

EXHIBIT 55

Doctors at U.S. base linked to questioning Coercive interrogations at Guantanamo

Lewis, Neil A . International Herald Tribune ; Paris [Paris]25 June 2005: 4.

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ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

U.S. military doctors at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have aided interrogators in conducting and refining coercive interrogations of detainees, including providing advice on how to increase stress levels and exploit fears, according to new, detailed accounts given by former interrogators.

The military declined to give The Times permission to interview medical personnel at the isolated Guantanamo camp, which is on a U.S. Navy base, about their practices. And the medical journal, in an article that criticized the program, did not identify the officials interviewed by its authors. The handful of former interrogators who spoke to The Times about the practices at Guantanamo spoke on condition of anonymity; some of them said they had welcomed the assistance of the doctors.

Dr. Spencer Eth, a professor of psychiatry at New York Medical College and chairman of the ethics committee of the American Psychiatric Association, said in an interview that there was no way that psychiatrists at Guantanamo could ethically counsel interrogators on ways to increase distress on detainees.

FULL TEXT

U.S. military doctors at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have aided interrogators in conducting and refining coercive interrogations of detainees, including providing advice on how to increase stress levels and exploit fears, according to new, detailed accounts given by former interrogators.

The accounts, in interviews with The New York Times, come as mental health professionals are debating whether the doctors psychiatrists and psychologists at the prison camp have violated professional ethics codes in the questioning of prisoners, largely men captured in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Defense Department and mental health professionals have been examining the ethical issues involved.

The former interrogators said the military doctors' role was to advise them and their fellow interrogators on ways of increasing psychological duress on detainees, sometimes by exploiting their fears, in the hopes of making them more cooperative and willing to provide information. In one example, interrogators were told that a detainee's medical files showed he had a severe phobia of the dark and suggested ways in which that could be manipulated to induce him to cooperate.

In addition, the authors of an article published by The New England Journal of Medicine on Thursday said that their interviews with doctors who helped devise and supervise the interrogation regimen at Guantanamo showed the program was explicitly designed to increase fear and distress among detainees as a means to obtaining intelligence.

The accounts shed light on how interrogations were conducted and raise new questions about the boundaries of medical ethics in the United States' fight against terrorism.

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Pentagon officials said in interviews that the practices at Guantanamo violated no ethics guidelines and disputed the conclusions of the article, which was posted on the medical journal's Web site on Wednesday.

Bryan Whitman, a senior Pentagon spokesman, declined to address the specifics in the accounts. But Whitman suggested that the doctors advising interrogators were not covered by ethics strictures because they were not acting as caregivers to patients but rather as behavioral scientists.

He said that while some health care personnel were responsible for "humane treatment of detainees," some medical professionals "may have other roles," like serving as behavioral scientists assessing the character of interrogation subjects.

Several ethics experts outside the military said that there were serious questions involving the conduct of the doctors, especially those in units known as behavioral science consultation teams, colloquially referred to as "biscuit" teams, which advise interrogators.

"Their purpose was to help us break them," one former interrogator told The Times in an interview earlier this year.

The interrogator said in a more recent interview that a biscuit team doctor, having read the medical file of a detainee, suggested that the inmate's longing for his mother could be exploited to persuade him to cooperate.

Dr. Stephen Xenakis, a psychiatrist and former army brigadier general in the medical corps, said in an interview that "this behavior is not consistent with our medical responsibility or any of the codes that guide our conduct as doctors."

The use of psychologists and psychiatrists in interrogations prompted the Defense Department to issue a policy statement that officials said was supposed to ensure that doctors do not participate in unethical behavior.

While the American Psychiatric Association has guidelines that specifically prohibit the kinds of behaviors described by the former interrogators for their members, who are medical doctors, the rules for psychologists, who are ordinarily not medical doctors, are less clear.

Dr. Spencer Eth, a professor of psychiatry at New York Medical College and chairman of the ethics committee of the American Psychiatric Association, said in an interview that there was no way that psychiatrists at Guantanamo could ethically counsel interrogators on ways to increase distress on detainees.

In a statement issued in December, the American Psychological Association said that the issue of involvement of its members in "national security endeavors" was a new one.

DETAILS

Lexile score:	1770 L
Publication title:	International Herald Tribune; Paris
Pages:	4
Number of pages:	0
Publication year:	2005
Publication date:	Jun 25, 2005
Dateline:	WASHINGTON:
Section:	NEWS
Publisher:	New York Times Company
Place of publication:	Paris
Country of publication:	United States, Paris
Publication subject:	General Interest Periodicals--France
ISSN:	02948052
Source type:	Newspapers
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	NEWSPAPER
ProQuest document ID:	318671351
Document URL:	https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/doctors-at-u-s-base-linked-questioning-coercive/docview/318671351/se-2?accountid=46320
Copyright:	Copyright International New York Times Jun 25, 2005
Last updated:	2017-11-01
Database:	eLibrary

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