

is especially important to those parts of government that operate in secret, as the Church committee discovered decades ago.

The challenges the Church committee confronted four decades ago persists today—namely, how to ensure that those government actions which are necessarily conducted in secret are nonetheless conducted within the confines of the law.

The release of this executive summary is testament to the power of effective oversight and the determination of Chairman FEINSTEIN and members of the committee to doggedly beat back obstacle after obstacle in order to reveal the truth to the American people. I have much more to say about these obstacles and about the critical importance of reforming an agency that refuses to even acknowledge what it has done. I will deliver those remarks soon. For now, I wish to congratulate the chairman and her staff on this very important achievement.

The document we are finally releasing today is the definitive history of what happened in the CIA's detention and interrogation program. We have always been a forward-looking nation, but to be so, we must be mindful of our own history. That is what this study is all about. That is why I have no doubt that we will emerge from this dark episode with our democracy strengthened and our future made even brighter.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. I see the distinguished senior Senator from Texas on the floor seeking recognition. I have been told to come here at 3:30 p.m., but obviously I yield to my friend from Texas and ask unanimous consent that when he completes his remarks I be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank my friend from Vermont. All of this got pushed back a little bit with the laudatory speeches for our retiring colleague from Nebraska. We are backed up a little bit, but I won't be long.

I have to say that I came to the floor when the Senators from Oregon and Colorado were talking about Senator FEINSTEIN's decision to release this report. I get it that different people see the same subject matter sometimes through a different lens, but I can't think of any more reckless or irresponsible thing to do to our brave men and women who fight in our military, who have fought our wars for the last 13 years, and the intelligence community that has worked while risking their lives to keep us safe.

We all remember what happened on 9/11/2001, but apparently with time our memories have faded. What we do know for a fact is we would not have avoided another attack on our own soil if it were not for the dedication and the patriotism of men and women in our intelligence community who were oper-

ating under color of law. In other words, this isn't just something they decided to cook up; this was something that was vetted at the highest levels of the Justice Department and the Department of Defense.

We had hearing upon hearing on these various enhanced interrogation techniques. There were disagreements, but we do know they were effective in gleaning intelligence that helped keep Americans safer. That is not just me saying that. Ask Leon Panetta, the immediate past Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Secretary of the Department of Defense—a proud Democrat but also a patriot in his own right. Ask John Brennan, President Obama's choice to be the current CIA Director. He said virtually the same thing.

So much of this should have proven to be unnecessary after two separate U.S. attorneys conducted criminal investigations. There was one done earlier and then one done later when Attorney General Eric Holder reopened the investigation. These men and women who risk their lives to do what their government asks them to do to keep us safe were subjected to at least two Justice Department investigations, and obviously no decision to proceed with any kind of criminal charges was decided upon.

I think you have to wonder about the timing of this in a lame-duck session where we have basically three items of business to do before we break for the Christmas holidays and a new Congress. It is clear that this report was pushed out in an attempt to make a political statement, but I have to tell you that I think it is a reckless act, and it is a disservice not only to the men and women who risked their lives but also to the American people who should expect more of us.

This was not a bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee report. Once Republicans on the Senate Intelligence Committee figured out what was happening, they simply disassociated themselves from it. This is purely a partisan report. There are absolutely no recommendations made for any reforms in this report. It was simply done to embarrass and to hold up our brave men and women who serve our country and the intelligence community to ridicule, and it is a shame.

TRIBUTE TO RALPH HALL

Mr. CORNYN. I came to the floor to talk about another topic, and that is about my friend and fellow Texan Congressman RALPH HALL, who at the end of this year will be retiring from representing Texas's Fourth District in the House of Representatives for more than three decades. It is hard to speak to the entirety of RALPH's 34 years in Congress in just a few minutes. I will try. I would be remiss if I didn't mention some of his greatest hits, so to speak.

Let me begin with what I admire most about RALPH HALL and why he is

so beloved back home in Texas. Why would they return him election after election over these many years?

First, RALPH is someone whom a lot of Texans look up to as a role model. He is a happy warrior. Having proudly served this country and Texas for over 50 years, he is a man of extraordinary character and remarkable integrity.

Thinking about RALPH, the first thing that comes to mind is his service to others, from his military service to being the oldest and among the longest serving Members of Congress. RALPH has lived a life of service to others and leaves behind a considerable legacy—one that will be long remembered and celebrated by people in my State and I believe the people of the United States too.

Those who know RALPH know he is the man who, wherever he goes—whether it is back home or here in Washington—before leaving a room, he will have hugged or shaken the hand of every person in the room, not to mention telling a few bad jokes and leaving everybody laughing in the process. He is a man who truly cares about others, and that is evident by the way he arranged his desk in his Washington office. He said one of his favorite things about his office is the view. Even so, he arranged his desk with his back to the window so others could sit and enjoy the view. This speaks to the kind of man he is, always putting other people first.

As I said, he is also well known for his excellent sense of humor and an occasional bad joke. He is a great storyteller and raconteur. He does have some pretty good stories to tell, though, from selling cigarettes to the famous outlaws Bonnie and Clyde, to putting President Reagan on hold, to his interesting encounters and friendships with Mickey Mantle, Muhammad Ali, Ted Williams, Neil Armstrong, John Glenn, among others. There are his many stories about flying Hellcat fighter aircraft in the U.S. Army during World War II.

RALPH has led a full and exciting life. During his time in Congress, he has not just been the hometown Congressman from Rockwall, TX; he has been the hometown Congressman to everyone he has encountered. It doesn't matter who you are—RALPH just naturally wants to try to find out how he can be helpful to you, from the person he met on the street, to the colleagues in the Texas delegation, to the President of the United States. That is just the way he is.

Knowing RALPH, he probably has something up his sleeve that he is not telling us about what he is going to do after he leaves Congress next month. In fact, when asked about his plans after leaving Congress, RALPH mentioned he would probably go to work at Walmart because he has to have a job.

RALPH has always got to have something to do. But it goes to show that no matter what he does next, he will not be slowing down anytime soon.

RALPH HALL will be greatly missed in this Congress. I am privileged to call him a colleague and a friend. I would like to wish him Godspeed and all the best as he continues to recover from a recent car accident at home in Rockwall. I look forward to seeing what he accomplishes in the next chapter of his long and storied life.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont

SSCI STUDY OF THE CIA'S DETENTION AND INTERROGATION PROGRAM

MR. LEAHY. Mr. President, I listened with interest to the tremendous statement made by the Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, earlier today. She has spoken of this issue on other occasions, and we Americans should listen.

More than a decade ago the Central Intelligence Agency began detaining and torturing human beings in the name of the war on terrorism. Then employees and contractors of the U.S. Government, paid for by our taxpayers' dollars, abused and degraded, dehumanized people. They stripped them of their basic humanity. But more than stripping them of their basic humanity, they stripped America of its standing in the world as the leader of promoting and protecting human rights. Instead of protecting us as Americans, by their actions they hurt all Americans.

President Obama banned torture and cruel treatment when he took office, but only now, because of the courage and conviction of Senator FEINSTEIN and the other members of the Intelligence Committee and their staffs, do we have a full and public accounting of the CIA's actions—an accounting the American people deserve.

The decision to release this historic report, as Senator FEINSTEIN has courageously said, has been difficult, but it was the right and moral thing to do. If something is right and something is moral, no matter how difficult it is, you should do it. Releasing the report demonstrates that America—the America I love—is different. As Americans, we cannot sweep our mistakes under the rug and pretend they did not happen. We have to acknowledge our mistakes. We have to learn from our mistakes. In this case, we as Americans must and will do everything we can to ensure that our government never tortures again.

Five years ago, in 2009, I called for a commission of inquiry to review the Bush administration's detention and interrogation program and other sweeping claims of executive power by the Bush administration. I believe that in order to restore America's moral leadership, we have to acknowledge what happened in our name because much of the leadership we can show around the world is not based on our wealth or on the power of our military

but on our moral leadership. Our Nation needed back then a full accounting of the CIA's treatment of detainees, and we need it today. With this report, at long last we have it.

This is not the first report to record or condemn the detention and interrogation policies and practices that were used during the last administration, but it is the first to fully chronicle the actions of the most secretive of our government agencies, the Central Intelligence Agency. The final report lays bare the dark truth about their program. That truth is far worse and it is far more brutal than most Americans ever imagined.

We have all seen the shocking pictures from Abu Ghraib. We have read the cold, clinical description of "harsh" or "enhanced" techniques written by Department of Justice attorneys to justify such treatment. We know that what was done at Abu Ghraib terribly diminished the image of the United States throughout the world. It did not make us safer by one iota. In fact, many would argue it made us less safe.

The report makes clear one fundamental truth: The CIA tortured people. That is the bottom line. No euphemistic description or legal obfuscation or pettifogging can hide that fact any longer. The Intelligence Committee report shows that techniques such as waterboarding and sleep deprivation were used in ways far more frequent and cruel and harmful than previously known. It shows that gross mismanagement by those in charge at the CIA and a shocking indifference to human dignity led to horrendous treatment and conditions of confinement that went far beyond even what they had been approving. It turns out that the senior CIA leadership did not even know that "enhanced" techniques were being used at one CIA detention facility. In fact, in one instance, one of their prisoners died as a result, left shackled on a concrete floor in a dungeon room, and likely died of hypothermia.

This is America? This is what we stand for? This is the image we want to give the rest of the world? This American does not think so. This American does not think so. It is not what brought my grandparents and great-grandparents to this country.

These so-called "enhanced" interrogation techniques were not just used on the worst of the worst either. In some instances, the CIA did not even know whom it was holding. CIA records show that at least 26 people detained by the CIA did not meet the CIA's own standard for detention. Some of these individuals were subjected to—and this is a wonderful slogan—"enhanced" techniques. What an evil slogan. Some detainees were determined not even to be members of Al Qaeda.

Moreover, the CIA relied on contractors—not even CIA personnel but contractors—who had no experience as interrogators to develop this program. They were happy to take American

taxpayers' money. They did not know what they were doing, but they said: Give us the money. Eventually the CIA outsourced all aspects of the program to the company these contractors set up. Did they make a few thousand dollars? No. They made \$80 million. This was a program out of control. It is yet another reason why Congress has to exercise its oversight responsibility.

The report also disproves CIA claims that torture programs were necessary to protect our Nation, and that it thwarted attacks. How many times have we heard it before—that we need this to protect us; we need this to protect us from another 9/11? We had all of the evidence we needed to stop 9/11, but the government had not even bothered to translate some of the material that our intelligence people had already obtained. After the fact, they decided: We should really translate some of that material we have. Then we found it could have been stopped.

This program of torture did not make us safer. As laid out in meticulous detail in the report, the use of these techniques did not generate uniquely valuable intelligence. In fact, the report thoroughly repudiates each of the most commonly cited examples of plots thwarted and terrorists captured. That should not come as a surprise.

The Senate Judiciary Committee held numerous hearings on the Bush administration's interrogation policies and practices. What we heard time and again from witness after witness is that torture and other cruel treatments do not work. But there are still some who continue to argue, even in the face of overwhelming testimony and actually now hard evidence to the contrary, that the program thwarted attacks and saved lives. They defend the CIA's action. They argue that the report does not tell the full story. But these are often the same people who participated in the rampant misrepresentations detailed in this report.

The report shows that CIA officials consistently misled virtually everyone outside the Agency about what was actually going on and about the results of the CIA interrogations—very similar to what we heard leading up to the war in Iraq after 9/11. I remember being in those hearings. I remember listening to the then-Vice President. I remember listening to others in those secret hearings and thinking: It does not ring true. I stated to others that I thought some of the things they were telling us did not ring true.

I remember walking early one morning with my wife near our home and two joggers coming up, calling us by name. These were people we had never seen before in the neighborhood.

One of them said, "I hear you have some questions." He asked whether I had asked to see a particular document.

I said, "I haven't. I didn't know there was such a thing."

He said, "You might find it interesting to read."