

## **US Rendition of Suspects to Prisons Worldwide: A Documentation**

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By K Gajendra Singh

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### **US FRANCHISED TORTURE REFUSES TO GO AWAY**

Tell us about the CIA flights.  
The US does not torture.  
Tell us about the black sites.  
The US does not torture.

"Let me be clear," was a popular refrain of Secretary State Ms Condi Rice about US rendition of terrorism suspects, when she visited Europe last month. But for many, she was everything but clear. [From Der Spiegel]

The ramifications of US franchised torture or franchised street revolutions in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan et al are not going to go away. The current fence-mending visit to Washington by the new right wing German Chancellor Angela Merkel remained overshadowed by US rendition of terrorism suspects to prisons in Europe and elsewhere.

To it were now added reports that German intelligence had fed America key information about military targets in Iraq before the US led 2003 illegal invasion of Iraq. The Iraq war was vehemently opposed by the government of Merkel's predecessor Gerhard Schröder of Social Democrat party, which is now in grand coalition with her party.

The question of torture at secret prisons specially in East Europe had erupted following a clutch of media reports led by the Washington Post and Der Spiegel which reported US use of airports in Europe for CIA flights to transport terror suspects to a network of secret jails for questioning.

One of the persons picked up for questioning as a suspected terrorist was a German citizen Khaled Masri, who was on holiday in Macedonia. He was flown out and tortured in Afghanistan for five months before being released on grounds of mistaken identity in 2004. During the last December visit of Ms Condoleezza Rice to Europe, Merkel had said that the United States had acknowledged responsibility.

"The American government admitted its mistake," Merkel said. But Rice said she could not talk about the case specifically but added, "Any policy will sometimes result in errors, and when it happens we will do everything we can to rectify it." This had led to some confusion.

Angela Merkel's current visit;

George W. Bush spent 45 minutes with Angela Merkel signaling a "new chapter" in U.S.-German relations . But it was admitted that there was a "spirited" but respectful one-on-one Oval Office session where she challenged U.S. treatment of terror suspects but lent strong support to joint diplomatic efforts to defuse the nuclear standoff with Iran. Merkel, raised the question of detainee treatment at Guantánamo Bay, but she was non-confrontational stating that Europeans critical of such treatment needed to suggest reasonable alternatives for dealing with lawless terrorists.

Bush described his first impressions of Merkel "incredibly positive." "She's smart," he said. "She's plenty capable. She's got kind of a spirit to her that is appealing. She loves freedom." Some years ago he had looked into the soul of another visitor , Russian President Vladimir Putin, and was equally effusive.

But Merkel's visit was further blighted by a growing scandal reported by Germany's ARD television channel that Germans had fed USA key information about military targets in Iraq. Citing a US government source the TV channel said German intelligence officers in Baghdad passed information about a restaurant in the Mansur district of the city which the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, was likely to visit on the eve of the US-led invasion. The US military bombed the building killing 12 people.

German MPs have called for a full inquiry into the allegations putting under cloud future of Franz Walter Steinmeyer, Merkel's Social Democrat Foreign Minister, who was a close aide of Schröder during the Iraq war. The allegations were reportedly confirmed by Berlin government sources and were perhaps made to embarrass the Schröder government and his party.

From such reports it is clear that many segments of western establishments in contravention of officially stated policies help each other against eastern nations. During the 1990-91 Gulf Crisis and War , many sections of former communist states in East Europe had helped US-led coalition forces . Both in USA and West Europe there are leaks galore now a days .While there are many sincere and righteous people angered and worried by immoral and illegal policies and acts of their governments , there are many who remained silent when Iraq was being invaded .They are now croaking and singing to earn brownie points , specially senior Foreign officials and some think tanks in UK and USA. This is fooling no one.

USA with almost total bi-partisan support, with co-operation from its willing and supine corporate media , sought to sell " Operation Iraqi Freedom " to the American public as a bedside story with a happy ending .Ahmed Chalabi, in exile since decades and a longtime CIA agent , now Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq , but a convicted embezzler in Jordan , cheer led the invasion saying that Iraqis would welcome US[ invading?] forces with flowers .Among others ,he also conveniently produced an Iraqi defector named " curve ball " to mislead the Administration and the media ,about weapons of mass

destruction (WMDs) , not that it was needed , with the Neo-Cons in the Bush administration having already made up their minds for an invasion. But the 'Operation' has turned out to be a night mare for the Administration.

Swiss paper uncovers Ugly truth about CIA torture centres in Europe ;

Swiss newspaper Sonntags Blick better known for its light reading material said that it had hard evidence of CIA operated secret prisons in Europe, where al-Qaeda sympathizers were detained and interrogated. It said that the Swiss Intelligence had intercepted a message from the Egyptian Foreign Office to its Embassy in London in the middle of November, 2005 by the Swiss "Big Ears" , its Onyx system .Since 2000 it has enabled the Swiss to keep watch over civil and military satellite communications around the world . Onyx is a miniature Echelon system which the Americans use for eavesdropping and information around the world including Europe , even on commercial matters which is then passed on to US companies to give them undue advantage.It has led to debates in European Parliaments.

This interception would constitute the first proof of the existence of secret CIA prisons in Europe. Leakage of this secret according to France's Le Monde, has caused embarrassment and confusion in Switzerland. The Federal Department of Defense (DDPS), which refused to make any comment did admit that a secret document had leaked. It announced the opening of an administrative investigation which will be led by a Parliamentary Commission in charge of activities linked to national security.

Ironically , Swiss Senator Dick Marty, appointed by the Council of Europe to investigate on the "secret CIA prisons" in Europe, said he couldn't confirm the authenticity of the Egyptian message. Quoted by SwissInfo, he pointed out that this document used "information that confirms clues which was already suspected."

In Romania, the SonntagsBlick article reopens the scandal that broke in November 2005, triggered by Human Rights Watch accusations. At that time, Bucharest denied everything. The site of Mihail Kogalniceanu - a base used by the American army during the Iraq war - was mentioned as the airport where a CIA plane, coming from Kabul and going to Guantanamo, had stopped on September 23, 2005. This base was enthusiastically offered to USA by the Romanian government , after Turkey had refused use of its military bases for attacks against Iraq in 2003.

In the intercepted message the Egyptian Foreign Ministry claimed to have discovered, "through its own sources," that Romania allowed the CIA to interrogate 23 Iraqi and Afghan citizens at a interrogation centre at the Mihail Kogalniceanu military base near its major Black Sea port Constantza.

The ugly truth about the doings of the US administration is now becoming fully public even in USA .The American Civil Liberties Union (ACL) recently released new documents obtained from the Defense Department detailing abuse at U.S. facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantánamo Bay. Included in the release is the first publicly

available government document confirming the existence of a secret "Special Access Program" involving a special ops unit, Task Force 6-26, which has been implicated in numerous detainee abuse incidents in Iraq, and whose operatives used fake names to thwart an Army investigation.

"These documents confirm that the torture of detainees and its subsequent cover-up was part of a larger clandestine operation, in all likelihood, authorized by senior government officials," said ACLU attorney Amrit Singh. "Despite mounting evidence of systemic abuse authorized or endorsed from above, however, not a single high level official has thus far been brought to justice."

Rendition of Khaled Masri;

It may be recalled that in May 2004, the White House had dispatched US Ambassador Daniel R. Coats to Berlin to tell that the CIA had wrongfully imprisoned Khaled Masri, for five months, and would soon release him, with a request that the German government not disclose what it was told even if Masri went public. The U.S. officials feared exposure of covert action programs on thin or speculative evidence and transfer of the suspects to countries with secret bases would have serious repercussions. The CIA, working with other intelligence agencies, has captured an estimated 3,000 people, including several key leaders of Al Qaeda, in its campaign to dismantle terrorist networks. But it is impossible to know how many mistakes the CIA and its foreign partners have made.

Masri said that he underwent coercive interrogation and confinement for five months before being released, two months after the CIA concluded it was a case of mistaken identity. He is suing former CIA director George Tenet with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). In filing the suit in Washington, the ACLU said it was seeking to "reaffirm that the rule of law is central to our identity as a nation".

In another instance, according to the Washington Post, the CIA seized Hassan Mustafa Osama Nasir, an Egyptian refugee known as Abu Omar, from a street in Milan. The agency then told Italian anti-terrorism police that he had fled to the Balkans - a piece of disinformation. The deception worked for more than a year, until the Italians discovered that the CIA had whisked Nasir off to Egypt, where he was reportedly interrogated and tortured. The Italian courts are investigating the case.

US refused the Red Cross access to all detainees;

The state department's top legal adviser, John Bellinger admitted for the first time in Geneva that the US has not given the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to all detainees in its custody. But he gave no details about where such prisoners were held. He said ICRC had access to "absolutely everybody" at the prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, which holds suspects detained during the US war on terror.

Adam Ereli, the State Department's deputy spokesman, had said the United States would not alter its position after the ICRC president said in Geneva that his organization was holding discussions to gain access to all detainees, including those held in secret locations.

Ereli said that the Geneva Conventions requiring humane treatment of prisoners of war did not apply to certain terrorism suspects seized as "unlawful enemy combatants," but that, in any case, the United States treats most of them as prisoners of war. "We're going the extra mile here," Ereli said, by allowing the Red Cross access to Al Qaeda suspects and others held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and in Afghanistan. The Red Cross also has access to prisoners held in Iraq.

Commentators said that this has confirmed suspicions that the CIA has been operating secret prisons outside international oversight.

UN against US led detentions in Iraq;

John Pace, human rights chief for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), said that the US military is abusing its United Nations mandate in Iraq by detaining thousands of people without due process of law. The Iraqi Government, installed by the US led Occupation Forces, is also guilty of major human rights abuses, including holding people without charge in secret jails "littered" across the country. Referring to accusations of corruption among Iraqi justice officials and police, Pace said illegal detentions were fuelling rather than curbing revolt.

"There is no question that terrorism has to be addressed. But we are equally sure that the remedies being applied ... are not the best ways of eliminating terrorism," he said. "More terrorists are being created than are being eliminated." Pace added that the system, including the pattern, duration and conditions of detention, were "not consistent with what is foreseen in the UN Security Council Resolution 1546" and complained of "total breakdown" in individuals' rights.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has also voiced concern about mass detentions without charge, which US commanders say are a legitimate response to security threats under the Resolution 1546, their mandate for occupying Iraq.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour said that the U.S.-led war on terror has undermined the global ban on torture. This did not please U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. John Bolton, appointed by Bush against the wishes of the US Congress. Bolton called Arbour's statement "inappropriate and illegitimate."

Rice's December tour of Europe;

Before her departure for Europe in a pep talk for US audience at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, Ms Rice told critics of tough U.S. tactics in the war on terror that the intelligence gathered by the CIA had saved European lives. Responding to the outcry

over detailed reports of secret CIA run prisons in Europe. Rice said the United States "will use every lawful weapon to defeat these terrorists."

But Ms Rice steadfastly refused to respond to the question if the United States had CIA-operated secret prisons there. "We cannot discuss information that would compromise the success of intelligence, law enforcement, and military operations. We expect other nations share this view."

Reports of the existence of the secret prisons did cause a trans-Atlantic uproar. The European Union asked the Bush administration about these reports. Britain, the current EU president, sent a two-paragraph letter to Washington for clarifications.

Dutch Foreign Minister Ben Bot said Rice's comments about secret CIA flights and detention centers for terrorist suspects outside the United States were "unsatisfactory," Bot told MPs that "rendition" was not kidnapping as some critics claimed but a speedy process of extraditing suspects to the US. Normal extraditions through the courts can last for years, he said. Media reported that the CIA regularly made use of Dutch airports for secret flights.

The European Union (EU) has threatened to sanction any EU member countries, which had such prisons on their territories. Let us see !

US admits policy of renditions;

National Security Adviser, Stephen Hadley, Ms Rice's successor told CNN that "we do not move people around the world so they can be tortured". Thus dittoing the official line. But Hadley added that the policy of renditions "has been a practice before 9/11, before this Administration", as well as "a practice engaged in by a number of countries".

What is 'rendition'?

Rendition is an old western practice beginning perhaps from the days of the Spanish inquisitions if not earlier. In his memoirs, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel wrote that during the World War II the secret abduction and 'rendition' from Third Reich occupied countries to Germany of suspected Resistance members - otherwise known as the Nacht und Nebel (Night and Fog) Decree - was the worst of all of the orders issued by Adolf Hitler . Nacht und Nebel-type practices were used by the French to suppress successive uprisings by Algerian freedom fighters in the 1950s. Since then the practice of "disappearances" has spread around the globe - according to Human Rights Watch. Iraq and Sri Lanka accounted for the most cases between 1980 and 2003.

In Latin America, the technique was successfully internationalized under "Operation Condor". The operation, conceived and effectively implemented under Chilean president Augusto Pinochet, brought together the intelligence agencies of Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and Uruguay, as well as Pinochet's own secret police chief, Manuel Contreras, in 1975. The objective was to "enhance communications among each other and integrate

tactical operations in tracking down, secretly detaining, torturing and terminating [the lives of] critics or suspected militants, who were often referred to as 'terrorists'," according to Peter Kornbluh, a senior analyst at the Washington-based National Security Archive (NSA).

So what is new !Yes , Western leaders and media keep on maligning eastern governments for similar practices .In many cases the techniques have been taught by western agencies to the agencies of their allies e.g. CIA to Savak of Shah's Iran or to Pakistan's ISI and Jihadis during the Afghan resistance against USSR. Israel's Mossad almost openly implements rendition techniques and teaches it to any takers.

An Important Rice visit to Romania;

During her short December trip to Bucharest, Ms Rice signed with the Romanian Foreign Minister Mihai Razvan Ungureanu a bilateral agreement for use of Romanian military bases at Mikhail Kogalniceanu, Babadag, Cincu and Smardan, with President Traian Basescu watching over at the Cotroceni Palace. Ms Rice also had talks with President Basescu on bilateral relations and cooperation within the Black Sea region and in the Balkans, as well as the cooperation in Afghanistan and Iraq. Romania announced that it would not withdraw troops from Iraq.

"Romania will turn into a pylon of stability in the region through the setting up of the American bases," declared Basescu. "The location of the American facilities on the territory of Romania represents a confirmation of the fact that the Romanian army has reached a certain potential as partner of the USA", added Basescu.

He also said that the other security structures of Romania could cooperate at the highest level with those of the US. "Washington's decision means also political credibility from the point of view of Romania," The acceptance by the Romanian people of the American presence in Romania is considered a precious asset of the bilateral relations, Basescu concluded.

Ms Rice replied that "Romania has become a strong ally for the US." She recollected that when she was in Bucharest with President Bush a rainbow appeared as a symbol of bilateral relations. She added that the US and Romania are not just friends, but also brother and sister in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Ms Rice thanked Romania for the sacrifices of their soldiers in difficult and dangerous places, calling this a strong commitment for the future of democracies like Iraq and Afghanistan. "We have a great, committed partner in Romania, which is ready to make sacrifices.

"Explaining why Washington chose Romania instead of Bulgaria, Rice said this was because of Romania's progress in the fields of defense and military training and that it was President Bush's decision who also took into account the strategic position of Romania.

In connection with the reported CIA detention centers, Ms Rice said the agreement regarding the bases in Romania would be a transparent one and up for discussion in the Parliament.

Asked about the risks following the signing, President Basescu said the risk was neither big, nor small, but that this was "just a leap forward for Romania in the global security system." "When I decided to sign, I had already assessed the risks and I knew that Romania was able to face the risks." He pledged commitment for stability in Iraq. "Romania will not diminish her military capabilities destined for this end in Iraq and will stay at the disposal of the Iraqi Government under the UN resolution and close to her allies," Basescu assured.

Ms Rice did not give a direct reply about the CIA prisons in Romania, but Basescu reiterated that Romania did not have and does not have such prisons on its territory, "My only appeal is that those who say that Romania has allegedly hosted or is hosting torture places assumed the responsibility of their declarations. It was improper to state that secret prisons existed only subject to the arrival of some planes. Romania is not willing to accept accusations of infringement of the human rights based on mere speculations," President Basescu said.

After 50 years under communism, a reluctant member of the Soviet Camp (but not fully of the Warsaw pact) Romania has discovered and assumed its European Christian identity as a full member of NATO and hopes to join EU in 2007. For USA and EU, the Romanian location is very important militarily and as a vantage point for trade with Caspian basin and Central Asia across the Black Sea.

How ever ,as the author had pointed out last year to senior Romanian leaders in meetings along with members of the foreign media in Bucharest that Romania must avoid projecting too close an affinity with US policies of torture .There are around 100,000 Muslims , mostly Tatars in Romania , which has a history of anti-Semitism . A few hundred thousand Romanian Jews had migrated to Israel. Tens of thousands of Israelis visit Romania for rest and recreation. The November 2003 bombings of a Synagogue in Istanbul was to punish it for the pro Israel policy . Turkey also receives hundreds of thousands of Israeli tourists every year. When President Basescu, soon after his election, visited Iraq to show solidarity with USA, the three journalists accompanying him were kidnapped. The story of their capture and release remains a mystery.

Poland;

Romania and Poland are two very pro US countries, described by US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as new Europe (an appellation the countries rejected) which was chided by French President Jacque Chirac when they had sided with USA on the question of US invasion of Iraq, against the general EU policy of opposition or neutrality.

Poland appears to be the center of CIA's secret detention network in Europe, with bases there holding a quarter of the 100 detainees estimated in such camps worldwide.

"Poland was the main base for CIA interrogations in Europe, while Romania played more of a role in the transfer of detained prisoners," Marc Garlasco, a leading analyst at Human Rights Watch, was quoted by Polish daily Gazeta Wyborcza.

Garlasco said that the CIA maintained two detention centers in Poland, which were closed only after the Washington Post broke the story. He said the allegations were based on information from CIA sources and other documents obtained by Human Rights Watch. "We have leads, circumstantial evidence to check but it's too early to reveal them," Garlasco added.

Polish authorities have repeatedly denied the existence of secret jails of any form on Polish territory, with Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz saying this week he would fully cooperate in human rights probes into the allegations. On 11 December, he ordered a detailed probe to "check if there is any proof that such an event took place in our country. It is necessary to finally close the issue because it could be dangerous to Poland." Said Marcinkiewicz's spokesman, Konrad Ciesiolkiewicz.

Rice in Ukraine of US franchised revolution;

Ms Rice flew to Kiev from Bucharest to express solidarity with US protégé President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine. US organizations across the board had spent hundreds of millions of US dollars last year to get him elected in a US franchised election organized through street revolutions, a process which was begun with the overthrow of Milosevic in Serbia and then perfected in Georgia. Street revolutions failed dismally in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan with Russia and China with central Asian states vociferously opposing US led franchised revolutions.

The sheen has come off the so called Orange revolution with Yushchenko's rich partner the Prime Minister quitting his company. The Ukrainian masses are unhappy with the results of the revolution with bribery and other scandals on increase. Russia on which Ukraine is dependent for its energy needs is squeezing Kiev. Next year's Parliament elections would be a litmus test for the Yushchenko regime. Ukraine is feeling the pinch of moving away from Russia, as Moscow is now charging market price for its gas, making the government unpopular. Western media and leaders objected to the market price. US and West use such tactics regularly. What is good for the goose is not good for the gander!

Shift in US Policy?

By the time Ms Rice reached Kiev, there was apparent shift in her position. She said that Washington now viewed its responsibilities under a UN treaty as banning the cruel or inhumane treatment of prisoners anywhere. She appeared to give the torture

question a clear and broad interpretation. Referring to the UN Convention against Torture (CAT), ratified by USA in 1994, Rice said that "as a matter of U.S. policy, the United States' obligations under the CAT, which prohibits cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment - those obligations extend to U.S. personnel wherever they are, whether they are in the United States or outside of the United States."

Scott McClellan, the White House spokesman, described the new approach by Rice as "existing policy." But when pressed repeatedly by reporters, he would not say whether the United States took steps to ensure that countries to which it transferred prisoners lived up to promises against using torture.

Rice's shift produced some confusion in Washington, possibly reflecting tensions among the State Department, White House, Congress and the Pentagon on how narrowly to define some of the tools available. These can include techniques known as water boarding, in which a prisoner is strapped to a plank and dunked into water to create a sense of being drowned. Rights groups say that these methods have been used on prisoners at the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and elsewhere.

No rendition for torture –George Bush;

President Bush, referring to the process known as rendition, under which the United States has turned detainees over to other countries reiterated: "We do not render to countries that torture. That has been our policy, and that policy will remain the same."

But wrote Naomi Klein in the Guardian "It's [torture] a history exhaustively documented in an avalanche of books, declassified documents, CIA training manuals, court records and truth commissions. In his forthcoming book, *A Question of Torture*, Alfred McCoy synthesizes this evidence, producing a riveting account of how monstrous CIA-funded experiments on psychiatric patients and prisoners in the 1950s turned into a template for what he calls "no-touch torture", based on sensory deprivation and self-inflicted pain. McCoy traces how these methods were field-tested by CIA agents in Vietnam as part of the Phoenix program and then applied in Latin America and Asia under the guise of police training.

"It is not only apologists for torture who ignore this history when they blame abuses on "a few bad apples". A startling number of torture's most prominent opponents keep telling us that the idea of torturing prisoners first occurred to US officials on September 11 2001, at which point the methods used in Guantanamo apparently emerged, fully formed, from the sadistic recesses of Dick Cheney's and Donald Rumsfeld's brains. Up until that moment, we are told, America fought its enemies while keeping its humanity intact."

David Luban, a Georgetown University law professor said that Rice appeared to be marking a genuine shift. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales had implied that such treatment was forbidden by the U.S. Constitution - meaning within the United States. So the techniques short of outright torture could legally be employed abroad. "But this looks

like it's different," Luban said, "and I think if Rice meant what she said, that's a big change." He cautioned, however, that only U.S. personnel were covered and perhaps not foreign police or security personnel or even foreign contractors.

Opposition in UK to rendition in CIA torture Prisons;

Resistance to wayward US ways has grown steadily in UK, where assurances by Ms Rice that Washington did not send detainees abroad for torture were dismissed as "beyond belief" by a group of MPs from various parties.

The group was launched to investigate the "extraordinary renditions" of prisoners by the CIA. It claimed that Ms Rice confirmed that Britain had been informed about the nature of the secret CIA flights to UK airports. Andrew Tyrie, the group's Tory chairman, said: "There has been so much smoke on this issue; it's very unlikely that there is not a fire somewhere. I think it's likely they have been tortured."

Photographs were produced of CIA planes landing and taking off at UK airports while the government denied that British airports were used for torture flights, "so far as we aware". This did not satisfy the MPs, and Mr. Mullin, a former Labor foreign affairs minister said, "Some of the assurances in [Ms Rice's] statement defy belief in a country where there has recently been a public discussion on whether submerging prisoners in water to the point of drowning constitutes torture or not."

Tyrie interpreted Rice's claim that the US respected the sovereignty of other countries to mean that UK ministers knew about the flights. "By implication, whatever has been going on, the British authorities were informed," he said. He added that Ms Rice chose her words carefully to avoid ruling out abuse of prisoners that stopped short of torture. "She said torture is defined by law and by implication there may be levels of duress that may be short of torture," he clarified.

He warned Ms Rice that defending abuse of prisoners would be counter-productive. "It's not just that people may have been tortured. It is that using torture to combat terrorism is likely to inflame Muslim opinion and leave us less secure, not more. We have learnt that lesson the hard way in Northern Ireland; the French learnt that lesson in Algeria."

Liberal Democrat MP Menzies Campbell described Ms Rice's statement as "disingenuous". He said: "The volume of evidence of transfers has become overwhelming but what possible purpose is served by rendition other than to subject individuals to harsher treatment than would otherwise be the case?"

"Parliament and the public are entitled to expect the British Government to show equivalent candor. But the question remains, what did our government know and when did it know it? How high up the political tree did such knowledge go?"

The Labor chairman of the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, Mike Gapes pledged that his committee would also pursue ministers over "extraordinary rendition" flights

across UK airspace. Some member of the committee privately said they were appalled after Ian Pearson, a Foreign Office minister, who told a recent hearing that the Government would use information gained from torture to protect against attacks by terrorists.

In spite of Tony Blair being in a state of denial that US-UK led invasion of Iraq had any relation to last July bombings in London, the people know better and are worried about implications of torture by US and UK , with many British citizens being victims of such torture in Guantanamo, in Iraq , Afghanistan and even UK itself .

British Lords ban "torture evidence"

The Law Lords ruled in London that information gleaned from torture anywhere in the world was unacceptable as evidence in British courts. Rights groups immediately said the ruling sent a clear signal to governments around the world who are wrestling with accusations that they participated in, provided facilities for, or used evidence in court extracted from people detained as part of a CIA program known as "rendition". The decision by UK's highest court to refuse evidence obtained under torture in third countries comes a day after the United States explicitly banned its interrogators from treating detainees inhumanely after widespread anger and pressure from European governments and the U.S. Congress.

POWER CORRUPTS, ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTED US SYSTEM  
ABSOLUTELY

Louise Arbour, the UN's high commissioner for human rights, also warned that the absolute ban on torture could become a casualty of the "war on terror". Without naming the United States, she criticized "governments in a number of countries" who were claiming that the world had changed and that the old rules no longer applied. No credible case for this had been made, she insisted.

With the growing opposition in USA and even reawakening of some in the US media to Bush policies, there is hope. Even before the March 2003 war more than 1,000 law professors and U.S. legal institutions had organized opposition to the U.S. war crime of launching an "aggressive war in violation of the UN Charter" against Iraq. Violation of international law was also a central theme in worldwide demonstrations by tens of millions against the war. The illegality of the war was confirmed by the leak of the Downing Street memo; 130 members of Congress joined Rep. John Conyers in demanding that the Bush administration come clean about the invasion ,supported by a half million citizen signatures gathered in barely a week. "Scootergate" is fundamentally about the cover-up of White House lies justifying the war.

"Illegal detention and torture are also war crimes. Starting with the exposure of prisoner abuse at Abu Gharib and Guantanamo, cascading revelations have established that these cases exemplify a pattern of abuse authorized at the highest levels of government. Human rights groups like the Center for Constitutional Rights, the

American Civil Liberties Union, and Human Rights First have suggested suing in U.S. and foreign courts Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and others for breaching the U.S. Constitution and the Geneva Conventions.

Paul Craig Roberts, Hoover Institution senior fellow and assistant secretary of the treasury under Ronald Reagan, has charged Bush with "lies and an illegal war of aggression, with outing CIA agents, with war crimes against Iraqi civilians, with the horrors of the Abu Gharib and Guantanamo torture centers" and calls for the president's impeachment. Anne-Marie Slaughter, dean of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton and former president of the American Society of International Law, declares: "These policies make a mockery of our claim to stand for the rule of law. [Americans] should be marching on Washington to reject inhumane techniques carried out in our name." Cindy Sheehan, mother of a soldier killed in Iraq, whose single handed resistance to US policies, including sit-ins near Bush's Texas ranch ,brought various opposition groups together ,insists: "We cannot have these people pardoned. They need to be tried on war crimes and go to jail."

Throughout the discourse on Iraq war , which now agitates USA and Western Europe, the point made is that the US invasion could have been carried out better and implemented better and successfully. There is no realization or acknowledgement that time for colonization is now gone. It is not the divine right of Christian West to subjugate and rule the Middle East, Africa or Asia through the power of its guns. The Iraqi resistance to U.S.-led occupation from the very beginning has made it clear that the era of colonization is over.

(Gajendra Singh., served as Indian Ambassador to Turkey and Azerbaijan in 1992 -96. Prior to that, he served as ambassador to Jordan (during the 1990 - 91 Gulf war), Romania and Senegal. He is currently chairman of the Foundation for Indo-Turkic Studies, in Bucharest. The views expressed here are his own