

TRIBUTE TO AARON DAVID
HUDSPETH

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Aaron David Hudspeth a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Aaron has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Aaron has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Aaron David Hudspeth for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

INVESTIGATION NEEDED ABOUT
TAPE DESTRUCTION

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, many Americans are rightly concerned about reports that the Central Intelligence Agency destroyed tapes documenting the interrogation of two suspected Al Qaeda terrorists.

This morning's newspapers report that the decision to destroy the tapes may have come after the matter had been discussed with legal advisers at the highest level in the Bush administration.

I do not know how accurate those reports may be. But I agree with an editorial in yesterday's Gazette, the daily newspaper of Colorado Springs, that Congress should investigate this matter.

In the words of the Gazette:

The House and Senate intelligence committees and other congressional committees have vowed to undertake investigations into the circumstances under which those tapes were destroyed. This is an appropriate use of the legislative branch's power to oversee the activities of the executive branch, especially when allegations of illegal activity are involved.

On Friday, however, the Justice Department asked the relevant congressional committees to postpone their investigations while preliminary investigations by the Justice Department and the CIA itself are under way. U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey also announced that the Justice Department would not comply with congressional requests for information at this time.

This stonewalling is inappropriate and only feeds suspicion. Congress is an equal branch of government under the Constitution. As such, it has full authority to conduct investigations into the activities of executive branch employees. * * *

In a democratic system the government is supposed to serve the interests of the people and eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. But the people cannot maintain vigilance over "their" government if the government

is allowed to keep its arguably questionable activities secret.

I completely agree with that succinct summary of the situation, and urge the Intelligence Committees to proceed with their inquiries.

For the information of all our colleagues, I am attaching the complete text of the Gazette's editorial:

[From the Colorado Springs Gazette, Dec. 18, 2007]

OPEN GOVERNMENT—CONGRESS MUST
INVESTIGATE TAPES' DESTRUCTION

Although the circumstances are suspicious surrounding a decision by the CIA to destroy videotapes of the interrogations of two al-Qaida suspects by CIA interrogators, it is virtually impossible to know whether those tapes contain evidence of "enhanced interrogation" techniques that rise to the level of torture. What is certain is that all the investigations into how and why those tapes were destroyed, and who ordered their destruction, should proceed with all deliberate speed.

Last week CIA Director Gen. Michael Hayden gave secret testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee regarding the hundreds of hours of videotaped interrogation of two men identified as members of al-Qaida, Abu Zubaydah and Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri. He acknowledged that the tapes had been destroyed sometime around 2005.

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This stonewalling is inappropriate and only feeds suspicion. Congress is an equal branch of government under the Constitution. As such, it has full authority to conduct investigations into the activities of executive branch employees.

At the same time, the Justice Department is urging a federal judge not to hold a hearing into the destruction of the tapes. U.S. District Judge Henry Kennedy is presiding over a case involving 12 Yemeni prisoners being held at the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay on Cuba. Defense lawyers have urged such a hearing, noting that in 2005 Kennedy as the presiding judge in Zubaydah's and al-Nashiri's cases ordered that all evidence involving that case be preserved, and want to determine whether the destruction of the Zubaydah and al-Nashiri interrogation tapes violated that order.

It is possible for reasonable people to differ as to whether torture is ever justified. We agree with Sen. John McCain, who knows something about torture from his experience as a Vietnam prisoner of war, that the United States should maintain the moral high ground by abjuring torture. Most experienced interrogators also note that torture is not a reliable way to acquire accurate information.

A broad, informed debate on appropriate interrogation techniques is appropriate given widespread suspicion that the U.S. has used techniques that are tantamount to torture. The more information available, the

more informed any such discussion will be. That's why it is deplorable that the Justice Department wants to quash congressional and judicial inquiries into the destruction of videotapes that may—or may not—have documented the use of inappropriate techniques by government operatives.

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CONGRATULATING STRATON
KARATASSOS

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. PICKERING. Madam Speaker, the athletic tradition at Mississippi State University has celebrated the lives and accomplishments of many student and staff leaders over the years. Recently another has been added to this list when Straton Karatassos was inducted into the Mississippi Athletic Trainers' Association Hall of Fame.

Straton has a lifetime of experiences and stories as a manager and trainer of athletic teams. While working with the Georgia Southern baseball team in 1973, he made his first visit to Mississippi State University for a game, and later that year returned as a graduate student. Now, three decades later, Straton has become inseparable from the MSU athletic family. He was named State's head trainer in 1981, later served as assistant athletic director for sports medicine, and now works as assistant athletic director for athletic development within the Bulldog Club.

While he is a native of Savannah, GA, we like to claim him as a true son of Starkville. He and his wife, Harriet, of Batesville, MS, are central to the Bulldog community, and he is as much part of the teams at Mississippi State as are the players.

Madam Speaker, I hope the Congress joins me in congratulating Straton Karatassos for a lifetime of service to sport and saluting him in his induction into the Mississippi Athletic Trainers' Association Hall of Fame.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 17, 2007

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, the men and women who put on the uniform of the National Guard have acted with extreme bravery and integrity. Through the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, these soldiers have fought valiantly, without question and without reservations, and they embody the entire spirit of service.

In New Mexico, the National Guard has played an historic role in defending our Nation. Members of the New Mexico National Guard served as "Rough Riders" on San Juan Hill