

Some comments received in the past two weeks from members:

This is what will befall us next:



FM: William W. Winn

SUBJECT: Feinstein Committee

I personally know the hard-earned valor that can be stolen by self-serving political ramblings that purport to be fact when they are largely fiction.

COMMENTS RE A HERETICAL WITCH HUNT AND BLOOD-LETTING

I have read with personal interest the various recriminations and denials of CIA torture tactics. This reminds me of my graduate studies concerning realism versus idealism in domestic and international governmental affairs. Arguments included that historians have indicated that the idealists all too often push aside the negative outputs of their efforts in favor of what they see as a strict right-wrong analysis.

Whereas, the realist tends to look beyond blind morality and to the expected outputs of a policy or decision. Certainly the realist, according to observers, must also consider moral and ethical issues, but the overriding principle is, what is the best good for the people of the nation.

This latest storm of righteousness mirrors the early 1970s with the moral outrage of the Church and Pike committees, bolstered by the media. There were hearings and there were hearings. There was testimony and conflicting testimony, there was hearsay evidence and non-attributed accusations.

Certainly torture and condoning torture was also an issue in those days. Several years later, a GAO investigation reported that there was no evidence of CIA involvement in condoning or assisting torture and misadventures by leaders of foreign countries, and that much of the evidence accepted by the Church-Pike Committees for their report was provided by a Soviet disinformation program, channeled through Cuba. A Soviet KGB defector later confirmed the source of disinformation and the channel used to the Committees.

Church, Pike, Abourask and others claimed idealistic motives in their zeal, much the same as the claims of the now dispirited and over-the-top previous McCarthy Hearings. Today's zealots claim idealistic motives when demanding that their rather one-sided report be released to the public as an example of gross malfeasance. Both the McCarthy and Church-Pike reports indeed backfired on the authors and are looked upon now as some sort wanderings into a heretical accusatory affair to include political smoke and mirrors.

While it is true that severe torture does result in little immediate intelligence (except for some battlefield expediencies), but intelligence gathering and analysis is a process of connecting the dots based on information from various sources. Also, to label all of the interviews/interrogations as torture is certainly little more than political headline seeking.

We will continue to see the self-appointed idealists and realists engaged in a battle over which the media will certainly attempt to referee and provide its own interpretations and analyses and decide upon which of the two sides is the winner. In the game of war, there are no real winners and in our modern history it is difficult to find losers, or in fact it is difficult to separate the winners from the losers.

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I watched a CNN interview on Monday (12/08/14) with Congressman Mike Rogers (Michigan) regarding his displeasure over the release of the CIA Torture Report. I agree with him, and do not believe it was prudent for the Senate Intelligence Committee to approve the release of this report on the CIA's post-9/11 interrogation program. People in foreign countries will be placed in harm's way as soon as it is declassified and subsequently broadcast in the news media.

In addition, despite the current news media reporting and grandstanding machinations by politicians, no new surprises or revelations exist within the document. As a member of the Association Of Former Intelligence Officers (AFIO), I conducted much OSINT research and interviewed several professionals in the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) regarding the CIA's Torture Report, and could not uncover any startling new details about the CIA's detention and interrogation program, nor could I find evidence that the CIA lied to the Senate Intelligence Committee about it.

I do believe, from the very beginning, that our senators were fully aware of the intelligence operations undertaken after 9/11. Senate Intelligence Chair Dianne Feinstein knew that the CIA created clandestine 'black sites' and used 'enhanced-interrogation techniques' in each of them, even though she has spoken negatively of them.

I wanted to hear the facts about the EIT program first hand, so last year I planned to travel to Tysons Corner, VA to hear Jose A. Rodriguez, Jr. talk at the Association Of Former Intelligence

Officer's (AFIO) Summer Luncheon. Unfortunately, I couldn't make the meeting due to illness; however, I learned much about the presenter, Rodriguez, who is a former CIA National Clandestine Service Director and was the person who, after 9-11, led the U.S. counterterrorism operations and oversaw the highly controversial enhanced interrogation technique (EIT) program, which was created to obtain vital and timely intelligence from terrorists bent on killing as many Americans as possible. He also served the U.S. for twenty-five years as an undercover officer before bringing his wealth of field knowledge to the CIA's Counterterrorism Center (CTC).

Rodriguez was one of America's top undercover operatives and used "hard measures" to thwart terrorist's plans that targeted the U.S. In short, he was bent on saving thousands of American lives...lives that Sen. Diane Feinstein and most of our senators and congressmen also thought were in imminent harm's way at the time.

At the AFIO lecture, that I missed, Rodriguez discussed how the CIA's undercover operations and tactics were implemented during the George W. Bush presidency, how they were approved at the highest levels of the U.S. government, how they were certified as legal by the Department of Justice, and why they were supported by bipartisan leadership in the congressional intelligence oversight committees.

Rodriguez and the CIA have undergone relentless criticism and smear campaign rhetoric. After reading his AFIO Summer Luncheon lecture transcript, conducting personal OSINT research on EIT's, and interviewing several intelligence community professionals, I wonder if the current critics of the EIT program forgot the stark realities of 9/11.

Neither did they offer sensible alternatives to the program in the post-9/11 chaos, other than inaction or weak responses towards terrorist detainees. The EIT program was, indeed, an appropriate response to the deaths of thousands of innocent victims trapped in the twin-towers, helplessly pinned inside the Pentagon or held hostage on board the commercial airliner that crashed in a rural Pa. countryside.

Americans grieved and were anxiety-ridden at the time, for they did not know if future terrorist attacks were in the making! But, as the shock of 9/11 faded, the support that the CIA needed gave way to shortsighted and potentially dangerous political correctness. The tools for effective counterintelligence and counterterrorism was neutralized by lack of funding and ineffective legislation. America's counterintelligence agents were hamstrung, spread thin, overworked, and became subject to ridicule and prosecution...as was Rodriguez himself.

In his book "Hard Measures", Rodriguez reflects on the justification for the techniques used and why they were necessary, why they worked, and how, ultimately, they saved American lives and contributed to the capture of the world's most-wanted terror operatives, including bin Laden.

Still, he was ostracized by the media. I watched the 60 Minutes program that grilled Jose Rodriguez and concluded it was an unbalanced 'script' skewed heavily by the critics of the CIA's EIT program, including some grandstanding politicians who claimed to be "experts" and unnamed others who stood on the sidelines to lob stones at officials, like Rodriguez, who were in the post-9/11 trenches making tough, real-time national security decisions.

During the 60 Minutes bashing, he showed no regrets about the CIA using "enhanced interrogation techniques". His interviewer, Leslie Stahl, exhibited intimidating body language, including raised eyebrows. It was quite obvious that she considered EIT's unnecessary, evil and unbecoming of America. Through her criticism, Stahl tried to make her prejudice plausible, but failed. She drilled Rodriguez about water-boarding and other EIT methods, but he reminded her that they proved essential in getting information from suspected terrorists. He emphasized that high-level detainees like Khalid Sheik Mohammed and Abu Zubaydah provided their best information only after harsh treatment.

We'll never know how many American lives that CIA Case Officer Rodriguez and the CIA EIT program saved, even those who compiled the Senate Torture Report have no idea, either. I only hope the news media uses much prudence in reporting the details of this document when it is declassified.

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AFIO member

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[Michael Morell on The Charlie Rose Show for the full hour](#)

December 15, 2014

(Note: also airs in some markets at 7PM this evening on Bloomberg TV)

[Man Who Interrogated Khalid Sheikh Mohammed Speaks Out](#)

Dr. James Mitchell on The Kelly File -Fox News December 15, 2014

(Note there are four video clips -- if you have time to view just one -- look at the last one. Dr. Mitchell will be on The Kelly File again tonight)

[CIA blocked insider copy Feinstein 'torture' report, says it was 'killing trees'](#)

[Meanwhile, paper copies of the report were hand-delivered to terror suspects at Guantanamo Bay -- though not the rebuttals from the CIA or Republicans.](#)

Washington Examiner - By Paul Bedard, December 16, 2014

[CNN's Chris Cuomo and Ex-CIA Officer Phil Mudd Clash on Interrogation](#)

CNN New Day December 16, 2014

(Note watch the end where Mudd scores against Cuomo)

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The Senate's report on CIA's use of torture is incomplete, critics charge, because not one CIA officer was interviewed. Former CIA Director Gen. Michael Hayden is particularly incensed: he is named over 200 times and wasn't even in the Agency when the abuses occurred!

But Gen. Hayden is not charged with authorizing extreme measures; he is charged with deceiving Congress by dealing in half-truths: Useful information was undoubtedly gleaned from CIA's questioning but there is little documentary evidence that torture contributed to them. If it had, we would expect that CIA would long since have declassified and made such revelations public. Unequivocally and in its own defense: Not, "...the Subject gave us a critical lead to Osama bin Laden's courier," but "...he provided a critical lead to bin Laden's courier only after being Instead being subjected to EIT." Instead, we are left with the nagging certainty that subjects will say anything to stop excruciatingly inhumane treatment.

The strength of the Feinstein Report is that it is based solely on documents - not just a handful, but many. You allege that the evidence was cherry-picked, but its sheer quantity is pretty overwhelming. Critics dismiss this evidence with the bland admission that "Mistakes were made," but it is precisely those 'mistakes' that are the substance of the Report.

Still, you may be right. But as neither I, nor I expect you, nor I imagine most of the critics of the Report have seen the full 6,700 pages (with its 38,000 footnotes) we are adrift on our own biases. I freely admit to mine: my experience in CIA - first in Ops., then in TSD - gave me an enormous respect for documentary intelligence - and a healthy skepticism of verbal reporting. Our clients in the DI wanted facts - not just verbal reports about them. Document photographs (for the most part) didn't lie; agent reports (too often) were fragmentary, distorted by the source's own agenda, or told us what we wanted to hear. And carefully scripted Post-event testimonies to Congress (always read, you'll notice) are notorious for their half-truths and omissions.

Second, "the Nuremberg trials established that individuals cannot shield themselves from liability for war crimes by asserting that they were simply following orders issued by a superior in the chain of command. Subordinates in the military or government are now bound by their obligations under international law, obligations that transcend their duty to obey an order issued by a superior. Orders to violate recognized rules and customs of warfare, or to persecute civilians and prisoners are considered illegal under the Nuremberg principles." (Source: West's Encyclopedia of American Law | 2005)

I agree - the Feinstein Report does a disservice to the vast majority of CIA officers that served and continue to serve honorably and selflessly. No, I take that back: The actions of a few (and particularly their masters) threw the rest of CIA under the bus. Therein lies one of the great tragedies: If you yourself served in the Agency (or even the broader IC), you must feel some twinge of anger and resentment (as so many of us do) at the callousness of leaders that could snuff out a Valerie Plame's career in a pique of revenge, or wreck such havoc by trampling on values we promoted daily in our recruitments. "All power corrupts," Lord Acton told us, "And absolute power corrupts absolutely."

It is the torture that has sullied America's standing in the world, not the questioning. It is the reason why so many loyal officers objected on moral grounds, only to be overruled by Headquarters. It is why the FBI - which has had much more interrogation experience than CIA - shuns the use of strong-arm tactics, and backed out of working with the Agency when its field officers were ordered to turn up the heat.

Post-event testimonies are carefully scripted. Like comb-overs and push-up bras; they enhance the positives while hiding the negatives. Instead, the Senate report deals solely with cold, unvarnished facts, gleaned from CIA's own e-mails, reports and memos. The post-event testimonies of officers involved would have shed little useful light; the documents speak for themselves. Like Gen. Hayden's statements, they would only have muddied the waters.

Let me close by saying that I truly love CIA, cherish the years I spent in its service and recognize its important role in the Intel Community. But each new generation seems to forget the lessons of the past: The Cuban Invasion fiasco, The Church Committee's findings, and now the Feinstein report. We blow them; we fulminate, make ringing denials, but in the end we learn from them and become a wiser and more responsible Agency.

Carlos Luria

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The writer, an AFIO member, served for 29 years as a CIA officer