

## Officials Say C.I.A. Kept Qaeda Suspect in Secret Detention

By MARK MAZZETTI

WASHINGTON — The Central Intelligence Agency secretly detained a suspected member of Al Qaeda for at least six months beginning last summer as part of a program in which C.I.A. officers have been authorized by President Bush to use harsh interrogation techniques, American officials said Friday.

The suspect, Muhammad Rahim, is the first Qaeda prisoner in nearly a year who intelligence officials have acknowledged has been in C.I.A. detention. The C.I.A. emptied its secret prisons in the fall of 2006, when it moved 14 prisoners to Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, but made clear that the facilities could be used in the future to house high-level terrorism suspects.

Mr. Bush has defended the use of the secret prisons as a vital tool in American counterterrorism efforts, and last July he signed an executive order that formally reiterated the C.I.A.'s authority to use interrogation techniques more coercive than those permitted by the Pentagon.

Mr. Bush used his veto power last weekend to block legislation that would have prohibited the agency from using the techniques, and this week the House of Representatives failed to override the veto.

Military and intelligence officials said that Mr. Rahim was transferred earlier this week to

techniques against Mr. Rahim during his months in secret detention.

"This detention, like others, was conducted in accordance with U.S. law," said Paul Gimigliano, a C.I.A. spokesman. He declined to say whether the C.I.A. currently had custody of any other prisoners.

Government officials described Mr. Rahim, an Afghan who has fought battles for two decades, as a Qaeda planner and facilitator who at times in recent years had been a translator for Osama bin Laden.

They said he was captured and detained by local forces last summer in a country they would not name before being transferred to C.I.A. custody. Pakistani newspapers reported last summer that Pakistani operatives arrested Mr. Rahim in Lahore in August.

Before Mr. Rahim, the last prisoner the C.I.A. acknowledged it had detained was Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi, an Iraqi Kurd held by the agency for six months before being transferred to Guantánamo last April.

In his message to C.I.A. employees on Friday, General Hayden called Mr. Rahim a "tough, seasoned jihadist" with "high-level contacts" who at times had served as a personal translator for Mr. bin Laden. The message said that in 2001, Mr. Rahim helped prepare the Afghan cave complex of Tora Bora as a hideout for Qaeda fighters fleeing the American-led offensive.

According to an American counterterrorism official, Mr. Rahim is in his 40s and is a native of Nangarhar Province in Afghanistan, a rugged mountain territory that has long been a hive of jihadi activity.

The counterterrorism official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly, said that Mr. Rahim had attended radical madrasas, or religious schools, in Pakistan.

The Bush administration last month formally charged six Qaeda operatives said to have been involved in plotting the Sept. 11 attacks. Five of the six detainees, including Khalid Sheikh Mohamed, the alleged mastermind of the attacks, had been in C.I.A. custody until September 2006, when they were among the 14 prisoners moved to Guantánamo.

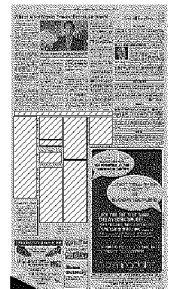
Military prosecutors have decided to seek the death penalty against the six men, government officials have said. During a speech on Friday in London, Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey said he hoped that the six men would not receive the death penalty. If they were to be executed, he said, "they would see themselves as martyrs."

Also on Friday, a lawyer representing Majid Khan, who had spent more than three years in the C.I.A.'s secret prisons, briefed Senate Intelligence Committee staff members on her client's description of his treatment there as torture. The lawyer, Gitanjali Gutierrez of the Center for Constitutional Rights, is the first lawyer to speak to Congress after meeting with a prisoner who was in the C.I.A. program.

The 90-minute meeting was closed, and Ms. Gutierrez said that she could not reveal what Mr. Khan had said about his treatment because the government declared prisoners' statements to be classified.

Ms. Gutierrez said her testimony was aimed at giving Congress independent information on the C.I.A. program, which she said "is operating criminally, shamefully and dangerously." C.I.A. officials say all of the agency's interrogation techniques were lawful at the time they were used.

***A prisoner is part of a program that allowed harsh interrogation methods by officers.***



Scott Shane contributed reporting.

the military prison at Guantánamo Bay. In a message to agency employees on Friday, Gen. Michael V. Hayden, the C.I.A. director, said Mr. Rahim had been put into the C.I.A. program because of "his past and the continuing threat he presented to American interests."

Intelligence officials would not say whether the C.I.A. had used any of what it calls an approved list of "enhanced" interrogation