|  |
| --- |
| 1. Mark your confusion by highlighting or underlining anything you don’t understand. Show evidence of a close reading (questions, connections, predictions, reactions, summarizing, clarifying, challenging, etc.). 2. Write a 1-page response. Possible Writer’s Notebook questions:  * What is your position on ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’? Do you think they have a place in America’s security arsenal? Why or why not? Explain. * Do you think it was a good idea for the Senate to release this report at this time? Why or why not? Explain. * Select any passage and analyze or respond to it. |

**Senate report on CIA program details brutality, dishonesty**

Excerpted from Greg Miller, Adam Goldman and Julie Tate, *Washington Post,* December 9, 2014

An exhaustive five-year Senate investigation of the CIA’s secret interrogations of terrorism suspects renders a strikingly bleak verdict on a program launched in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, describing levels of brutality, dishonesty and seemingly arbitrary violence that at times brought even agency employees to moments of anguish.

The report by the Senate Intelligence Committee delivers new allegations of cruelty in a program whose severe tactics have been abundantly documented, revealing that agency medical personnel voiced alarm that waterboarding methods had deteriorated to “a series of near drownings” and that agency employees subjected detainees to “rectal rehydration” and other painful procedures that were never approved.

The 528-page document catalogues dozens of cases in which CIA officials allegedly deceived their superiors at the White House, members of Congress and even sometimes their peers about how the interrogation program was being run and what it had achieved. In one case, an internal CIA memo relays instructions from the White House to keep the program secret from then-Secretary of State Colin L. Powell out of concern that he would “blow his stack if he were to be briefed on what’s been going on.”

A declassified summary of the committee’s work discloses for the first time a complete roster of the 119 prisoners held in CIA custody and indicates that at least 26 were held because of mistaken identities or bad intelligence. The publicly released summary is drawn from a longer, classified study that exceeds 6,000 pages.

The report’s central conclusion is that harsh interrogation measures, deemed torture by program critics including President Obama, did not work. The panel deconstructs prominent claims about the value of the “enhanced” measures, including that they produced breakthrough intelligence in the hunt for Osama bin Laden, and dismisses them all as exaggerated if not utterly false—assertions that the CIA and former officers involved in the program vehemently dispute.

In a statement from the White House, Obama said the Senate report “documents a troubling program” and “reinforces my long-held view that these harsh methods were not only inconsistent with our values as [a] nation, they did not serve our broader counterterrorism efforts or our national security interests.” Obama praised the CIA’s work to degrade al-Qaeda over the past 13 years but said the agency’s interrogation program “did significant damage to America’s standing in the world and made it harder to pursue our interests with allies and partners.”

The CIA issued a 112-page response to the Senate report, acknowledging failings in the interrogation program but denying that it intentionally misled the public or policymakers about an effort that it maintains delivered critical intelligence.

“The intelligence gained from the program was critical to our understanding of al-Qa’ida and continues to inform our counterterrorism efforts to this day,” CIA Director John Brennan, who was a senior officer at the agency when it set up secret prisons for al-Qaeda suspects, said in a written statement. The program “did produce intelligence that helped thwart attack plans, capture terrorists, and save lives,” he said.

The release of the report comes at an unnerving time in the country’s conflict with al-Qaeda and its offshoots. The Islamic State has beheaded three Americans in recent months and seized control of territory across Iraq and Syria. Fears that the report could ignite new overseas violence against American interests prompted Secretary of State John F. Kerry to appeal to Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), the chairman of the Senate committee, to consider a delay. The report has also been at the center of intense bureaucratic and political fights that erupted this year in accusations that the CIA surreptitiously monitored the computers used by committee aides involved in the investigation.

**Cheney: 'The report's full of crap'**

Excerpted from Eric Bradner, *CNN,* December 11, 2014

Former Vice President Dick Cheney called a Senate panel's report on U.S. interrogation tactics during George W. Bush's administration is "deeply flawed" and a "terrible piece of work."

"The report's full of crap," he said in an interview with Fox News on Wednesday evening. Bush's Republican vice president insisted that the Central Intelligence Agency's rough tactics—which the report said included mock executions, beatings, "rectal rehydration" and feeding, sleep deprivation and more—helped the United States "catch the bastards who killed 3,000 of us on 9/11."

"It did in fact produce actionable intelligence that was vital in the success of keeping the country safe from further attacks," he said. Asked specifically about the rectal rehydration instance detailed in the report, Cheney said: "I don't know anything about that specific instance -- I can't speak to that." He also said he hadn't actually read the report. Its full 6,000 pages haven't been released, but a lengthy summary was issued Tuesday. Cheney said he'd "seen parts of it. I read summaries of it."

He said he has no regrets about the tactics used after the Sept. 11, 2001, al Qaeda attacks. "I think what needed to be done was done," Cheney said. "I think we were perfectly justified in doing it. And I'd do it again in a minute."

**McCain makes passionate defense for torture report's release**

Excerpted from Alexandra Jaffe, *CNN,* December 10, 2014

Republican Sen. John McCain broke with members of his party Tuesday, lauding the release of the Senate Intelligence Committee's report on torture and decrying the use of torture as having "stained our national honor" and doing "much harm and little practical good."

McCain, a survivor of torture himself from his naval service during the Vietnam War, said from the Senate floor that the techniques outlined in the report "not only failed their purpose—to secure actionable intelligence to prevent further attacks on the U.S. and our allies—but actually damaged our security interests, as well as our reputation as a force for good in the world."

Many Republicans have argued against releasing the report, especially as the threat of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria grows, and U.S. intelligence officials have warned that its release could cause backlash from nations and groups hostile towards the nation. American embassies in the Middle East have been put on heightened security alert for its release.

McCain said that while "the truth is a hard pill to swallow ... the American people are entitled to it." And he acknowledged that violence against the U.S. from the "Muslim world" is "possible ... perhaps likely" but argued that America's enemies "hardly need an excuse" to attack the nation, so the good done by the release of the report should trump any security concerns. "This report strengthens self-government and, ultimately, I believe, America's security and stature in the world," he said.

During his comments, McCain referenced his own experience with torture and argued that it "produces more misleading information than actionable intelligence" and that "we can and we will" win the war on terrorism without such techniques. But he argued that the U.S. shouldn't resort to such tactics not just because they're ineffective and potentially dangerous but because they undermine the nation's values and beliefs. "I have often said, and will always maintain, that this question isn't about our enemies; it's about us. It's about who we were, who we are and who we aspire to be. It's about how we represent ourselves to the world," he said.

McCain added, "When we fight to defend our security we fight also for an idea ... that all men are endowed by the Creator with inalienable rights."

"Our enemies act without conscience. We must not," he added.