'Why don't we just kill them?': New Book Details CIA Rendition and Torture Programme

Cathy Scott Clark, author of 'The Forever Prisoner', links CIA torture programme to notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq

By Umar A Farooq

Global Research, April 12, 2022

Middle East Eye 11 April 2022

Region: USA

Theme: Law and Justice

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In the early years of America's war on terror, during an undisclosed meeting of the top brass of the US's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), senior intelligence officials gathered to discuss what to do with the individuals subjected to rendition and "enhanced interrogation techniques".

After looking at a number of options, including keeping them in detention, sending them to another country, and prosecuting them, one senior official asked, "Why don't we just kill them?"

The details of that meeting were revealed on Monday, in a virtual panel with author and journalist Cathy Scott Clark, whose book *The Forever Prisoner* offers an in-depth look into the CIA's controversial torture programme.

> "You hear revelations like that, which I found a bit alarming," she said during the event, hosted by the New America think tank.

The book, which will be released later this week, focuses on the case of Guantanamo

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detainee Abu Zubaydah, who was interrogated using techniques that amounted to torture – including being waterboarded 83 times in one month, hung naked from a ceiling, and deprived of sleep for 11 straight days.

It covers a number of aspects in the CIA's rendition programme, including interviews Clark had with several top military and intelligence officials.

In the process of working on the book, Clark interviewed James Mitchell, one of the architects of the torture programme. Clark also interviewed another person, identified as "Gus" in the book, who orchestrated the entire rendition operation.

> "Having met and interviewed so many people in the programme, my overall feeling is that it sort of became like a pack mentality – that everybody was in it together," Clark said.

> "And if someone were to say who's responsible should someone be prosecuted, I don't think you can point to any one person."

From CIA torture to Abu Ghraib

Following the 9/11 attacks, the US launched a far-reaching campaign to root out "terrorists" that had planned the attacks and who could coordinate further attacks on US soil.

However, civil society groups have said that many of Washington's practices, including rendition and "enhanced interrogation techniques" – which the Senate concluded in a landmark report amounted to torture – are illegal according to international law.

Last month, newly declassified documents detailed how Ammar al-Baluchi, a detainee at a CIA black site in Afghanistan, was used as a living prop for interrogators-in-training to receive certification in interrogations. The torture he received led to brain damage.

During the event on Monday, Clark also revealed that despite denial from US officials, there is a link between the creators – such as Mitchell – of the CIA's torture programme and the gross abuses that took place at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison where detainees endured physical, psychological and sexual abuse, including the use of electric shock and mock executions at the hands of US forces.

> "The other thing that I put together in great detail in the book is how the CIA's enhanced interrogation programme absolutely, definitely led to abuses in the US military as well," Clark said.

> "The same people... were involved in putting together training programmes, training materials, training the CIA, training interrogators to go to Guantanamo, training interrogators at Bagram, and then interrogators who went to Abu Ghraib.

> "Jim [Mitchell] can rightly say 'I didn't design what went wrong at Abu Ghraib', but he has to accept responsibility that he created something that got out of control."

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