

**WASHINGTON AND THE WORLD****The CIA Is Still Running Amok**

I should know: I wrote the book on an agency gone rogue.

By TIM WEINER | December 10, 2014

Officers of the CIA's clandestine service working overseas are compelled to be a kind of legal criminal. Their crucial job—before Sept. 11—was to convince foreigners to commit treason, using cash and cunning as inducements. Thus they would steal secrets in the name of the national security of the United States. To do so, spies abroad had to lie about who they were and what they did.

But when they got back to Washington, they had to tell the truth to their fellow Americans. They had to trust—and be trusted by—the people who gave them their marching orders. They could not deceive those they served at headquarters, at the White House, the National Security Council and the State Department.

What is striking about this week's Senate report on the Bush administration's torture program—what is new—is not the fact that CIA officers may have violated the laws of God or the Geneva Convention setting up torturing prisons in the black sites of Afghanistan and Thailand and Poland. We knew that.

What is shocking is the continuing claim of the CIA's leaders that torture worked. And that is a damnable lie, a devastating deceit and a self-deception that poses a danger to the agency and the American people.

The continuing insistence that torture produced unique intelligence and saved uncounted lives is where the logic of the CIA's leaders fails. The Senate report makes this excruciatingly clear.

"The use of the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques was not an effective means of obtaining accurate information or gaining detainee cooperation," it says. "Multiple CIA detainees fabricated information, resulting in faulty intelligence. Detainees provided fabricated information on critical intelligence issues, including the terrorist threats which the CIA identified as its highest priorities."

The CIA had some experience with torture—or "enhanced interrogation techniques," if you prefer—and secret prisons before Sept. 11. During the Korean War, it held suspected double agents in clandestine cells in occupied Germany and Japan. Later in the 1950s and the early '60s, it conducted mind-control experiments on unwitting human guinea pigs—mostly mental patients and prisoners, "people who could not fight back," as one agency officer put it. In one case, a mental patient in Kentucky was dosed with LSD continuously for 174 days. The CIA's search for a truth serum, something that could be used for interrogations, failed.

The CIA took a defector from the Soviet intelligence service, Yuri Nosenko, who it suspected might have secret information on the assassination of President Kennedy, and held him in a secret prison under the harshest conditions and ceaseless interrogation for nearly four years before deciding he was innocent. The CIA officer who investigated the Nosenko case called it "an abomination."

In the 1980s, a CIA officer devised an interrogation manual for the use of the U.S.-backed contras fighting the government of Nicaragua, which included the use of violence to elicit information. The CIA's inspector general recommended that the officer be admonished for inappropriate use of interrogation techniques. It appears from the Senate report that this same man became the officer in charge of CIA interrogations in 2002.

Yet the CIA had concluded before Sept. 11 that torture does not work. Richard Stolz,

chief of the CIA's clandestine service under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, testified to Congress: "Physical abuse or other degrading treatment was rejected not only because it is wrong, but because it has historically proven to be ineffective." To quote from the agency's own manuals, reproduced in the Senate report: "Inhumane physical or psychological techniques are counterproductive because they do not produce intelligence and will probably result in false answers."

Stop right here and grasp this fact: People being tortured might say anything to stop the pain, including invented and imaginary information. And false intelligence is worse than no intelligence at all.

Tim Weiner is a Pulitzer Prize-winning former national-security correspondent for *The New York Times* and author of *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*, which won the 2007 National Book Award.

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