



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 9, 2014

Release of U.S. Senate Report on CIA Torture Delayed

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said on September 8 that the committee's long-awaited report detailing the CIA's use of harsh interrogation techniques that some critics have described as "torture" will not be released this week.

"Certainly [the release of the report] won't be this week," Feinstein told reporters. "We're still discussing redactions, and it won't be released until we're satisfied that we can have a comprehensive and understandable report."



Some members of the committee had hoped to release its 600-page summary of the report before Congress left for its August recess, but the expected release date was moved to September. When Congress returned from its five-week summer recess on Monday, Feinstein said the report might not be released before legislators leave later this month to campaign for the November 4 congressional elections.

The report that will be released is a summary of a much longer 3,600-page document, based on a review of several million classified CIA documents. The full report will remain secret indefinitely. Reuters reported that in August, officials familiar with the report said it will conclude that the CIA's use of harsh interrogation techniques (e.g., waterboarding) following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks produced no critical intelligence on terrorist plots that could not have been obtained through less brutal methods.

In a September 7 article, Peter Foster, a reporter for Britain's *Telegraph* newspaper, cited an unidentified source who claimed that the CIA's interrogation technique went far beyond the much-criticized waterboarding that simulates the sensation of drowning. In waterboarding, water is poured over a cloth covering the face and breathing passages of an immobilized captive. In an open letter to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales on April 6, 2006 signed by more than 100 professors of law and legal studies, the signatories asserted:

Waterboarding is torture. It causes severe physical suffering in the form of reflexive choking, gagging, and the feeling of suffocation. It may cause severe pain in some cases. If uninterrupted, waterboarding will cause death by suffocation. It is also foreseeable that waterboarding, by producing an experience of drowning, will cause severe mental pain and suffering. The technique is a form of mock execution by suffocation with water. The process incapacitates the victim from drawing breath, and causes panic, distress, and terror of imminent death. Many victims of waterboarding suffer prolonged mental harm for years and even decades afterward.

However, the *Telegraph's* source asserts, the CIA engaged in interrogation techniques that went far beyond waterboarding. "They weren't just pouring water over their heads or over a cloth," said the source, who reportedly has first-hand knowledge of the period. "They were holding them under water



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until the point of death, with a doctor present to make sure they did not go too far. This was real torture.”

A second source cited by the *Telegraph* who is familiar with the Senate report said that it contained several accounts of some CIA interrogations which — the source predicted — will “deeply shock” the general public.

Senator Feinstein said that the report will expose “brutality that stands in stark contrast to our values as a nation.” Those who have read it say the report accuses the CIA of lying as well as grossly exaggerating the usefulness of torture.

The *Telegraph* noted that the report is “being angrily opposed by many senior Republicans, former CIA operatives and Bush-era officials, including the former U.S. vice president Dick Cheney, who argue that is it poorly researched and politically motivated.”

The release of the report, noted the *Telegraph* reporter, will likely disprove claims by George W. Bush administration officials, including former Vice President Dick Cheney, that “enhanced interrogation” was an essential tool in the war on terror and the hunt for Osama bin Laden.

A press statement released by Feinstein on April 3 stated:

The Senate Intelligence Committee this afternoon voted to declassify the 480-page executive summary as well as 20 findings and conclusions of the majority’s five-year study of the CIA Detention and Interrogation Program, which involved more than 100 detainees.

The purpose of this review was to uncover the facts behind this secret program, and the results were shocking. The report exposes brutality that stands in stark contrast to our values as a nation. It chronicles a stain on our history that must never again be allowed to happen.

This is not what Americans do.

During the Republican presidential candidates’ debate on November 12, 2011, there was a wide difference of opinion about whether waterboarding was ethical or not.

Candidates Herman Cain and Michele Bachmann said that they were in favor of using waterboarding.

“I don’t see it as torture. I see it as an enhanced interrogation technique,” Cain said.

Rep. Bachmann concurred with Cain, stating: “If I were president, I would be willing to use waterboarding. I think it was very effective. It gained information for our country ... and I also would like to say that today, under Barack Obama, he is allowing the ACLU to run the CIA.”

However, both former Representative Ron Paul and former Governor Jon Huntsman expressed opposition to waterboarding. “It’s illegal under international law and under our law. It’s also immoral, and it’s also very impractical. There’s no evidence that you really get reliable evidence,” Dr. Paul said.

Huntsman said: “We diminish our standing in the world and the values that we project, which include liberty, democracy, human rights and open markets, when we torture.”

Photo of mock “waterboarding” by Karl Gunnarsson

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