

John Conyers' Press Release

(Washington, D.C.) – House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers, Jr. D-Mich.) today released the transcript of the Committee's interview of Judge Jay Bybee, former assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel during the administration of President George W. Bush and author of two of the Bush administration's most infamous "torture memos."

"This testimony reveals that many brutal techniques reportedly used in CIA interrogations were not authorized by the Justice Department – the author of these legal memos has now admitted this on the record," Conyers said. "These statements are highly relevant to the pending criminal investigation of detainee abuse and I have provided the Committee's interview to the Justice Department and directed my staff to cooperate with any further requests for information."

"During a recent Committee interview, answers provided by Judge Bybee made very clear that detainee interrogations were not conducted within the 'four corners' of the advice provided by the Office of Legal Counsel, and that the close relationship between John Yoo and the administration warrants further investigation," said Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), one of the members involved in questioning Judge Bybee. "Judge Bybee's disclosures heighten the need for a special counsel to investigate the development and implementation of interrogation policies following the 9/11 attacks and, once again, I call upon the Department of Justice to ensure justice and accountability for these potentially grave abuses of executive power."

"The memos issued from Judge Bybee's office during his tenure, some authored by John Yoo and others bearing his own signature, have now been widely criticized across the political spectrum for their flawed legal analyses," said Congressman Adam Schiff (D-Calif.). "Judge Bybee's testimony confirms that the Office of Legal Counsel failed to act as an independent and objective source of legal counsel to the administration, and rather saw its role as fashioning a colorable defense for any action President Bush and Vice President Cheney sought to take."

The [attached fact sheet](#) summarizes key revelations of the interview including the following:

- Bybee made clear that OLC never approved a number of interrogation techniques that were reportedly used on CIA detainees, and that the OLC memos did not permit "substantial repetition" of even those techniques that were approved, such as waterboarding. According to other OLC documents, one detainee was waterboarded 183 times by the CIA and another was waterboarded 83 times.
- Bybee reported that his Deputy John Yoo never informed him of secret White House "war planning" meetings and that, based on what he knows now, he is "worried" that Yoo was too close to the White House.
- It has been previously reported that John Yoo's lost e-mails hampered the DOJ investigation of the torture memos – Bybee testified that he did not recall taking any steps to ensure that Yoo preserved his OLC e-mails when he worked for Bybee.
- Despite the widespread, bipartisan criticism of the torture memos and the extreme view of presidential power that they represent, Bybee testified that "in terms of the analysis, I am going to stand by the memo."

The Judiciary Committee interview of former Assistant Attorney General Bybee was conducted on May 26, 2010. The complete transcript (with one name redacted at the request of the Department of Justice) and documents referenced in the interview are available [here](#) .