3-5-1999

Trends. Tortuous Reasoning on Torture: The Ocalan Case

Editor

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As reported by The New York Times, a torture prevention group from the Council of Europe arrived on the island of Imrali to inspect the conditions under which the Kurdish rebel leader (murderer and terrorist from a Turkish Government perspective) Abdullah Ocalan is being held. However, if one assumes the intent to torture by Turkish captors, the probability of torture prevention is not high.

The immediate physical environment in which Ocalan is being held can be easily and quickly sanitized. Physical torture can be applied so as not to leave external marks. Psychological coercion can be used so that a captive will not easily divulge physical torture. And torture can be psychological as opposed to physical. In this last case the torture can even be applied in a manner that is not perceived as such by the captive or that is conducive to withholding information from a torture prevention group. Even a decision by Ocalan to completely and sincerely cooperate with his Turkish captors might not deter torture. In this case, his complete and sincere cooperation would be suspect and/or his actual and alleged transgressions would be perceived to merit immediate punishment and/or unsavory instincts of his captors would find a vulnerable target.