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Accuser With a Checkered Past

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A lawyer whose complaint prompted a Spanish criminal probe into whether the Bush administration approved the torture of terrorism suspects was once convicted of terrorist activity.

Gonzalo Boye served eight years in prison for his involvement in the 1988 kidnapping of Emiliano Revilla, a Spanish industrialist, who was held for ransom for eight months by ETA, a Basque separatist group classified as a terrorist organization by the U.S. and Spanish governments.

Boye was one of four Chilean members of a Marxist group, the Revolutionary Leftist Movement, or MIR, who were convicted of aiding ETA in the kidnapping. He received his law degree while behind bars and has since emerged as an advocate for European and Palestinian human rights causes.

Representing a group called the Association for the Rights of Prisoners, Boye and other lawyers filed a complaint with the Spanish National Court against six senior officials from the Bush administration, including former attorney general Alberto R. Gonzales. The complaint alleges that the officials sanctioned the torture of prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The other officials named in the complaint are Jay S. Bybee and John C. Yoo, former Justice Department officials; former Defense Department officials Douglas J. Feith and William J. Haynes II; and David S. Addington, who was legal counsel to Vice President Richard B. Cheney.

In an interview, Boye acknowledged his conviction but minimized his involvement in the crime, saying he had only lent an ID card to the kidnapers. He said he voluntarily traveled from London to Madrid in 1992 to answer investigators' questions about the case and was taken aback when he was arrested.

"I'm still convinced it was a very unfair trial," he said. "That was a very dark period in Spanish democratic history."

When asked if he thought the six Bush administration officials could expect to receive a fair trial in Spain, Boye said he had no doubts they would -- despite his experience.

The Spanish judge overseeing the investigation, Eloy Velasco, has said in court papers that he may not proceed if U.S. prosecutors decide to open their own criminal case against the "Bush Six," as Boye calls them.

-- Craig Whitlock

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