

CIA director called out for complicity in torture

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US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Gina Haspel was delivering a recruiting pitch to students at Auburn University in Alabama on Thursday where she was called out by an audience member for her participation in torture and other crimes.

Towards the beginning of her speech, Hapsel began recalling “the thrill of being sworn in” as a CIA operative when the crowd member shouted if Haspel remembered the “thrill of the CIA black sites you tortured people in and the evidence you destroyed?”

The heckling continued. “Tell these young children, tell them who you tortured. You know their names—they’re still in Guantánamo Bay,” he shouted.

“You’re a decrepit human being,” he yelled before being removed by security. “The only people you should be talking to is a prison guard in a jail cell.”

Haspel silently glanced at her speech notes at the podium and stated “I’ll continue” after the man was removed.

Later into the speech, once Haspel was joined onstage by Lt. Gen. Roger Burgess, former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, efforts were made to direct attention away from Haspel’s bloody record. Burgess claimed that Haspel did not need to respond to the comments and added that he was responsible for helping set up the intelligence collection unit at Guantánamo Bay in 2002.

Burgess declared, “We did the best we could with the guidance that we were given, with the resources we were given, to protect the United States of America.”

However, members of the audience were not persuaded. Another individual asked when the audience could expect to hear Haspel’s response to the allegations. Burgess told the person to wait their turn or be excused from the event as well.

Haspel was the head of a CIA “black site” in

Thailand known as “Cat’s Eye,” where two men were waterboarded and subjected to sleep deprivation, confinement in small boxes, being repeatedly slammed into a wall, hooding and shackling, and other forms of physical and psychological torture. The torture left both severely damaged, psychologically and physically.

In addition to overseeing the torture operations in Thailand, Haspel played a key role in the destroying videotapes made of the torture sessions, which was ordered by Jose Rodriguez, the director of the National Clandestine Service in 2005.

Haspel joined the CIA in 1985 and has held multiple positions in the agency including chief of station in several world capitals, senior manager of the Counterterrorism Center and, under the Obama administration, acting deputy director of the National Clandestine Service (NCS).

Haspel’s nomination as the head of “Murder Inc.” by the Trump administration in 2018 was championed as a “historical milestone” by Trump because she would be the first woman to run the organization. Her confirmation was secured with the necessary votes from the Democratic Party.

Much of Haspel’s rise in the CIA was due to her complicity in, and approval of, torture and other criminal actions. “The only people you should be talking to is a prison guard in a jail cell.” Indeed.



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