

The Case Against Rumsfeld: Hard Facts Timeline

Under Law:

The Commander is responsible for crimes directly ordered, as well as for crimes committed by officers when the commander knew or should have known they were going on but failed to prevent or punish them.

This timeline is also available in graphic format.

October 11, 2002

Guantanamo officials “request that additional techniques beyond those in the field manual be approved for use.”

December 2, 2002

Rumsfeld prescribes new interrogation policy for Guantanamo, authorizing “stress positions,” hooding, 20-hour interrogations, removal of clothing, exploiting phobias to induce stress (e.g., fear of dogs), prolonged isolation, sensory deprivation, and forced grooming. These techniques soon spread to Afghanistan and later to Iraq.

December 2002

FBI officials complain to Defense Department of abuses at Guantanamo.

Afghan detainees killed during interrogation in U.S. custody at Bagram Air Force Base, Afghanistan.

December 26, 2002

Washington Post reports regular, systemic abuses at Bagram, including “stress and duress” techniques during interrogation.

January 2003

Judge Advocates repeatedly object to aggressive interrogation techniques at Guantanamo but “Pentagon officials ‘didn’t think this was a big deal, so they just ignored the JAGs.’”

January 15, 2003

Rumsfeld rescinds blanket approval of some techniques but indicates techniques may continue based on his individual case approval.

Rumsfeld designates “Working Group” to assess legal, policy and operational issues for detainee interrogation in the “war on terrorism.”

January 24, 2003

Afghanistan Commander forwards list of techniques being used in Afghanistan, including some inconsistent with Army Field Manual, to inform Rumsfeld’s Working Group, including the use of dogs to induce fear, the use of stress positions, and sensory deprivation.

April 4, 2003

Working Group issues final report; recommends 35 interrogation techniques to Rumsfeld, including techniques from Afghanistan inconsistent with Army Field Manual.

April 16, 2003

Rumsfeld approves 24 of the recommended techniques for use at Guantanamo, including dietary and environmental manipulation, sleep adjustment, false flag and isolation.

May 2003

Red Cross reports 200 cases of alleged detainee abuse in U.S. custody in Iraq to U.S. Central Command.

May 30, 2003

FBI reasserts its objections to Guantanamo interrogation techniques to Guantanamo commander.

June 2003 - June 2004

Afghan citizens Mehboob Ahmad, Said Nabi Siddiqi, Mohammed Karim Shirullah and Haji Abdul Rahman detained and abused at U.S.-held Kandahar and Bagram facilities.

July 2003

Captain of unit responsible for killing two detainees in Afghanistan proposes interrogation techniques for Abu Ghraib, including stress positions, removal of clothing,

lengthy isolation, sensory and sleep deprivation and use of dogs. Lt. Gen. Sanchez approves techniques.

August 2003

Rumsfeld sends Guantanamo commander to Iraq to "gitmo-ize" Iraqi detention facilities, promoting wide-scale deployment of more aggressive interrogation methods in Iraq.

July/August 2003 – June 2004

Iraqi citizens Arkan Mohammed Ali Al-Hasnawi, Dahi Mohammed Sabbar, Sherzad Kamal Khalid Al-Barwari and Ali H. detained and abused at various U.S. detention facilities in Iraq, including Abu Ghraib.

August 31 - September 9, 2003

Guantanamo commander brings policies to Abu Ghraib; uses techniques as "baseline" for recommending new, harsher interrogation techniques at Abu Ghraib.

September 2003

Lt. Gen. Sanchez authorizes 29 interrogation techniques for use in Iraq, including the use of dogs, stress positions, sensory deprivation, loud music and light control, based on Rumsfeld's April 16 techniques and suggestions from captain of military unit formerly in Afghanistan.

October 12, 2003

Iraqi interrogation techniques modified but still authorize officers to "control" the lighting, heat, food, shelter, and clothing given to detainees and permit the use of dogs in interrogations with prior authorization.

October – December 2003

Torture and serious abuses of detainees take place at Abu Ghraib.

November 12, 2003

Human Rights First writes Rumsfeld as well as Afghan field commander requesting status of investigations into the deaths of detainees in U.S. custody in Afghanistan in 2002.

December 2003

U.S. Army report details abuses committed against detainees in Iraq by task force of military Special Operations and CIA officers, known as Task Force 121.

January 13, 2004

Joseph Darby gives Army criminal investigators CD containing the Abu Ghraib photographs depicting detainee torture and abuses. Rumsfeld informed.

February 24, 2004

Red Cross issues confidential report to Coalition Provisional Authority documenting widespread abuse and command failures to take corrective action.

February 26, 2004

Maj. Gen. Taguba completes investigation; reports of "systematic" and "sadistic, blatant and wanton criminal abuses" at Abu Ghraib.

March 2004

Abuse of detainees continues in Iraq.

April 28, 2004

60 Minutes II airs segment showing Abu Ghraib photos.

May 2004

Abuse of detainees continues in Iraq.

August 24, 2004

Rumsfeld-appointed panel reports Rumsfeld interrogation policy led to confusion in the field as to what techniques were authorized; also reports that civilian Defense Department leaders failed in their interrogation and detention duties.

March 2005

Pending investigative reports on detainee and interrogation operations (promised for delivery in summer 2004) still incomplete.

April 16, 2003 interrogation policy still in effect.

No U.S. official above the rank of Major has been prosecuted.

Rumsfeld still not held accountable.