

Center for the Victims of Torture

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://thehill.com/opinion/criminal-justice/469946-enhanced-interrogation-better-known-as-torture-took-america-to-the>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

When the movie [The Report](#) is released today, it will be painful to watch and will reinfect a wound that will not heal: Americas enhanced interrogation program implemented after 9/11 by the George W. Bush administration. All this seems long ago and, for some, forgotten. Yet history does not forget; nor should we.

Imagine American civil servants and their contractors, along with willing and able allies in dark sites around the world, torturing individuals for information related to various issues. Before that terrible Tuesday in September 2001, America simply did not torture as a matter of law, policy and practice. It was, and continues to be, that information garnered under extreme duress is unreliable. There are many other tradecraft techniques that allow for obtaining reliable intelligence. We have always known that, but after 9/11 we went to the dark side.

Torture is an international crime and domestic crime in most countries. The so-called [Torture Convention](#), of which the United States is a signatory, prohibits not only torture but, just as importantly, inhumane treatment. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is far more encompassing than most of the general public realize, yet the United States moved to step around the law and create a technique called enhanced interrogation. Its an interesting choice of words, yet it does not truly hide what it really is: torture.

The enhanced interrogation program was a part of a larger, even more problematic operation called the [rendition, detention and interrogation program](#), or RDI program. It was the umbrella operation under which the enhanced interrogation worked. Under the RDI program, run by Gina Haspel before she became director of the CIA, suspected terrorists some likely with little-to-no probable cause or reason were rounded up, sent to various sites, detained and tortured (enhanced interrogation) with the goal of gaining information in the name of national security.

It has been shown that no information obtained from the enhanced interrogation program assisted in keeping the United States safe. Various agencies and groups would have you think otherwise, but history has shown that, for all the pain and suffering netted out by U.S. operatives around the world, no useful or actionable intelligence was obtained to make any difference.

Much of this was found to be the case from the efforts of the [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence](#) (SSCI). Under the leadership of its chair, Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.), the committee found that the United States tortured people and the result was useless, jumbled information. That is it in a nutshell torture did not protect the United States.

Almost all of the facts will remain unattainable by the American people. This is the final tragic scene in a sad melodrama of torture by the United States: American citizens will not know what really happened during those dark years of enhanced interrogation under the RDI program. This is simply wrong.

Throughout the history of our republic, the law has required that American citizens have a right to know what their government is doing. Even the most sensitive national security programs must be revealed to citizens through their elected representatives. The wounds to our reputation, our ethos, even the way we view ourselves in 2019, perpetrated by the RDI program, will not heal unless exposed to the bright light of truth through public scrutiny and debate. It is the American way the only way. The time is now.

Thomas Jefferson believed in the truth and [wrote about it](#): [T]his institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it.

David M. Crane is a retired member of the Senior Executive Service who oversaw Department of Defense intelligence agencies on behalf of the secretary of Defense and the intelligence committees of Congress from 1996-2002. He was a commissioner on the North Carolina Commission to Investigate Torture (2018) and founding chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (2002-2005).

THE HILL 1625 K STREET, NW SUITE 900 WASHINGTON DC 20006 | 202-628-8500 TEL | 202-628-8503 FAX

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