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## 17 Disgraceful Facts Buried in the Senate's 600 Page Torture Report

by Igor Volsky

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The Senate Intelligence Committee's report on the CIA's extensive use of torture reveals that the agency regularly misled the White House and Congress about the information it had obtained from detainees and used techniques that are far more brutal than it — or former Bush administration officials — had previously acknowledged.

For instance, President George W. Bush insisted that “[t]his government does not torture people” and claimed that the intelligence it produced was instrumental to preventing terrorism on American soil and capturing high-value targets, including Osama bin Laden. But the Committee's five year investigation — and examination of more than six million CIA documents — reveals all of those assertions to be false.

For its part, the CIA acknowledged that it “did not always live up to the high standards that we set for ourselves” and “made mistakes” in how it ran the program, particularly “early on” when the CIA “was unprepared and lacked the core competencies required.” However, it insisted that “there are too many flaws for [this report] to stand as the official record of the program” and strongly disputed “that the agency's assessments were willfully misrepresented in a calculated effort to manipulate.”

Republicans are similarly shielding the agency from criticism, claiming that the report is “ideologically motivated and distorted recounting of historical events.” “The fact that the CIA's Detention and Interrogation program developed significant intelligence that helped us identify and capture important al-Qa'ida terrorists, disrupt their ongoing plotting, and take down Usama Bin Ladin is incontrovertible,” Sens. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Saxby

Chambliss (R-GA), vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said in a statement.

Below are just some of the most damning findings from the Committee's report:

**1. Torture did not lead the CIA to the courier who ultimately helped capture Osama bin Laden.**

“The most accurate information on Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti — facilitator whose identification and tracking led to the identification of UBL's compound and the operation that resulted in UBL's death — “obtained from a CIA detainee was provided by a CIA detainee who had not yet been subjected to the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques; and CIA detainees who were subjected to the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques withheld and fabricated information about Abu Ahmad al-Kuwaiti.” [Page 379]

**2. CIA personnel objected to torture techniques, but were “instructed” by the CIA headquarters to continue.**

“The non-stop use of the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques was disturbing to CIA personnel at DETENTION SITE GREEN. These CIA personnel objected to the continued use of the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques against Abu Zubaydah, but were instructed by CIA

Headquarters to continue using the techniques...”Several on the team profoundly affected.. .some to the point of tears and choking up. [Page 473]

### **3. The two psychologists who helped the CIA create the torture techniques earned over \$81 million.**

“In 2006, the value of the CIA’s base contract with the company formed by the psychologists with all options exercised was in excess of \$180 million; the contractors received \$81 million prior to the contract’s termination in 2009. In 2007, the CIA provided a multi-year indemnification agreement to protect the company and its employees from legal liability arising out of the program. The CIA has since paid out more than \$1 million

pursuant to the agreement.” [Page 11]

### **4. Colin Powell was not briefed on CIA interrogation methods because he would “blow his stack”.**

“At the direction of the White House, the secretaries of state and defense – both principals on the National Security Council – were not briefed on program specifics until September 2003. An internal CIA email from July 2003 noted that “... the WH [White House] is extremely concerned [Secretary] Powell would blow his stack if he were to be briefed on what’s been going on.” Deputy Secretary of State Armitage complained that he and Secretary Powell were “cut out” of the National Security Council coordination process.” [Page 7]

### **5. The CIA used rectal feeding on detainees.**

“At least five CIA detainees were subjected to “rectal rehydration” or rectal feeding without documented medical necessity. ...Majid Khan’s “lunch tray” consisting of hummus, pasta with sauce, nuts, and raisins was “pureed” and rectally infused. [Page 4]

### **6. CIA leadership refused to punish an officer who killed a detainee during torture session.**

“On two occasions in which the CIA inspector general identified wrongdoing, accountability recommendations were overruled by senior CIA leadership. In one instance, involving the death of a CIA detainee at COBALT, CIA Headquarters decided not to take disciplinary action against an officer involved because, at the time, CIA... In another instance related to a wrongful detention, no action was taken against a CIA officer because, “[t]he Director strongly believes that mistakes should be expected in a business filled with uncertainty,” and “the Director believes the scale tips decisively in favor of accepting mistakes that over connect the dots against those that under connect them.” In neither case was administrative action taken against CIA management personnel.” [Page 14]

### **7. The CIA tortured innocent people.**

“Of the 119 known detainees that were in CIA custody during the life of the program, at least 26 were wrongfully held. Detainees often remained in custody for months after the CIA determined

they should not have been detained...Other KSM [Khalid Sheikh Mohammed] fabrications led the CIA to capture and detain suspected terrorists who were later found to be innocent.” [Page 485]

**8. The CIA held an “intellectually challenged man” to use as leverage against his family.**

“[A]n “intellectually challenged” man whose CIA detention was used solely as leverage to get a family member to provide information, two individuals who were intelligence sources for foreign liaison services and were former CIA sources, and two individuals whom the CIA assessed to be connected to al-Qa’ida based solely on information fabricated by a CIA detainee subjected to the CIA’s enhanced interrogation techniques.” [Page 12]

**9. The CIA intentionally misled the media to “shape public opinion.”**

“The CIA’s Office of Public Affairs and senior CIA officials coordinated to share classified information on the CIA’s Detention and Interrogation Program to select members of the media to counter public criticism, shape public opinion, and avoid potential congressional action to restrict the CIA’s detention and interrogation authorities and budget.” [Page 8]

**10. CIA officers threatened to kill and rape detainees’ mothers.**

“CIA officers also threatened at least three detainees with harm to their families—to include threats to harm the children of a detainee, threats to sexually abuse the mother of a detainee, and a threat to “cut [a detainee's] mother’s throat.” [Page 4]

**11. The CIA dismissed information that wasn’t obtained through torture, even though it proved to be true.**

“KSM’s reporting during his first day in CIA custody included an accurate description of a Pakistani/British operative, which was dismissed as having been provided during the initial “throwaway” stage” of information collection when the CIA believed detainees provided false or worthless information.” [Page 82]

**12. CIA torture techniques included mock burials and use of insects.**

“(1) the attention grasp, (2) walling, (3) facial hold, (4) facial slap, (5) cramped confinement, (6) wall standing, (7) stress positions, (8) sleep deprivation, (9) waterboard, (10) use of diapers, (11) use of insects, and (12) mock burial.” [Page 32]

**13. Some interrogators had previously admitted to sexual assault.**

“The Committee reviewed CIA records related to several CIA officers and contractors involved in the CIA’s Detention and Interrogation Program, most of whom conducted interrogations. The Committee identified a number of personnel whose backgrounds include notable derogatory information calling into question their eligibility for employment, their access to classified information, and their participation in CIA interrogation activities. In nearly all cases, the

derogatory information was known to the CIA prior to the assignment of the CIA officers to the Detention and Interrogation Program. This group of officers included individuals who, among other issues, had engaged in inappropriate detainee interrogations, had workplace anger management issues, and had reportedly admitted to sexual assault.” [Page 59]

#### **14. One interrogator played Russian roulette.**

“Among other abuses...had engaged in ‘Russian Roulette’ with a detainee.” [Page 424]

#### **15. The CIA tortured its own informants by accident.**

“In the spring of 2004, after two detainees were transferred to CIA custody, CIA interrogators proposed, and CIA Headquarters approved, using the CIA’s enhanced interrogation techniques on one of the two detainees because it might cause the detainee to provide information that could identify inconsistencies in the other detainee’s story. After both detainees had spent approximately 24 hours shackled in the standing sleep deprivation position, CIA Headquarters confirmed that the detainees were former CIA sources. The two detainees had tried to contact the CIA on multiple occasions prior to their detention to inform the CIA of their activities and provide intelligence. [Page 133]

#### **16. The CIA tortured detainees in a dungeon.**

“Conditions at CIA detention sites were poor, and were especially bleak early in the program. CIA detainees at the COBALT detention facility were kept in complete darkness and constantly shackled in isolated cells with loud noise or music and only a bucket to use for human waste. Lack of heat at the facility likely contributed to the death of a detainee. The chief of interrogations described COBALT as a “dungeon.” Another senior CIA officer stated that COBALT was itself an enhanced interrogation technique.” [Page 4]

#### **17. The CIA spent hundreds of millions of dollars on the torture program.**

“CIA records indicate that the CIA’s Detention and Interrogation Program cost well over \$300 million in non-personnel costs. This included funding for the CIA to construct and maintain detention facilities, including two facilities costing nearly \$X million that were never used, in part due to host country political concerns. To encourage governments to clandestinely host CIA detention sites, or to increase support for existing sites, the CIA provided millions of dollars in cash payments to foreign government officials.” [Page 16]