried up, I couldn't get anything more on that because that one was with the Agency. So I mean, early on I found out that things were not the way they should be. And we began to examine, I don't know if you looked at this part of it but, we began to examine because we knew from the first Gulf War, Powell and I, that we had had some national guard units that we wouldn't have sent to war. We turned away a whole Brigade from Georgia. Got in a real political brouhaha over it. So we knew that some of these Guard units for example, reserve unites going to Afghanistan going to Iraq, were probably ill trained, ill equipped, ill manned, womanned, and probably shouldn't be doing what they were doing. We even suspected that about one Special Forces group in Afghanistan. And so, that added to my anxiety, if you will, about what was happening over there. Not only was I discovering that I thought was policy form the highest level in the land going down to the troops , but it was also going down to the troops who weren't qualified to be doing what they were doing and shouldn't be doing it. That's like you tell a bunch of masochistic dogs that they can be masochistic dogs and get away with it, I mean it's not that bad but they just weren't equipped to deal with the power they were given over other people.

Q: Your study about the evidence for holding detainees, was that limited to Guantanamo or did you also look at....

A: No, I looked at Abu Ghraib initially. And then I looked at, because the trail led me all over the place to General Miller, to Guantanamo, because it led me to one unit I recall had been transferred from Bagram and sent to Iraq, it just looked like all of a sudden, it looked like it all adhered, it all went together. And that's one reason why when I read I think it was Church's report I read the first version, and I think I mentioned this to Powell, It was a draft as I recall, I'm reading it and I'm going down this thing and all these proofs of it being a policy only to get to the end of the conclusion which says 'but we determined none of this was policy driven'. In other words it's all just a bunch of bad apples. I mean we'd just written report which said its policy driven, but it wasn't policy driven. It was a bunch of bad apples. Sanchez made some sort of remark to that affect too in his sort of *mea culpa* about a year ago or so. I think he actually used this phrase, in 'passing down policies he should have questioned'.

Q: It sounds like there was a point during your tenure at State where you were commission almost on an ongoing basis to look into the detainee treatment questions, am I right about that?

A: Well, that's true except that, and I puzzled over this I don't know how I'm going to handle this in my book, Powell's attention to it sort of drifted. And I attribute that right now to the fact that he was watching Rumsfeld, offer to resign, was watching Rumsfeld conduct his own investigation, had talked to Don about it, thought Rumsfeld was serious about what he was doing, and was himself going out and sometime being ambushed by the press on these issues and would say things like 'yes, there's a lot of dirty laundry, but you're going to see democracy handle it, you're going to see our democracy take steps to handle it, and those who are guilty will be punished, there is going to be accountability'. And he

made that, it almost became a mantra with him. And I think he was convinced that we were going to do something about the problem other than punish E4s, and that, I think he even thought at one point that ultimately it might lead up to some fairly substantial people. And so that made him a little less attentive to the issue once he charged Will and I to do it. I'd be interested about what Will would say to that because again I don't know if Will would agree with me that the Secretary's attention fell off and I thought the reason was he thought the system was working.

Q: Did you report to him the kind of things you discussed today, that there wasn't evidence against many of the detainees?

A: Some of it. Yes. In pop his head in, here's the latest. Pop his head in another day, here's the latest. But we were also, you have to remember, he was popping his head in and telling me about all the things that were falling apart with regard to his UN presentation. And so that became, not all consuming, but that became a big weight on his shoulders at that time.

Q: Okay, now we are talking about the pre-Iraq presentation.

A: Yeah. Tenet was calling him and McLaughlin is calling him and telling him as each pillar in his presentation collapses. The last one was the mobile biological laboratories. And Tenet stuck to that one, Powell walking into my office on day and he 'can you believe it! George still has it on his website. Look'. And there it was, he still...

Q: He raised his voice?

A: Yeah. Tenet still had on the CIA website, pictures of these mobile biological labs and I think he called him trying to get the things off the website.

Q: One of the factors was the al-Libi interrogation, wasn't it? Some of the evidence.

A: That was a very dramatic moment in the DSI's conference room when Powell had pulled me literally by the stacking into a room in the National Intelligence Councils spaces, sat me down, sat down across from me, made sure the door was closed, made sure no one was eavesdropping and he said 'I'm throwing all this terrorist shit out', and I said 'good, I don't like it either', he said 'it reads like a genealogy from Deuteronomy'. You know Mohab, begat Aheb, who begat ...[laughs] and he said 'there's nothing of consequence here'. And I said 'you better tell George because Phil Mudd, his guy, he wrote it'. And he said 'its 25 pages in about a 46 page text'. And I said 'okay, we're throwing it out, we're throwing it out'. Within thirty minutes, in the DCI conference room waltzes George Tenet with a big Cheshire cat smile on his face, and reveals that a high level al-Qaeda operative has just been interrogated and revealed substantial contacts between the Mukarat and al-Qaeda.

Q: This was Aby Zubaydah.

A: This was al-Libi. But no names, 'high level al-Qaeda operative'. No dates.

Q: How did you find out that al-Libi was the detainee?

A: FBI guy comes to me and says 'hey, you know that guy you were telling me about, that Tenet lay on the table, he was interrogated by the Egyptians, he was water boarded among other things, and he recanted almost everything he said later and the DIA wrote a dissent, did you know that?' and I said 'how much later', 'oh, a couple of weeks after the interrogation, DIA dissent'. So I went back and I asked McLaughlin for a copy of that dissent, I wanted to see that dissent. And I asked also why did this not come out during our development of the Secretary's presentation. The answer coming back, allegedly from George Tenet himself, was that there was a computer glitch. And that when they searched for any dissents on the information powers being given, it didn't register. It didn't come up.

Q: Can we talk to that guy in the FBI?

Q: Did you see the dissent? You didn't see it because it was gone?

A: No. It was gone. Here's a thing I don't know, and again I am wrestling with this too, I don't know how to solve it, I don't know if it can be solved. I don't...I was with Tenet 24/7. John was with me 24/7, he stuck to me like glue. If I so much as turned a page on the computer to change a word, John was looking at it. Davidson could tell you that.

Q: This is General Powell's presentation.

A: Yeah. I mean, Lin Davidson, god bless her, she's his speech writer and she's there crafting this thing on the computer and 2 o'clock in the morning John McLaughlin would be over my shoulder making sure I wasn't changing anything he didn't want changed. But as we were doing these things, we never got anything but 'I'm the DCI'. I represent all 16 intelligence entities within the US complex, plus, he would say from time to time, I represent Jordan, Israel, France, Britain, Germany and a host of others who have intelligence services with enough professionalism to be monitoring these matters.

Q: This is Tenet?

A: This is Tenet. So, you know, when Powell was told there are four sources for mobile biological labs all independently corroborating each other. One is materials intelligence. One is human intelligence and that happens to be an Iraqi engineer who happens to be in an accident that killed some people so we know how lethal the agents were being developed. Another one was a signal intercept. So that's what he told and nothing else. So here's what I don't know, there were occasions when Powell was back at State, he wasn't there the whole time like I was, there were occasions when George was out of my sight. Did Powell and George talk when I was not privy to it? Either on a secure phone or somewhere in George's office, something when both of them were out of my sight for a moment? And did George tell him details that I don't know? But I do know that we never were told names, we never were given...and it's because they didn't want to identify their sources and methods. And I understood that. I didn't even know, I slapped a classification on that presentation that first day we were out there, they were so freaking high that the President couldn't have read it. I told George Tenet 'you don't pass this to anyone, unless you have my permission or the Secretary's. Is that okay'; 'Oh absolutely, absolutely, wouldn't think of it'. He passed it around the whole freaking world. I didn't find that out until Tyler Drumheller

told me from Europe he'd read it, he'd seen it. And he passed the finished version around, or the nearly finished version around. So I mean you know, how do you deal with a guy like that. I'm showing my angst now.

Q: Well, there's a lot of angst because these things are important. I mean, I want to get back to the al-Libi situation because that was part of and obviously goes to the question of detainee treatment we're looking at. When did you, you mentioned being told by the FBI, was that the first time you found out...

A: That was the first time I knew that was the name of the guy. Yeah.

Q: Were you told before you knew his name that the information had been elicited by torture, without knowing who it was?

A: No. We were told a high level al-Qaeda, and this is almost a direct quote, a high level al-Qaeda operative has just revealed through interrogation that there are substantial contacts between the Mukarat in Baghdad and al-Qaeda, to include, went on to say, to include training in chemical and biological weapons. That's almost a direct quote.

Q: Did you ever have a discussion...

A: In fact, we were taping it. Look at the presentation, that's essentially what we taped in the presentation.

Q: Did you ever have a conversation with General Powell after the presentation and after you found out that information was elicited by torture.

A: Several.

Q: Did you talk with him about that fact?

A: I think I sent him an email and asked him what his view was. If I remember right. And I think I got a response back that went something like 'I knew that'. Not meaning that he knew it at the time, but that he had already found out.

Q: That had already been told. Did he say anything else about it?

A: No. He didn't say anything else to me, one liners, maybe three at the most. He's writing a book right now, and his chapter, this you'll want to read this, definitely you'll want to read this if it comes out in time. My understanding is he's well on the way with it. It was going to be a book about leadership and management, you know, Powell's ten rules, that sort of stuff. But he sent me an email about two weeks ago and he said 'do you remember our schedule?' and I said 'yeah, pretty much, here it is'. I had it down for my book, and he came back and he said 'I'm going to write a chapter in my book about the UN presentation'. And I said 'wow' and he said 'well, you know, it's going to be, it's not all success, I got to tell people how to take failure too'.

Q: There some other books out there responsive to that...

A: Yeah, he summed those books up for me the other day. When Condi's hit the New York Times at least in terms of what she's saying. Now Condi's attacking Dick and Don. But, it's going to be interesting to read that chapter. I'm going to read that chapter with great relish. What does he think happened? You know, I mean if it's going to be forthcoming, I don't know what it's going to say.

Q: You know when his book is coming out?

A: It's got to be pretty close because he told me about a month ago that it was almost finished.

Q: How about yours?

A: Mine is probably a year away yet. Especially if I keep teaching. I keep finding out new things.

Q: Just in connection with the al-Libi stuff, was there a discussion at the time or did you hear Abu Zaybaydah's name in connection with Iraq? Or anything about, because you know, now they're or not now, but over the past few years there have been reports that Abu Zubaydah who of course had been interrogated by the CIA was provided information that made those links in addition to al-Libi.

A: What I have discovered. Not at the time, not in 2004-2005. But what I have discovered through our conversations with various people from the FBI, the CIA, the DIA, the military and elsewhere, is that, and this really blew me away, as early as May-June 2002 and perhaps, one FBI agent told me, perhaps as early as the turn of the year, that is December-January 01-02, they had received instructions, they being the interrogators, had received instructions from the Vice-Presidents office that they were to look for two things in addition to the probability of another attack. And those two things were connections between al-Qaeda and Baghdad and the second one was a sort of a similar thing of a connection between al-Qaeda and any other terrorist organization that might give them a way, this is my own guess because of what I saw earlier, a way back into someplace that they needed to get back into. Let me give you an example. Rumsfeld used the potential for a connection between the various elements the Abu Sayyaf was the lead group, a bunch of thugs really, but also the Liberation Front in the Philippines he used that as a way to get US forces back into the Philippines. In Balikatan got Special Forces back in the Philippines you know we'd pretty much been told get out of the Philippines after we abandoned Subic and Clark and so forth. So Pentagon wanted desperately back in the Philippines so here's a way to get back in the Philippines. So any kind of intelligence that came in that said here's a al-Qaeda threat you could put your delta forces, you could put your Special Forces whatever on that threat. And if you could do it with the countries permission, okay. If you did it without the countries permission, that's okay too. In fact in 2002, at State we got our first shot at that when an ambassador called us and said 'we need to know who six foot six, white, nineteen inch by seven males are walking around our capitol city. We haven't been told who they are. Of course we know who they are but we want to know why we haven't been told who they are'. And I monitored some of that phone call. 'Don, what are you doing?'. He was putting delta and other special forces in countries around the world and not telling anybody but himself about it and hunting for al-Qaeda. So our country team, our ambassador, indeed the CIA station chief in

the area didn't know that these people were in the country hunting al-Qaeda, so that was another part of the intelligence questions: how do you get even more people out of more places?

Q: Do you, when you were looking at the staff did you have any contact with or otherwise with General Boykin?

A: Just a normal military scuttlebutt. When you have something like that, it gets around fast. Even if you're a retired Colonel at the State Department, somebody says our guy does better than their guy and so it gets to you pretty fast. The old rumor control. There was a lot of...culturally there is an extraordinary wall between special operating forces and conventional forces. And in the military, special operating forces are more or less given some leeway that conventional forces aren't given. By that I mean, you can have real nuts, I mean that's not to put a too fine a form on it. And their tolerated but when they get up to the general officer level, which they occasionally do, the rest of the military the conventional military just sits around gaping like 'I can't believe that happened'. He was an individual like that. And when he was made, I think he was finally made Under-Secretary of Defense or something like that, there was obviously just 'this is unbelievable. This guy may have been good chewing heads off rabbits but no, this is not somebody who should be at that level of responsibility'. Sad to say, my travels across the United States over the last five years have shown to me not just the problem that you and I were just discussing with regards to the detachment of the military from the body politic but there are an enormous number of evangelicals in the military now. I was at the Air Force Academy on one occasion and identified 15 Chaplains only one of which, two of which were mainline religions. One because he was a Rabbi and the other because he was a Southern Baptist and that on the line sometimes too. The rest were all what you might call MegaChurch evangelical.

[END]