



In recent weeks, former Bush speechwriter Marc Thiessen has been on a public relations campaign defending the efficacy of waterboarding, going so far as to say that the torture technique sanctioned by the Bush administration is not only safe, but is in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

In his defense of the practice, Yoo cited the thousands of US servicemen who have undergone SERE training and said, "we don't think it amounts to torture because we would not be doing it to our own soldiers otherwise."

However, a previously unreleased internal Department of Defense (DoD) memo, summarizing a review of the Navy SERE program in late February - early March 2007, reveals that there was fierce criticism within the DoD of the Navy SERE school in North Island, San Diego, for being the only SERE facility to still use waterboarding in its training program.

The memo, obtained by Truthout, stated that the use of waterboarding left students "psychologically defeated" and impaired in the ability to develop "psychological hardiness."

The attempt to remove waterboarding from Naval survival school training goes back to at least 2005, which was also the period when then-Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney Steven Bradbury was fashioning a series of legal opinions that approved waterboarding as an "enhanced interrogation" technique. Bradbury cited the use of waterboarding on numerous SERE students over the years, supposedly without reported serious injury or prolonged mental harm, as relevant in approving it as not meeting the legal criteria for torture.

Waterboarding Too Dangerous, Internal DoD Memo Reveals

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