

secret memos authorizing torture tactics

has helped our country disrupt terrorist plots and save innocent lives," Little said in a statement. "The agency has always sought a clear legal framework, conducting the program in strict accord with U.S. law, and protecting the officers who go face-to-face with ruthless terrorists."

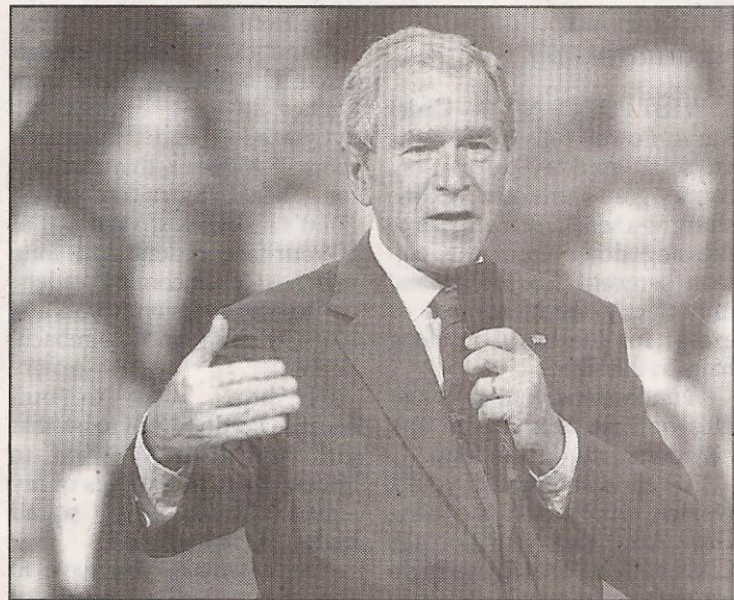
Congress has prohibited cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of terror suspects. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said several extreme interrogation techniques, including simulated drowning known as waterboarding, are specifically outlawed.

"As some may recall, there was at the time a debate over the way in which the administration was likely to interpret these prohibitions," McCain

said in a statement, adding that he was "personally assured by administration officials that at least one of the techniques allegedly used in the past, waterboarding, was prohibited under the new law."

The American Civil Liberties Union called for an independent counsel to investigate the Justice Department's torture opinions, calling the memos "a cynical attempt to shield interrogators from criminal liability and to perpetuate the administration's unlawful interrogation practices."

"The secret authorization of brutal interrogations is an outrageous betrayal of our core values, and a grave danger to our security," Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said in a statement.



Associated Press

President Bush speaks to the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lancaster, Pa., Wednesday.