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## Anti-torture agency helped with CIA interrogations

Personnel Recovery Agency aided in creation of harsh techniques

Julian E. Barnes, Los Angeles Times - A U.S. military agency that trains troops to resist and survive torture offered crucial help in developing harsh interrogation techniques used by the CIA, according to a Senate report to be released today.

The military expertise also was used by the Justice Department to develop controversial legal justifications for abusive interrogation methods, the report by the Senate Armed Services Committee said.

Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), the committee chairman, said the report "connects the dots" to show how techniques familiar to the military experts found their way into controversial memos

by the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel that authorized abusive interrogation practices.

Last week, the Obama administration released Justice Department memos outlining many of the harsh techniques used by the CIA.

Most of the methods were used at the military's Survive, Evade, Resist and Escape -- or SERE -- schools to prepare

American service members for possible torture in captivity overseas.

The report fills in details about the development of the Bush administration's controversial detention and inter-



Brennan Linsley/The Associated Press

rogation policies, which were ordered discontinued by President Obama when he took office.

The report shows that military and intelligence officials started planning

harsh techniques as early as February 2002, seven months before the tactics were approved by the Justice Department.

The 200-page Senate report was

completed in November. Defense Department officials only recently signed off on its release.

In summer 2002, the document said, the military's Joint Personnel Recov-

ery Agency, which oversees the SERE schools, was asked to help overcome resistance by suspected Al Qaeda operatives to interrogations.

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## US-Iranian journalist in hospital

Roxana Saberi fed intravenously after hunger strike



Behrouz Mehri, Getty Images/Roxana Saberi records video in Tehran, Iran, in September 2003.

United Press International- U.S. journalist Roxana Saberi, on a hunger strike in an Iran prison to protest her spying conviction, was hospitalized to get nourishment, her father said.

Reza Saberi said his daughter was taken to the hospital at Tehran's Evin prison Friday and fed intravenously before being returned to her cell, CNN reported.

Saberi said his

daughter looked "weak and frail" when he saw her Monday.

The 32-year-old Iranian-American free-lance journalist was tried and convicted during a one-day, closed-door trial on espionage charges and sentenced to eight years in prison. Saberi is appealing her verdict, and Iranian authorities have said they will ensure the appeals process is quick and fair.

Saberi began her

hunger strike to protest her imprisonment at Evin, which houses Iranian dissidents and political prisoners, CNN said

Saberi's case drew sharp denunciations from U.S. President Barack Obama and other U.S. and international leaders.

When arrested in January, Iranian officials said, Saberi was held for buying a bottle of wine. The Foreign Ministry later said

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## Egypt pig slayings called religiously motivated

By Maggie Michael, The Associated Press-

CAIRO- The Egyptian government is using swine flu as an excuse to get rid of tens of thousands of pigs raised by garbage collectors who live amid the refuse in Cairo slums. But the move has prompted

accusations Monday that Muslims are attacking minority Christians, who breed the animals.

The government ordered the slaughter of all the country's 300,000 pigs as a precaution against swine flu, even though no cases have been reported in the country. But after

the World Health Organization criticized the measure as entirely unnecessary, the government expanded the rationale for the slaughter to confront a long-standing hygienic problem posed by pigs and garbage dumps in the midst of the capital.

An estimated

quarter of a million people in Cairo, primarily poor Christians, make their living from garbage collecting and raising pigs in city slums. They collect the refuse, dump it in the courtyards of their house and comb through it for material recycled in crude workshops

nearby while the animals feed on food waste.

Muslims consider pigs unclean and most do not eat pork. With pig raising and consumption almost entirely confined to Christians, some see the slaughter as having religious overtones.

The city's gar-

bage collectors say destroying pigs is an attack on their livelihood that will further impoverish them. They clashed violently with police on Sunday as government workers came to haul the animals away for slaughter.

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## Egypt: 'This is all because we are Christians'

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"This is all because we are Christians. This is the only reason," said one middle-aged garbage collector in Cairo. He would not give his name because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Christians make up an estimated 10 percent of Egypt's population of 80 million and usually live in harmony with the country's Muslims.

The government denies the slaughter has anything to do with Muslim distaste for pork and maintains that new, hygienic pig farms will be set up in two years time.

But Adel Hammouda, the chief editor of the weekly *al-Fagr* and a Muslim, picked up on the religious undertones in his column this week entitled "Secularian flu in Egypt."

"They found in this black epidemic their golden opportunity to wage their religious war against Christianity, hiding behind the pigs," he wrote.

Egyptian Christian groups in the U.S. have also condemned the move as singling out Christians and targeting their economic lifeline.

"The question is why the government decided to destroy all Egyptian swine? The answer

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she was detained for reporting without proper credentials.

Saberi has been living in Iran since 2003, free-lancing for National Public

is simple, it's part of the forced Islamization which has been planned for over 50 years," said Archbishop Ashraf Ramelah, head of the U.S.-based Voice for Copts, as Egypt's Christians are known.

The government maintains that it has long been working to move the pig farms out of these slums because their steady diet of scraps and the city's organic refuse, is unhygienic.

According to Isaac Mikhail, the head of Garbage Collectors' Association, pig farmers want to move out of the slums to cleaner pastures, but have been prevented by the local municipality.

"If the government had moved us ten years ago, we wouldn't have faced this problem now. People are desperate to move to healthier location," he said. "We want to separate the pigs from the birds from the humans to prevent the virus."

Other critics of the government decision have pointed out that removing the pigs does not address another major part of the health hazard — the massive piles of rotting garbage in the slums.

Egyptian officials say they have killed about 700 pigs so far and they insist they are pressing ahead

Radio and other news organizations, and was writing a book about Iranian culture.

Iranian authorities revoked her press credentials in 2006, but Saberi still filed news items,

with slaughter of all swine in the country despite the mounting criticism.

The World Health Organization says the H1N1 virus that sickened 1,000 people around the world and killed 27 is being spread by humans, adding that pork products are safe to eat.

Egypt's decision threatens to devastate the country's largely Christian-run pork industry in Egypt. Girgis Youssef Boulis, the head of pork producer Ramsis Meats, said pork accounts for about 30% of the country's total meat production.

"There is a 100% impact on sales. They've ground to a halt," said Boulis, whose company — one of the largest pork producers in Egypt — employs about 100 people and runs state of the art farms in the countryside.

"If this continues, one of the first things that I will think about is layoffs," he said. "But more than that, there are the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people at stake in this industry, from the farmers, to the producers, to the workers and the drivers who deliver the meat."

"I've invested millions of pounds in equipment, including buildings, the Committee to Protect Journalists, a journalists' advocacy group, said. In early April, it was learned that Saberi was charged with espionage.

fridges, etc. Who will compensate me for these millions in investments?"

The move is already having an impact on the market for other meats, he said. Domestic fish prices have surged about 100% as people turn to other lean, protein-rich meats in place of pork.

"If beef prices haven't gone up now, they will in a week," Boulis predicted.



Agence France-Presse

## Taliban ends peace deal

MINGORA, Pakistan (AP) -

Black-turbaned militants roamed city streets and seized buildings in a northwestern Pakistan valley Tuesday as thousands of people fled fighting between the Taliban and troops that the government said could lead to an exodus of half a million people.

The Taliban declared the end of their peace deal with the government. Buses carrying the residents of Mingora, the region's main town, were crammed inside and out: Refugees clambered onto the roofs after seats and floors filled up.

Children and adults alike carried their belongings on their heads and backs - all of them fleeing fighting they fear is about to consume the region.

## US seeks help from Saudis

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)-U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Tuesday that the U.S. wants to enlist Saudi Arabia in helping Pakistan stave off extremist threats from militants advancing on Islamabad.

"Saudi Arabia clearly has a lot of influence throughout the entire region, and a long-standing and close relationship with Pakistan," Gates said.

Gates, the senior U.S. defense official, arrived in Riyadh on Tuesday afternoon.

## US bombings kill civilians

KABUL (AP)- Bombing runs by U.S.-led coalition jets killed dozens of civilians taking shelter from a fierce ground battle between Taliban militants and Afghan and international forces, two Afghan officials said Tuesday.

The U.S. confirmed fighting Monday in western Afghanistan and said reports of civilian deaths were under investigation. One official said villagers transported an estimated 30 bodies to a provincial capital to show officials. Other officials estimated the civilian toll to be between 70 and 100.



## Officials warned against using techniques on detainees

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Senior Defense officials, including the office of Undersecretary Douglas J. Feith, gave SERE officials their approval to assist the CIA, the report said.

Feith was considered a key architect of the Bush administration's war and detention policies.

In a memo uncovered by Senate investigators, Joseph Witsch, an instructor with the personnel recovery agency, wrote that interrogation methods in use at the time were "far too limited in scope" to be useful on suspected Al Qaeda terrorists.

"We must have a process that goes beyond the old paradigm of military interrogation for tactical information or criminal investigation for legal proceedings," Witsch wrote.

The techniques described to the CIA by SERE school officials at the time included many that eventually became part of the agency's

program -- including cramped confinement, waterboarding, manhandling, slaps to the face, stress positions and others.

Levin said top civilians in the Bush administration allowed the SERE program to be used to mistreat detainees.

"They took a program called SERE, totally distorted it and put it to a purpose it was never intended to be put," Levin said.

The report notes that a week after the personnel recovery agency described the techniques to Defense Department lawyers, former Assistant Atty. Gen. Jay S. Bybee issued a memo allowing the CIA to use 10 of the SERE techniques against Abu Zubaydah, who was believed to have been a high-ranking Al Qaeda operative.

The Senate report found that at the SERE schools, safeguards were used when demonstrating torture techniques on American service

members. However, many of the safeguards were left out when the methods were taught to CIA interrogators.

For instance, the limit on the amount of water poured on a detainee during waterboarding was raised from two pints to 1.5 gallons.

The report said some military officials forcefully warned against using the SERE techniques on detainees. Some warned that use of the tactics would be illegal. Others

emphasized that they would be counterproductive.

Lt. Col. Morgan Banks, a senior Army SERE psychologist, wrote in a 2002 memo cited by the Senate report that while applying pain could make detainees talk, it could not make them tell the truth.

"This will increase the amount of information they will tell the interrogator," Banks wrote, "but it does not mean the information is accurate."



Getty Images