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## The CIA's Disgrace

### Inside the Senate Intelligence Committee Report on Torture

by MELVIN A. GOODMAN

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The disgraceful and unconscionable role of the CIA in President George W. Bush's Global War on Terror included the sadistic torture and abuse that predated and exceeded the so-called Torture Memoranda of the Department of Justice; the pathetic mismanagement by CIA directors and deputy directors that actually abetted the sadism; and the pathological lying that has accompanied the CIA's campaign to marginalize the Senate report and the Senate intelligence committee's chairwoman, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). An editorial in yesterday's *Washington Post* actually credited President Barack Obama with "fully" reining in the CIA with executive orders in 2009, but the ugly reality is that the president has not been willing to seek any accountability at the Central Intelligence Agency.

The Senate report and virtually all of its critics have referred to the "brutality" of CIA torture and abuse. Sadly, the word brutality is simply a euphemism in this sad chapter in U.S. history; the actions of CIA officials and contractors were sadistic. The only explanation for the destruction of the 92 torture tapes by Jose Rodriguez, the director of interrogations, who defied orders from the White House, was to prevent any knowledge of the sadism that incorporated every aspect of physical and mental cruelty. Rodriguez claimed that he had to destroy the tapes to protect the identity of the torturers. Well, even the torturers in *Zero Dark Thirty* were hooded; there has never been a time in modern history when torturers weren't hooded. Rodriguez obstructed

justice, but he is free to write exculpatory books and editorials for the *Washington Post*. (The only CIA officer who went public with information on torture and abuse is predictably in jail.)

Senior CIA officials at the highest level not only allowed the sadistic techniques to be applied, but they overruled clandestine operatives in the field at secret prisons in East Europe and Southeast Asia who wanted to call a halt to some of the encounters. The torture report is replete with examples of CIA headquarters overruling CIA operatives who found certain prisoners both “compliant and cooperative.” The fact that 85% of the interrogation group consisted of contractors points to the fact that many career operatives presumably refused to take part in the sadistic techniques.

The most egregious example was the case of al-Nashiri, who was waterboarded at least three times. The interrogators found al-Nashiri compliant, but a senior official in the Counter-Terrorism Center ordered the reinstatement of the torture and abuse and even ordered the field operatives not to make “sweeping statements” in cable traffic regarding compliance. It is obvious that CIA headquarters was witting of the need to cover-up as much as possible regarding the enhanced interrogation techniques. Thus, as strong as the executive summary is, the full report that runs to 6,000 pages also may only be the tip of the iceberg.

Senior CIA officials did not address the fact that many interrogators were untrained and that an inexperienced officer was given command of one of the most notorious secret prisons where all detainees were tortured. The report’s conclusion that the CIA detained 119 individuals is probably a conservative number, but even so nearly one-fourth of these detainees were wrongfully held and did not meet the detention standards in the 2001 Memorandum of Notification. One of the detainees was described as “intellectually challenged” with his detention designed to get a member of his family to provide information. Other detainees were former CIA sources or foreign liaison sources. In one notable case, two individuals were tortured based on information fabricated by a CIA detainee subjected to torture. Again, no senior official concerned himself with these issues.

Former CIA director George Tenet and General Counsel Scott Muller lied at the White House to Vice President Dick Cheney and Attorney General John Ashcroft about the extent of the torture and abuse, and even warned members of the National Security Council that “termination of this program will result in loss of life, possibly extensive.” The CIA also provided inaccurate and incomplete information to the White House, and nearly 40 detainees were subject to enhanced interrogation techniques before President Bush received an official briefing. The CIA simply stonewalled the chairman and deputy chairman of the Senate

intelligence committee when they requested additional information on the program. Former director Michael Hayden misrepresented the program on numerous occasions. (Actually, there is a long history of the CIA bamboozling the Congress, which I will address in my next article.)

Thus, it should come as no surprise that former directors (Tenet, Hayden, and Porter Goss) and deputy directors (John McLaughlin and Steve Kappes) are still lying. In yesterday’s *Wall Street Journal*, they credited the CIA with reporting any allegations of abuse to the Inspector General and the Justice Department. They contend that “nothing was held back” in briefings to the

Congress. They deny that the CIA went beyond interrogation techniques authorized by the Justice Department. In yesterday's *Washington Post*, McLaughlin, who gave President Bush the specious "slam dunk" briefing that made the case for invading Iraq, stated that the record shows the CIA went to "extraordinary lengths to assure" the program was "both legal and approved." The record demonstrates the opposite. The lying never stops.

President Obama has stated eloquently that the torture and abuse of the Global War on Terror was not representative of "our values," but he has done virtually nothing to make sure that our values are not compromised once again. He failed to "rein in" the CIA in 2009, which the *Washington Post* falsely credited him with doing, and he indicated upon taking office that he would not seek accountability, that he would "look forward and not backward." President Obama has made particularly poor choices in selecting CIA directors and the fact that the current one, John Brennan, has lied to the chairwoman of the Senate intelligence committee and has tried to block congressional oversight has not attracted the president's attention.

Indeed, when President Obama and former CIA director Leon Panetta left the CIA without an Inspector General in 2009-2010, he certainly signaled that there would be no oversight, no reform, no accountability. As for the Senate's report, there should be no surprises.