

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection.

20 key findings of the Senate's CIA torture report

Source: The Boston Globe 12/10/14

The findings and conclusions of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's study of the CIA's detention and interrogation program were outlined as below in the committee's executive summary report:

1. The CIA's use of its enhanced interrogation techniques was not an effective means of acquiring intelligence or gaining cooperation from detainees.
2. The CIA's justification for the use of its enhanced interrogation techniques rested on inaccurate claims of their effectiveness.
3. The interrogations of CIA detainees were brutal and far worse than the CIA represented to policymakers and others.
4. The conditions of confinement for CIA detainees were harsher than the CIA had represented to policymakers and others.
5. The CIA repeatedly provided inaccurate information to the Department of Justice, impeding a proper legal analysis of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program.
6. The CIA has actively avoided or impeded congressional oversight of the program.
7. The CIA impeded effective White House oversight and decision-making.
8. The CIA's operation and management of the program complicated, and in some cases impeded, the national security missions of other Executive Branch agencies.
9. The CIA impeded oversight by the CIA's Office of Inspector General.
10. The CIA coordinated the release of classified information to the media, including inaccurate information concerning the effectiveness of the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques.
11. The CIA was unprepared as it began operating its Detention and Interrogation Program more than six months after being granted detention authorities.
12. The CIA's management and operation of its Detention and Interrogation Program was deeply flawed throughout the program's duration, particularly so in 2002 and early 2003.
13. Two contract psychologists devised the CIA's enhanced interrogation techniques and played a central role in the operation, assessments, and management of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program. By 2005, the CIA had overwhelmingly outsourced operations related to the program.
14. CIA detainees were subjected to coercive interrogation techniques that had not been approved by the Department of Justice or had not been authorized by CIA Headquarters.
15. The CIA did not conduct a comprehensive or accurate accounting of the number of individuals it detained, and held individuals who did not meet the legal standard for detention. The CIA's claims about the number of detainees held and subjected to its enhanced interrogation techniques were inaccurate.
16. The CIA failed to adequately evaluate the effectiveness of its enhanced interrogation techniques.
17. The CIA rarely reprimanded or held personnel accountable for serious and significant violations, inappropriate activities, and systemic and individual management failures.
18. The CIA marginalized and ignored numerous internal critiques, criticisms, and objections concerning the operation and management of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program.
19. The CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program was inherently unsustainable and had effectively ended by 2006 due to unauthorized press disclosures, reduced cooperation from other nations, and legal and oversight concerns.
20. The CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program damaged the United States' standing in the world, and resulted in other significant monetary and non-monetary costs.

Yes, the CIA torture report should have been released

Source: Tom Keane, The Boston Globe, 12/11/14

The ponderous title, "Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program," begs for a nickname: the "torture report." Released by the Senate Committee on Intelligence this week, it was originally written in 2012 and has caused an uproar, with critics and defenders firing rhetorical salvos at one another. It may be, as the Senate Committee minority report and CIA both argue, that the report is politically motivated, that it doesn't tell the full story, and that the conclusions it reaches are unwarranted.

But it should definitely have been released.

It almost wasn't. The voluminous study — more than 6,000 pages — focuses on the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the methods the CIA used to try to extract information from those it thought had knowledge of that plot and others. Originally classified as top secret, some members of the Intelligence Committee, headed by Senator Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat, wanted it released. After several complicated rounds of negotiations, agreement was eventually reached by a majority of committee members: They would publish a redacted version of what amounted to a 525-page summary. The details would be omitted.

Others also resisted making the report public. Secretary of State John Kerry reportedly called Feinstein just before the documents were to be unveiled, begging she hold off. Representative Mike Rogers, a Republican from Michigan and chair of the House Intelligence Committee, warned, "Foreign leaders have approached the government and said, 'You do this, this will cause violence and deaths.'" Former CIA head Michael Hayden similarly worried that, "this will be used by our enemies to motivate people to attack Americans in American facilities overseas."

The arguments all boiled down to this: The report would be a big PR hit on the United States. It would be embarrassing. It would hurt the stature of the nation on the world's eyes. It would inflame some to lash out. All of that is probably true. For what the report contains is disturbing and explosive. It portrays the CIA — or at least many officers in the CIA — as callous, inhumane, and brutal. It argues that the torture tactics the agency deployed were largely ineffective. And it depicts an agency that was essentially rogue, unwilling to be held accountable to anyone, be they the White House, Congress, the Justice Department, or even the CIA's own Office of Inspector General.

A reader can't help but come away wondering how a nation that professes to such high ideals could have engaged in the activities it did — in the same way, quite frankly, that people reacted to stories about the priest-abuse scandals that enveloped the Catholic Church.

Bad news hurts, and the first impulse of many is to try to keep it hidden. Allow us to deal with it on our own, runs the argument. Don't expose it to the light of day where it can damage reputations, undermine institutions, and provoke our adversaries.

When that argument carries the day, the sad consequence is that change rarely occurs. People make excuses, efforts at reform are half-hearted, and no one insists on a full accounting. Examples are easy to find. Until the crimes of many priests were exposed, the Catholic Church papered over the activities of abusers, sometimes ignoring them, occasionally moving them to new assignments, minimizing the damage, and never addressing the pain of victims. So too, until the revelations by Edward Snowden of widespread spying by the National Security Agency, there was little impetus for reining in the agency's actions. But even those upset with what Snowden did, such as intelligence director James Clapper, had to admit that "It's clear that some of the conversations this has generated, some of the debate, actually needed to happen."

Public outcry and public pressure can be extraordinary tonics. Indeed, that's the reason we have laws at both the federal and state levels that require government meetings be open and records made public. If we have a right to know why a restaurant was granted a liquor license, shouldn't we also have a right to know how the CIA conducts its activities?

In a democracy, the answer to that question has to be yes. The people govern. And the people cannot govern unless they know what is being done in their name.

Possible Response Questions:

- The article on this page is an opinion. What might the counter-arguments be? What points did the writer leave out? Explain.
- Identify and analyze the persuasive techniques employed by the writer.
- Select any passage and respond to it.