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Opinion: Torture Report Reveals Brutality, Dishonesty

It's time some folks are held accountable.

By Scott McPherson
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Great distress surrounded the impending release of the US Senate's long-awaited "torture report." Now that it's out, it's not hard to understand why.

Fox News couldn't stop reminding us that danger lurked right around the corner, should the truth be revealed. The lives of Americans – that most hallowed of all people – could be put at risk!

The *Washington Post* reports today that "An exhaustive, five-year Senate investigation of the CIA's secret interrogations of terrorism suspects renders a strikingly bleak verdict of a program launched in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, describing levels of *brutality, dishonesty and seemingly arbitrary violence* that at times brought even agency employees to moments of anguish." [Emphasis mine]

The report by the Senate Intelligence Committee delivers new allegations of cruelty in a program whose severe tactics have been abundantly documented, revealing that agency medical personnel voiced alarm that waterboarding methods had deteriorated to "a series of near drownings" and that agency employees subjected detainees to "rectal rehydration" and other painful procedures that were never approved.

The 528-page document catalogues dozens of cases in which CIA officials allegedly deceived their superiors at the White House, members of Congress and even sometimes their own peers about how the interrogation program was being run and what it had achieved. In one case, an internal CIA memo relays instructions from the White House to keep the program secret from

then-Secretary of State Colin Powell out of concern that he would “blow his stack if he were to be briefed on what’s going on.” [Emphasis mine]

There’s more, if you can stomach it.

Apologists for our government’s despicable practice of torture – a witch’s brew of Neo-Conservative war-mongers and water-carriers for the Obama Administration (sometimes one and the same) – claim that this report should have been kept under wraps, lest it cause such an uproar in the countries that have been invaded, bombed, droned, occupied, and otherwise terrorized by the current and previous occupants of the White House, that they rise up and start killing Americans in protest.

That is how it always works out: Our government stirs up trouble, and we pay the price.

One has to wonder if the real concern of the political class is that such truth-telling will undermine the carefully constructed facade that depicts the US as some kind of international force for The Good – because the “good guys” were regularly brutalizing people in violation of the Geneva Conventions, and lying about it.

They still are.

The *Post* report continues, “The release of the report comes at an unnerving time in the country’s conflict with al-Qaeda and its off-shoots. The Islamic State has beheaded three Americans in recent months and seized control of territory across Iraq and Syria. *Fears that the report could ignite new overseas violence against American interests prompted Secretary of State John F. Kerry to appeal to Feinstein to consider a delay*” the report’s release. [Emphasis mine]

Funny that those who deny any possibility that terrorists target Americans because of the actions of our government (“They hate our freedoms,” remember?) are now so very concerned that revelations of the actions of our government will lead terrorists to target Americans.

There is nothing humorous about this, but one can’t help but chuckle that the report’s “central conclusion is that harsh interrogation measures...didn’t work.” A government program that doesn’t work? Nooooo.

Agents within the CIA lied and covered up to keep this information from coming to light.

If legitimate government requires that the people remain informed of the actions of those whom they employ, then there is no excuse for delaying the release of this report.

From the agents who tortured prisoners right up to former President George W Bush, it would appear that criminal prosecutions are in order.

Let justice be done, though the heavens fall.