

New Snowden Leak Reveals Key NSA Role in Guantanamo Torture



Washington, May 17 (RHC)-- A new batch document dump from the Snowden Archives of National Security Agency internal newsletters reveals that the NSA had a direct role in "interrogations" programs in Guantanamo at the outset of the so-called "global war on terror."

The documents, released by the Intercept on Monday, reveal that the intelligence agency offered tailored training to staff on national security issues in Latin America and how to steer the region toward U.S. interests.

Issues of SIDtoday, an internal publication run by the Signals Intelligence Directorate, the division that The Intercept describes as "arguably the NSA's most important," reveal information on NSA agents' deployment to Guantanamo Bay in 2003 alongside the CIA and U.S. military.

One publication in October 2003 announced the "change to get to Gitmo for 90 days!" The vacation-like promotion was a hiring announcement for the NSA Liaison Officer to the Joint Task Force Guantanamo to collaborate with interrogators on Operation Enduring Freedom, the official term for the U.S. war on terror.

The advertisement explained that the staffer would be responsible for working with Department of Defense, CIA, and FBI interrogators to “assess and exploit information sourced from detainees,” specifically al-Qaida and Taliban “terrorists/detainees.” The newsletter heralded the job as an “excellent opportunity.”

A later issue of the publication from December 2003 offered a report-back from an NSA employee’s experience working at Guantanamo Bay. It explained that the NSA liaison works day-to-day to “pull together intelligence to support an upcoming interrogation, formulate questions and strategies for the interrogation, and observe or participate in the interrogation,” a job that the staffer described as “extremely interesting, challenging, and fulfilling.”

Disturbingly, the personal account then shifts immediately from describing interrogation activities to showing off that “fun awaits” outside work hours while at Guantanamo Bay. “Water sports are outstanding,” the NSA agent gushes, going on to talk about Tiki Bars and how “relaxing is easy.”

The “lighthearted and celebratory” descriptions of Guantanamo in the NSA newsletter are out of step with other assessments of what was happening at the U.S. military prison around the same time, when human rights groups raised early alarms about torture and attempts to cover up of inhumane interrogation tactics.

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