

# Internal CIA report shows agents tortured, killed prisoners

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25 August 2009

On Monday, the White House made public a heavily redacted version of a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) inspector general's report discussing cases of agency torture and murder of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan. The same day, Attorney General Eric Holder appointed a federal prosecutor to investigate nearly a dozen cases of torture discussed in the report.

Separately, an anonymous White House official told the media that the US would continue the practice of rendition, whereby terror suspects are abducted and sent to other nations to be interrogated under torture.

The 159-page report was produced more than five years ago, in May of 2004, but had been suppressed by both the Bush and Obama administrations. Its release was forced by a court order, which came in response to a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

The *New York Times* reports that "two dozen abuse cases" were brought to the attention of the Bush Justice Department in the report years ago. Charges were never brought in these cases, in which "some detainees died and others suffered serious abuses."

Among the known cases of CIA-US military torture discussed in the full report is the murder of Manadel al-Jamadi, an Iraqi who was captured by Navy Seals in 2003. He was evidently beaten on his arrest, and then taken naked and hooded to Abu Ghraib prison where a CIA interrogator, Mark Swanner, ordered him suspended from a barred window by his arms, which were tied behind his back.

Al-Jamadi died either as a result of the beating he received at the hands of the Seals or from his CIA interrogation. Charles Graner and other US Army reservists then infamously posed for photographs over the man's corpse. While Graner was eventually convicted for his role in prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, neither Swanner or the Navy Seal commander who ordered and oversaw al-Jamadi's arrest and torture have been punished.

There are a number of clear cases of abuse and torture documented in the unredacted sections of the report:

\* An agent told a suspect that his mother would be raped in front of him.

\* To induce fear, on more than one occasion CIA agents simulated the killing of inmates in adjoining rooms by firing a gun, the report reveals. Both US and international law make illegal, and define as torture, threats made on the life of a prisoner.

\* An interrogator told Khalid Sheikh Mohammed that if another terrorist attack took place in the United States, "We're going to kill your children."

\* An interrogator pinched the carotid artery of a prisoner until he lost consciousness, and then shook him awake, repeating the process two more times.

\* CIA agents threatened to use a power drill on Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, who is accused of participating in the bombing of the USS Cole in October of 2000. Agents also threatened to shoot him with a handgun.

Al-Nashiri was also the subject of repeated waterboarding. According to a 2006 Red Cross report leaked earlier in the year, Nashiri reported that agents threatened him with "sodomy, and the arrest and rape of his family."

An entire chapter of the report is redacted, including its title. Given its location between two sections detailing forms of torture used in interrogations, it may well refer to particularly brutal, and even fatal, cases.

The inspector general's report does not delve into cases of torture at CIA prison "black sites" that were secretly established in a number of countries after the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

The methods described in the inspector general's report went beyond even the forms of torture authorized by Bush administration legal memos produced by Justice Department lawyers in 2002 and 2005. These memos were released by the Obama administration earlier in the year, also in response to a Freedom of Information suit by the ACLU. One purpose of the report appears to have been to analyze discrepancies between those forms of torture formally authorized by the Bush administration and what was actually taking place in the field.

The report also illustrates that CIA officials were aware that the methods used by their personnel could place them in legal jeopardy, noting that "the agency faces potentially serious long-term political and legal challenges as a result of the... program, particularly its use of [enhanced interrogation techniques] and the inability of the US Government to decide what it will ultimately do with terrorists detained by the agency." The report states further that "public revelation" could "seriously damage... the reputation and effectiveness of the agency itself."

Late Monday afternoon, Holder announced the appointment of John Durham, a federal prosecutor from Connecticut, to investigate a number of cases included in the inspector general's

report that had been brought to the attention of the Bush administration. In a separate inquiry, Durham is investigating whether the CIA broke the law by destroying video footage of interrogation sessions with prisoners—footage which likely featured methods of torture.

Also on Monday, Obama administration officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the White House had formally decided to carry on with the policy of rendition. The administration would give a greater role to State Department diplomats in overseeing the fate of rendered prisoners, administration sources said.

Civil liberties groups were quick to condemn the decision. Amrit Singh of the ACLU pointed out that the sort of diplomatic access to prisoners promised by Obama had done little in the past to ease the plight of those rendered to third countries, pointing to the case of Canadian Maher Arar, who was tortured in Syria for an extended period in spite of several visits from a Canadian diplomat.

With the court-ordered release of the CIA inspector general's report, the Obama administration turned its attention to damage control, with Obama announcing the creation of a new White House task force to oversee the interrogation of "high value detainees" and Attorney General Holder announcing the appointment of a prosecutor to reopen a handful of torture cases.

Obama distanced himself from the Justice Department decision. Deputy Press Secretary Bill Burton said Obama, now on vacation in Martha's Vineyard, believes "we should be looking forward, not backward," and that Holder "ultimately is going to make the decisions."

Since the Bush Justice Department torture memos were made public in April, Obama has repeatedly promised that there would be no investigations, much less prosecutions, of high-ranking officials from the previous administration. If Holder's investigation goes forward, it is probable that it will focus on supposed "rogue" agents in the field, in spite of the now overwhelming evidence that torture was systemic and organized and approved by the upper echelons of the Bush White House.

The military-intelligence apparatus lobbied against the CIA inspector general report's release, even though such a move would have defied a court order and basic democratic precepts such as the separation of powers.

There appear to be sharp divisions within the Obama administration over how to respond to the report's publication, with the CIA openly opposing the Justice Department's reopening of any cases. "Justice has had the complete document since 2004, and their career prosecutors have reviewed it carefully for legal accountability," said CIA spokesman Paul Gimigliano. "That's already been done."

In a Monday email to CIA employees, Director Leon Panetta defended the agency—and torture. "[T]his much is clear," Panetta wrote. "The CIA obtained intelligence from high-value detainees when inside information on Al Qa'ida was in short supply. Whether this was the only way to obtain that information will remain a legitimate area of dispute, with Americans holding a range of views on the methods used."

The new interrogation unit announced by the administration,

dubbed the High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group (HIG), will be overseen by the National Security Council, the top presidential military-foreign policy body.

It appears that HIG will oversee a panoply of spy agencies, domestic and international, engaged in interrogations. It will include at least the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Deputy White House Press Secretary Burton told the media the authority will bring "all these different elements under one group," and will be based at FBI headquarters in Washington and led by an FBI official.

The creation of a White House interrogation authority is typical of Obama's moves in "the war on terror" since his inauguration. The president makes high publicity announcements, creates task forces, etc., to give the appearance of "change." In reality, his measures create a new institutional and legal framework to continue the Bush administration's criminal policies of torture, kidnapping, domestic spying and indefinite detention.

The entire political establishment is implicated in the anti-democratic practices of the "war on terror," including the torture and murders carried out by the CIA. Leading congressmen and senators of both parties were given copies of the inspector general's report shortly after it was produced five years ago, and it was shown to all of the members of the House and Senate intelligence committees in September of 2006.

Leading Democrats joined with Republicans to suppress the report and conceal its findings from the public.

Torture and other violations of basic democratic rights arise inevitably from a militaristic policy based on the launching of wars of aggression. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—for which 9/11 served as the pretext—enjoyed broad bipartisan support and the enthusiastic backing of the American media.

The Nuremberg trial of Nazi war criminals concluded that the launching of aggressive war was "the supreme international crime, differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

There must be a full accounting of the illegal methods used by the US military and spy agencies in "the war on terror." Those policy-makers responsible, from Bush on down, must be subjected to criminal prosecution. This, however, cannot be achieved by appealing to the political parties and institutions of the ruling elite, all of which are implicated in the crimes of American imperialism.

A thorough accounting—and the prevention of further abuses—requires the independent mobilization of the working class.



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