

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program



Additional Views

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**SENATOR
HEINRICH
ADDITIONAL
VIEWS**

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Additional Views of Senator Martin Heinrich

In January 2009, President Obama signed Executive Order 13491, limiting interrogations by any American personnel to the guidelines in the Army Field Manual, and reinforcing the commitment that prisoners in U.S. custody are entitled to rights under the Geneva Conventions. This officially ended a dark period in American history that, in reality, had already effectively collapsed under the weight of poor policy decisions, ineffectiveness, bad management, and public disclosures.

I came to this Committee believing that the press accounts and books I read had adequately prepared me for what took place in this program. I was wrong.

Compounding this is the fact that my ignorance was not unique: the CIA deliberately kept the vast majority of the Senate and House Intelligence Committees in the dark until the day the president revealed the detention and interrogation program to the world in 2006 – four years after it began.

Even then, misrepresentations to the Committee about the effectiveness of the CIA's detention and interrogation program continued, in large part because the CIA had never performed any comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the program or the actions of its officers. Myths of the "effectiveness" of torture have been repeated in the press, perpetrating the fable that this was a necessary program that "saved lives." My hope is this meticulously detailed, near 7,000-page Committee study finally puts those lies to rest.

Those who were responsible for the CIA's detention and interrogation program will continue to exploit public ignorance of what took place in the program to argue that the study is one-sided or biased, or that it lacks important details or context. In the course of their efforts, they will misrepresent what is or is not in the study, while selectively picking through the executive summary in an effort to support their arguments.

However, the full study contains far more information and detail than could ever be captured in an executive summary. That is why I firmly believe the release of the executive summary should not be the last step in this process, but the first. It is my hope that someday soon there will be a public release of the full Committee study. If this deplorable chapter is to truly be closed and relegated to history, the full study should be declassified and released. The president has that authority, and I hope he will exercise it.

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This study represents years of hard work by Members and staff who faced a number of obstacles in completing the work: the CIA taking years to dump millions of unsorted documents in a massive database while resisting requests for additional information; the executive branch withholding thousands of pages of documents from the Committee; and current and former officials anonymously misrepresenting the contents and the findings of the study in the press. The list could go on. The fact that this study was finished is a testament to the dedication of Chairmen Rockefeller and Feinstein in deciding that oversight is worth it, regardless of how long it takes.

This is an objective and fact-based study. It is a fair study. And it is the only comprehensive study conducted of this program and the CIA's treatment of its detainees in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

The reality is that the president's signature on Executive Order 13491 is only valid until the next national crisis emerges and moves a well-meaning, but misguided president to rescind the order. It is worth remembering that years before this detention and interrogation program even began, the CIA had sworn off the harsh interrogations of its past; but in the wake of the terrorist attacks against the United States, it repeated those mistakes by once again engaging in brutal interrogations that undermined our nation's credibility on the issue of human rights, produced information of uneven – and often questionable – value, and wasted millions of taxpayer dollars.

This study should serve as a warning to those who would make similar choices in the future: torture doesn't work. It is therefore my hope that Members of Congress will read this study and join me in the conclusion that we must never let this happen again. We need to shut the door on abusive interrogations completely through legislative action that leaves no loopholes, and no room for interpretation.

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