

Dems want probe into CIA tape destruction

by UPI

WASHINGTON - U.S. Democratic lawmakers, expressing shock and anger, called for an investigation into the CIA's destruction of videotapes that documented interrogations. The CIA destroyed videotapes in 2005 that showed the use of harsh interrogation techniques, Director Michael Hayden told employees Thursday in a statement. The tapes, which showed the interrogation of Abu Zubaydah, the first detainee in CIA custody, were destroyed in part because of concern about interrogators possibly being subjected to legal risks, several officials told The New York Times. Hayden said they also were destroyed to protect agents' identity and because they no longer had intelligence value. President George Bush "has no recollection of being made aware of the tapes or their destruction before (Thursday)," White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said. "It is a startling disclosure," Senate Majority Whip Richard Durbin, D-Ill., said, "that the United States of America, where the rule of law is venerated, is now in the business of destroying evidence." The destruction occurred as Congress scrutinized the agency's detention program, current and former government officials told the Times. "This matter must be promptly and fully investigated," said Rep. Jane Harman, D-Calif., head of the Homeland Security subcommittee on intelligence and terrorism risk assessment.

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