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**From:** Perino, Dana M. [Dana\_M.\_Perino@who.eop.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 04, 2007 11:37 AM  
**To:** Bradbury, Steve; Roehrkasse, Brian  
**Cc:** Engel, Steve; Burck, William A.  
**Subject:** RE: Draft copy of today's gaggle -- not completely proofed

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-----Original Message-----

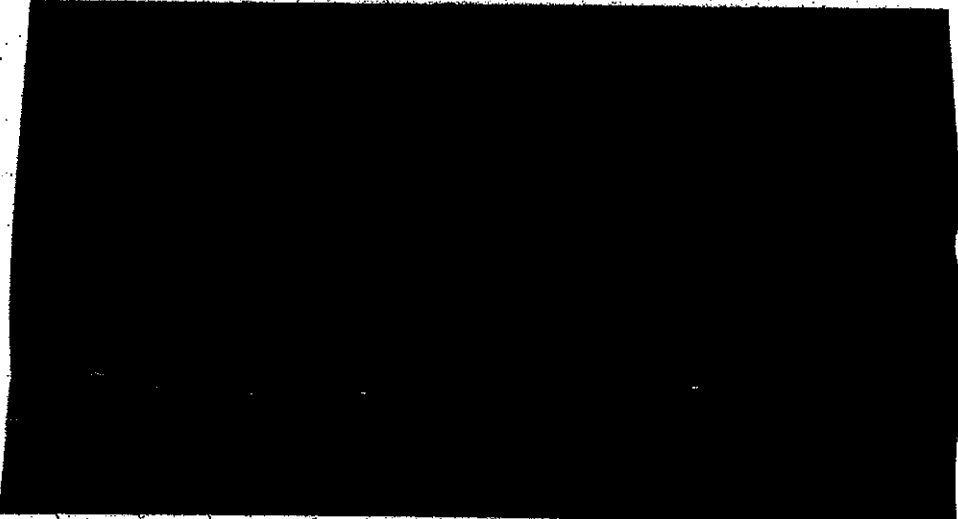
**From:** Bradbury, Steve [mailto:Steve.Bradbury@usdoj.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 04, 2007 11:35 AM  
**To:** Perino, Dana M.; Roehrkasse, Brian  
**Cc:** Engel, Steve; Burck, William A.  
**Subject:** Fw: Draft copy of today's gaggle -- not completely proofed



----- Original Message -----

**From:** Engel, Steve  
**To:** Bradbury, Steve  
**Sent:** Thu Oct 04 11:28:17 2007  
**Subject:** RE: Draft copy of today's gaggle -- not completely proofed

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-----Original Message-----

From: Bradbury, Steve  
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2007 11:24 AM  
To: Engel, Steve  
Subject: Re: Draft copy of today's gaggle -- not completely proofed

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----- Original Message -----

From: Engel, Steve  
To: OLC\_AAG/Deputies  
Sent: Thu Oct 04 11:03:11 2007  
Subject: FW: Draft copy of today's gaggle -- not completely proofed

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From: Roehrkasse, Brian  
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2007 10:41 AM  
To: Carr, Peter A; Engel, Steve  
Subject: FW: Draft copy of today's gaggle -- not completely proofed

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From: Perino, Dana M. [mailto:Dana\_M\_Perino@who.eop.gov]  
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2007 10:40 AM  
To: Roehrkasse, Brian; Bradbury, Steve  
Subject: FW: Draft copy of today's gaggle -- not completely proofed

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From: Siciliano, Stuart W.  
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2007 10:25 AM  
To: Perino, Dana M.  
Subject: FW: Draft copy of today's gaggle -- not completely proofed

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From: Suntum, Margaret M.  
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2007 10:24 AM  
To: Siciliano, Stuart W.  
Subject: Draft copy of today's gaggle -- not completely proofed

9/30/2009

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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Internal Transcript

October 4, 2007

PRESS GAGGLE BY

DANA PERINO

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

9:42 A.M. EDT

MR. PERINO: Good morning. Sorry I'm a little late. The President this morning had his normal briefings at 8:00 a.m. At 10:15 a.m. this morning he will meet with the leader of the parliamentary majority in Lebanon, Saad Hariri. That will be in the Oval Office with pool at the bottom. A couple of notes on that.

The President looks forward to discussing Lebanon's presidential elections. The United States supports Lebanon's independent and democratically elected government as it undertakes to select a new President. We will work hand-in-hand with a freely elected President. I expect them to discuss the U.N. special tribunal that is investigating the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, the father of Saad Hariri, that the President will meet with today. And the United States expects Syria to cooperate in this investigation and to cease its interference in Lebanon's domestic affairs. They are also likely to discuss continued American support to the Lebanese government as it further builds the capacity of the Lebanese armed forces to confront challenges to stability in Lebanon and in the region.

At 11:30 in the morning today, the President will be interviewed by Elie Nakouzi, of Al Arabiya. That will be -- we'll get you the location. We're working on that.

9/30/2009

DOJ OLC 001374

And at 7:20 p.m. tonight, the President and Mrs. Bush will host the Iftaar dinner with ambassadors and Muslim leaders, State Dining Room. Pool for remarks. The President has hosted an Iftaar dinner every year of his presidency. This year's special guests include American Muslim women who have made a significant contribution to our nation in key fields such as science and education, civil society, and the arts and culture. The imam this year is Lieutenant Commander Abuhena Saifulislam, which I will spell for you -- A-b-u-h-e-n-a, and then the surname is spelled S-a-i-f-u-l-i-s-l-a-m. He is the second Muslim chaplain commissioned in the U.S. Navy, and he will deliver a prayer following the President's remarks.

That's it.

Q The New York Times has a piece today about legal opinions from the Justice Department authorizing harsh interrogation techniques. Do you challenge the accuracy of that report at all?

MS. PERINO: Let me start off by saying that our programs have always been designed within U.S. law and in keeping with our international obligations. Our intelligence agencies, they work every day to make sure that they're keeping our country safe, and they legally obtain information that they need to protect us from attack from foreign terrorists who aim to kill Americans. The article is quite long. You're asking me if everything in it is accurate. No, I would not think that everything in it is accurate, and I would have to refer you to the Justice Department for some specifics on that.

Q Well, how about the central points, about the legal opinions?

MS. PERINO: What about the legal opinions? What's the --

Q Shortly -- shortly after Alberto Gonzales got there, did the Justice Department issue a legal opinion that --

MS. PERINO: That is different from a December 2004? No, I don't -- no. My understanding is that there is the December 2004 opinion, which is publicly available for everyone to read. Additional opinions on specific applications were done. They are classified. I have not seen those, but they were not -- the general opinion was the one that was done in December 2004, and as I understand it this February 5th one, was just talking about -- it was different in that it was focusing on

9/30/2009

DOJ OLC 001375

specifics, not reinterpreting that memo.

Q Well, it says for -- that the February one authorized things like head-slapping, simulated drowning, and --

MS. PERINO: I don't know about that. But again, look at what I just said. The December 2004 memo, which is publicly available for all of you to read, is more -- is broad and general about interpreting the statute. And, not commenting specifically on any particular memos, what I just said is that the memo -- any opinions that were issued in February of 2005 were specific to the -- were more specific to applications under that agreement.

Q But that would not deny -- that wouldn't deny what the Times is reporting.

MS. PERINO: I didn't say that I was. I said, are there two different -- were there two different pieces of paper or opinions that were released. There was the broader opinion, yes, and I think -- it's not apples and oranges, but it was an altogether different type of document that was released in February 2005.

Q You're being specific to applications.

MS. PERINO: Well, if you look at the December 2004 opinion, which I haven't in a long time, but it's publicly available, you can see it, and it's a general overview of OLC's opinion -- Office of Legal Counsel's opinion -- interpreting the statute more broadly. Then there are specifics that -- regarding interrogation techniques that were reviewed and that are classified, that I haven't seen. So it's a different document altogether. But it's within -- still within that overall broad framework of the December 2004 document.

Q The New York Times also says that the U.S. is still using black sites for prisoners, to interrogate them. Is that accurate?

MS. PERINO: I'm just not going to comment. I would refer you back to what the President said in a December -- I'm sorry -- September 10th -- I'm sorry -- September 6, 2006, when the President held a East Room event where he laid out the fact that we have been holding some of the people responsible for the 9/11 attacks and that they had been transferred to Guantanamo Bay.

9/30/2009

DOJ OLC 001376

Q Have you heard whether any other -- they've started holding prisoners again?

MS. PERINO: I would refer you back to that speech, and in it the President said, I will not be coming back to you every time we might hold somebody in the future because these are classified for a reason; we're trying to protect the American people and the more information that's out there that gives other people clues as to what we might or may not -- who we may or may not have -- the President said we're not going to be providing information.

And we did do -- I think there was one -- we have told you when we have transferred people to -- terrorists to Gitmo, but we haven't been in the habit of doing a press release every time we have a prisoner.

Q Can I ask you about the North Korea summit?

Q Can we stay on this a while longer?

MS. PERINO: Sure.

Q Does the administration still assert that it does not engage or authorize torture?

MS. PERINO: Absolutely. This country does not torture. It is the policy of the United States that we do not torture -- and we do not. I would also say that the one of the things that I would challenge in this article is the characterization of Steve Bradbury, who is one of the most decent, patriotic human beings I know. He is dedicated to the law. He calls them like he sees them. He is asked to consider very complex and unique legal questions. He provides his best guidance, his best judgment.

Is it -- it is possible that reasonable people could disagree on opinions regarding complex and unique and novel questions that are put to them, but this is an individual who the President nominated a long time ago. He deserves to be confirmed in the United States Senate. He has given a lot to his country, and we fully appreciate all he's done for us.

9/30/2009

DOJ OLC 001377

Q You maintain that the administration still does not torture?

MS. PERINO: Correct.

Q But is it not possible that some of these classified opinions may have changed the definition of "torture?"

MS. PERINO: No. I don't believe so. I have not seen them. But as everything was described to me, no, I don't believe that's possible.

Xxxx

Q Isn't it inconsistent with the commitment to democracy to hold people outside the country when we want to do things to them we cannot do under the laws inside the country?

MS. PERINO: Wendell, the policy of the United States is not to torture. We have not and we are not torturing anyone.

Q It is oft declared that the policy of the United States is not to torture, but, of course, you won't describe to us what you do -- that you don't (inaudible) torture.

MS. PERINO: Well, there's a very good reason for that.

Q So once again I will say, whether or not you torture them, whether or not what you consider what you're doing to these people, torture -- isn't it inconsistent with the commitment to democracy to hold someone outside the United States when you want to do to them what you cannot do inside the United States?

MS. PERINO: Now, I will tell you what -- the reason that we don't provide the classified information on interrogation techniques is because we know very well that individuals like al Qaeda -- let me finish, Wendell -- that individuals like al Qaeda --

Q I'm granting you that.

MS. PERINO: That -- well, then let me say it -- that individuals like al Qaeda train to interrogation techniques. And we know that these are

9/30/2009

DOJ OLC 001378

people who will make sure that they can resist any type of interrogation technique in order to carry out horrible, murderous deeds, like killing 3,000 Americans in New York and at the Pentagon. And we are in a global war on terror. The President -- go back to the September 6th speech. The President was very clear as to the situation that we are in and why we are endeavoring to protect the American people like we are. That's exactly why we do it.

Q I will stipulate these are bad people. I am not asking you to tell me what is being done to them; I'm asking you about the principle of holding them someplace where you can do what you can't do in the United States.

MS. PERINO: Look, regardless of where they are, we do not torture anyone. And getting that information from those individuals is critically important to protecting this country.

Q Can I go back to -- you just\*\* said we do not provide information.  
\*\* Is what you're saying you \*\* al Qaeda to train its people to resist your techniques; is that \*\*?

MS. PERINO: That's right. You don't hand over your game book to the opposing team. And we know that these are ruthless individuals who will do anything; and that they're very patient -- that they'll do anything to try to carry out their attacks. And this President has put in place -- all within the foursquare corners of the law -- tools in the global war on terror that we need and that the future President -- Presidents, plural -- will need in order to protect this country.

Q Dana, these techniques that have been talked about through intelligence sources and published -- whether it's waterboarding, simulated drowning, subjection to extreme temperatures, loud music, deprived of food or sleep for periods of time -- all of that is well known. And if al Qaeda needs a game book, they can read the New York Times and figure out, well, those are a few techniques we might try to train against. So doesn't that sort of defeat the purpose of saying that it is not something we want to --

MS. PERINO: Just because it's printed in the New York Times doesn't mean that we should talk about it publicly. I just reject the notion --

Q \*\* that you can't discuss it and that you blanketly say there's no torture when, clearly, in the Department of Justice there has been a debate about if those techniques were too severe -- and to simply say there's no torture, but then to never provide any insight as to what the

9/30/2009

DOJ OLC 001379



limitations are, with the exception of death or organ failure --

MS. PERINO: I'm not disputing that there can be legal disagreements between reasonable people who may look at something one way and another person looks at it in another way. I'm not disputing that. What I am saying is that we do not torture, and I disagree with the notion that just because information is leaked or provided to The New York Times or any other news organization that this country should -- that this government should then have to spell out any specifics. And I'm not confirming or denying anything that you just -- although --

Q How can you say that -- how can you say with assurance that we don't torture if you don't know what was in the --

MS. PERINO: Because we follow the law.

Q -- if you don't know what was in the other opinions, the classified opinions?

MS. PERINO: Because all of the opinions and all of the discussions, everything has to be within the law and the policy, and the policy of the United States is that we don't torture.

Q Well, we'd like to believe that, but there's no way to assure us, is there?

Q Do you think the people have a right to know what we do to others?

MS. PERINO: I think to a certain extent, yes, and that's why we have, for example, that December 2004 opinion that lays out broadly how we interpret the law.

Q Taking your word for it, though, is not true --

MS. PERINO: Well, I think that the American people can understand -- I believe that the American people can understand why there are certain pieces of information and tools that we use in the global war on terror that remain classified in order to protect them --

9/30/2009

DOJ OLC 001380

Q Why do you believe that?

MS. PERINO: -- and I believe they have every right to know that.

Q Why do you believe they are not disgraced and shamed when torture is attached to our name?

MS. PERINO: Helen, the United States policy is not to torture, and we do not.

Q I hear what you're saying, the policy. But what do we really do --

MS. PERINO: The American people have every right to be very proud of what we've done, and we have not had another terrorist attack on this country. And they should be glad of that, as well.

Q So the end justifies the means.

MS. PERINO: Our end is that we don't -- our means are that we don't torture, and the end result is that we've not had a terrorist attack.

Q Just you\* saying it doesn't mean it's true.

MS. PERINO: Well, Helen, look, I can't decide -- if I can't change your mind, I mean, that's fine. I just -- I'm giving you the information that I have.

Q -- testimony of the people who have been tortured themselves.

MS. PERINO: Elaine.

Q What can you tell us about members of Congress and sort of how they fit into this picture and that time frame you described, December 2004 being the broad overview, but then any kind of more specific classified opinions coming out in February of '05.

9/30/2009

DOJ OLC 001381

MS. PERINO: I would \* members of the Department of Justice, I don't know what the Congressional --

Q Were the briefings taking place to kind of --

MS. PERINO: \* to the Justice Department; I don't know. I'll see if I can more for you.

You still on this? Okay. Who wanted North Korea? Go ahead.

Q First, what is -- what is the White House response to what happened at the summit? They're saying they would like to have talks with the United States about formally ending the Korean War -- the Korean War.

MS. PERINO: That's in -- that's in the six-party talk agreement. If you look at the outline of the agreement and to -- what we get -- what we can achieve once we get a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. One of the things we want is a normalization of relations between the North and the South. And if that takes the form of a treaty, then we would be okay with that. That's what we're hoping to get to in the six-party talks. We've long been supportive of a inner-Korean dialogue between the two countries. They -- by news accounts they appear to have had a decent meeting, but I don't have anything beyond that.

John. I'll just do John and then \*. Go ahead, John.

MS. PERINO: Thank you, Dana. California recently passed, and its governor signed, a \* of their pension funds from Iran, making it the third state to do so. Is this something the administration encourages among the states, and would like to see expanded into a federal level?

MS. PERINO: Well -- well, I think, what we have sanctions on a federal level and we have to allow the states to make their own decisions. That's what they're going to do with their own policies.

Mark.

9/30/2009

Q Did the President and Talabani discuss Iraq's purchase of weapons from China, when they met earlier this week?

MS. PERINO: No.

Q They didn't?

MS. PERINO: No.

Q Does the U.S. have a view of this 100 million dollar purchase? That Iraq is dealing -- negotiating with China?

MS. PERINO: I'm aware of the story. I did not get any information about it. So, can I get back to you?

Q Sure.

MS. PERINO: Alright.

Q Did we ever find out who paid for the television \* the President?

MS. PERINO: Yes. Helen, Emily came to find you yesterday, but she couldn't find you. I'll tell you.

9/30/2009

DOJ OLC 001383