

# Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

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



Additional Views

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**SENATOR  
ROCKEFELLER  
ADDITIONAL  
VIEWS**

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**Senator John D. Rockefeller IV – Additional Views**

The Senate Intelligence Committee's entire Study on the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program is the most in-depth and substantive oversight initiative that the Committee has ever undertaken, and it presents extremely valuable insights into crucial oversight questions and problems that need to be addressed at the CIA.

Moreover, this Study exemplifies why this Committee was created in the first place - following the findings of the Church Committee nearly 40 years ago - and I commend Chairman Feinstein for shepherding this landmark initiative to this point.

It is my hope and expectation that beyond the initial release of the Executive Summary and Findings and Conclusions, the entire 6,800 page Study will eventually be made public with the appropriate redactions. Those public findings will be critical to fully learning the necessary lessons from this dark episode in our nation's history, and to ensuring that this never happens again.

It has been a long, hard fight to get to this point. Especially in the early years of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program, it was a struggle for the Committee to get the most basic information - or any information at all - about the program.

The Committee's Study of the Detention and Interrogation Program is not just the story of the brutal and ill-conceived program itself. This Study is also the story of the breakdown in our system of governance that allowed the country to deviate, in such a significant way, from our core principles.

One of the profound ways that breakdown happened was through the active subversion of meaningful congressional oversight - a theme mirrored in the Bush Administration's warrantless wiretapping program during the same period.

As a matter of my own history with this issue, I first learned about some aspects of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program in 2003, when I became Vice Chair of the Committee. At that point, and for years after, the CIA refused to provide me with additional information I requested about the program or share information regarding the program with the full Committee. The briefings I received provided little or no insight into the CIA's program. Questions or follow up requests were rejected, and at times I was not allowed to consult with my counsel or other members from my staff.

It was clear that the briefings were not meant to answer my questions, but were intended only to provide cover for the Administration and the CIA. It was infuriating to realize that I was part of a box checking exercise the Bush Administration planned to use - and later did use - so they could disingenuously claim that they had "fully briefed Congress."

In the years that followed, I fought - and lost - many battles to obtain credible information about the Detention and Interrogation Program. As Vice Chair I tried to launch a comprehensive

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investigation into the program, but that effort was blocked. Later, in 2005, when I fought for access to over 100 specific documents cited in the Inspector General report, the CIA refused to cooperate.

The first time the full Senate Intelligence Committee was given any information about the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program was September 2006. This was years after the program's inception, and the same day President Bush informed the public of the program's existence.

The following year, when I became Chairman, the new Vice Chairman, Kit Bond, agreed with me to push for significant additional access to the program – including Senators' access to our staff's counsel on these matters. We finally prevailed and got this access, which enabled us to have much needed hearings on the program, and we did. As Chairman, I made sure we scrutinized it from every angle. However, the challenge of getting accurate information from the CIA persisted.

In the same time period, I also sent two Committee staffers to begin reviewing cables at the CIA regarding the agency's interrogations of Abu Zubaydah and al-Nashiri. I firmly believed we had to review those cables, which are now the only source of important historical information on this topic because the CIA destroyed its videotapes of the interrogation sessions. The CIA did this against the explicit direction of the White House and the Director of National Intelligence.

The investigation I began in 2007 grew under Chairman Feinstein's dedication and tremendous leadership into a full study of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program. The more the Committee dug, the more it found, and the results we uncovered are both shocking and deeply troubling.

First, the Detention and Interrogation Program was conceived by people who were ignorant of the topic and made it up on the fly based on the untested theories of contractors who had never met a terrorist or conducted a real-world interrogation of any type.

Second, it was executed by personnel with insufficient linguistic and interrogation training, and little if any real-world experience.

Third, it was managed incompetently by senior officials who paid little or no attention to crucial details, and it was rife with troubling personal and financial conflicts of interest among the small group of CIA officials and contractors who promoted and defended it.

Fourth, it was physically severe, far more so than any of us outside the CIA ever knew.

Finally, its results were unclear at best, but it was presented to the White House, the Department of Justice, the Congress, and the media as a silver bullet that was indispensable to "saving lives." In fact, it did not provide the intelligence it was supposed to provide, or that CIA officials argued it provided. To be perfectly clear, these harsh techniques were not approved by anyone – ever – for the low-bar standard of learning "useful information" from detainees. These techniques were approved because Bush Administration lawyers and officials were told, and believed, that these

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coercive interrogations were absolutely necessary to elicit intelligence that was unavailable by any other collection method and would save American lives. That was simply not the case.

Nevertheless, for all of the misinformation, incompetence, and brutality in the CIA's program, the Committee's Study is not, and must not be, simply a backward looking condemnation of past mistakes. The Study presents a tremendous opportunity to develop forward looking lessons that must be central to all future intelligence activities.

The CIA developed the Detention and Interrogation Program in a time of great fear, anxiety and unprecedented crisis; but it is at these times of crisis when we need sound judgment, excellence, and professionalism from the CIA the most. When mistakes are made, they call for self-reflection and scrutiny. For that process to begin, we first have to make sure there is an accurate public record of what happened. The public release of the Executive Summary and Findings and Conclusions is a tremendous and consequential step toward that goal.

For some I expect there will be a natural temptation to reject, cast doubt on, or rationalize parts of the Study that are disturbing or embarrassing. Indeed the CIA program's dramatic divergence from the standards that we hold ourselves to is hard to reconcile. However, we must fight that shortsighted temptation to wish away the gravity of what this Study has found.

How we deal with this opportunity to learn, and improve, will reflect on the maturity of our democracy. As a country, we are strong enough to bear the weight of our mistakes, and as an institution, so is the CIA. We must confront this dark period in our recent history with honesty and critical introspection. We must draw lessons, and we must apply those lessons as we move forward. Although it may be uncomfortable at times, ultimately we will grow stronger, and we will ensure that this never happens again.