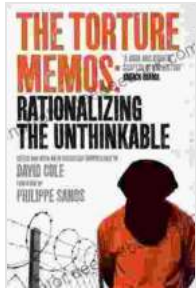


The Torture Memos: Rationalizing the Unthinkable



The Torture Memos: Rationalizing the Unthinkable

by Kenneth Paul Tan

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1118 KB
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Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
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The Torture Memos were a series of secret legal opinions issued by the Bush administration that provided legal justification for the use of enhanced interrogation techniques, including waterboarding, against suspected terrorists. The memos were widely condemned as illegal and immoral, and they played a significant role in damaging the United States' reputation abroad.

Background

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Bush administration launched the "War on Terror." As part of this war, the administration authorized the use of enhanced interrogation techniques against suspected terrorists. These techniques were designed to inflict pain and suffering on the detainees in order to extract information.

Waterboarding, which involves pouring water over a detainee's face while they are hooded and strapped to a board, was one of the most controversial of these techniques.

The administration's legal justification for the use of enhanced interrogation techniques was based on a narrow interpretation of the Geneva Conventions. The Geneva Conventions are a set of international treaties that prohibit the use of torture and other forms of cruel and inhuman treatment.

The Torture Memos

The first Torture Memo was issued on August 1, 2002, by the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) of the US Department of Justice. The memo was written by Assistant Attorney General Jay Bybee and Deputy Assistant Attorney General John Yoo. It argued that the Geneva Conventions did not apply to al-Qaeda and Taliban detainees because they were not members of a state party to the conventions. The memo also argued that the president had the authority to authorize the use of enhanced interrogation techniques against these detainees.

The second Torture Memo was issued on March 14, 2003, by the OLC. The memo was written by Bybee and Yoo. It provided a more detailed legal justification for the use of enhanced interrogation techniques. The memo argued that the president's authority to authorize the use of these techniques was based on his constitutional powers as commander-in-chief.

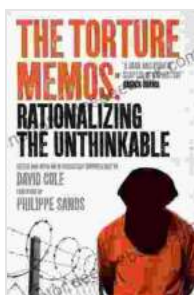
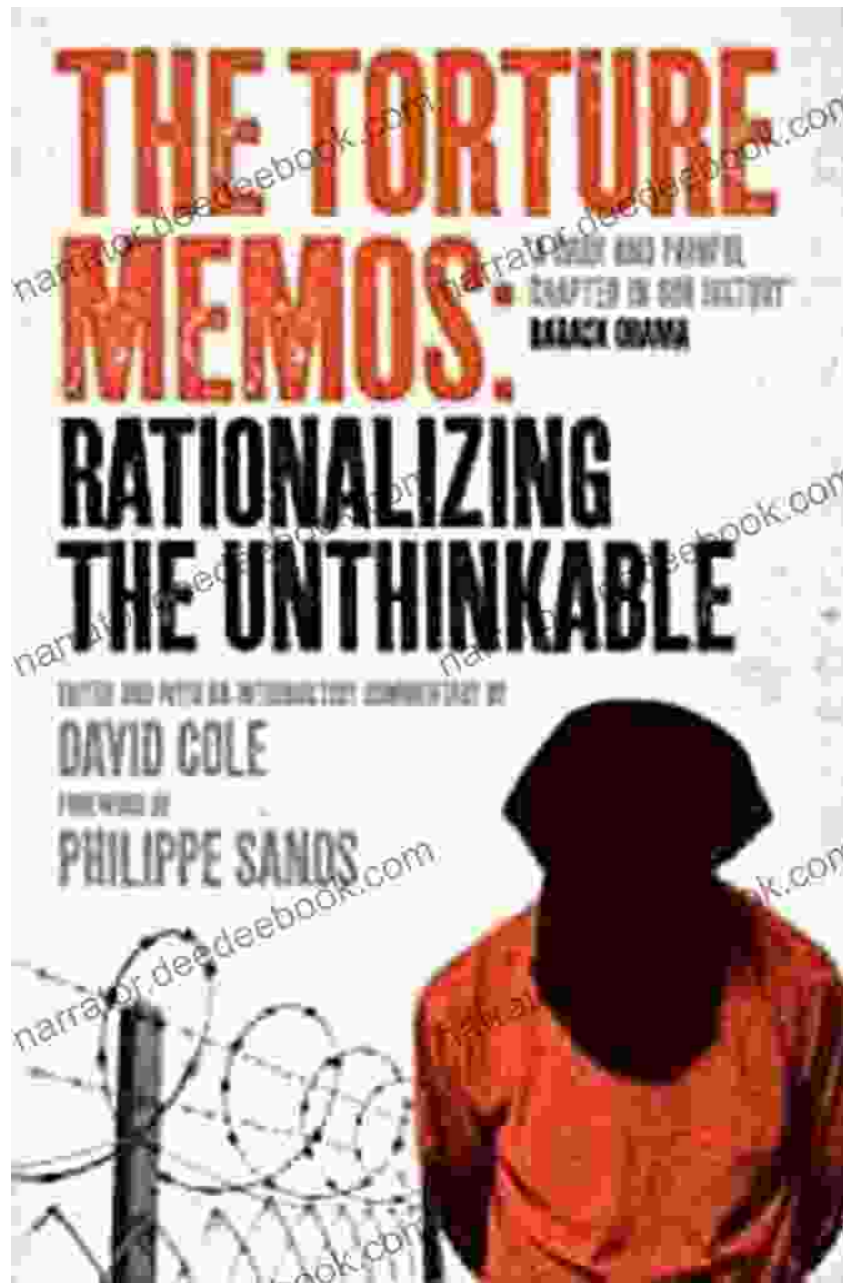
Criticism of the Torture Memos

The Torture Memos were widely criticized by human rights groups, legal experts, and members of Congress. Critics argued that the memos were

illegal and immoral. They also argued that the memos damaged the United States' reputation abroad.

In 2004, the Senate Armed Services Committee released a report that condemned the Torture Memos. The report concluded that the memos were "a stain on our national honor." In 2009, the Obama administration released a memo that repudiated the Torture Memos.

The Torture Memos represent a dark chapter in American history. The memos were a cynical attempt to justify the use of torture and other forms of cruel and inhuman treatment. The memos damaged the United States' reputation abroad and they undermined the rule of law. The Torture Memos should never be forgotten, and they should serve as a warning against the dangers of unchecked executive power.



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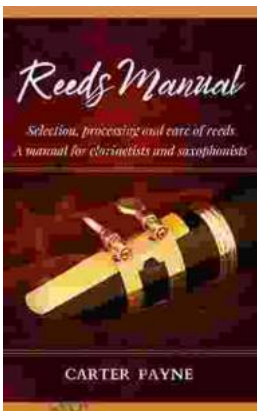
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