

**STATEMENT BEFORE THE  
SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SUBJECT: INTERROGATION POLICY AND  
EXECUTIVE ORDER 13440**

**SEPTEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2007**

**SUBMITTED BY:  
STEVEN M. KLEINMAN**

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chairman, members of the Committee, it is truly an honor to appear before you today and have the opportunity to offer my thoughts on this most important issue.

In the course of more than twenty years of commissioned service primarily assigned to duties involving human intelligence operations, I had the opportunity to serve as an interrogator during three major military campaigns: Operation JUST CAUSE, Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM, and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. I also was entrusted with directing the Air Force Combat Interrogation Course during which we provided a unique training program for interrogators from all the services as well as several foreign countries.

In the past two years, I've spent considerable time reflecting upon and writing about that experience as well as working with a number of distinguished colleagues in systematically researching this unique discipline.

This background indelibly informs my perspectives on the three primary areas I've been asked to address: 1) historical U.S. interrogation practices, 2) the effectiveness of various interrogation approaches, and 3) the challenges faced by the United States in developing an effective interrogation program. I'll begin, then, by addressing each of these issues before offering several concluding thoughts.

### **Historical U.S. Interrogation Practices**

As a student in the graduate program at the National Defense Intelligence College, I began my thesis on the U.S. strategic interrogation program during World War II with a quote from a British officer who had served in the United Kingdom's Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Center, an extraordinary program that would become the model for our own. This officer, I believe, eloquently captured the intrinsic nature of interrogation when he observed:

“Interrogation of prisoners is a difficult and delicate task that cannot be conducted by anybody, anywhere and by no matter what method. It is indispensable, if results of any value are to be produced, that the examination be conducted in a skilled, planned and methodical manner.”

The U.S. program that I studied, known by its code-name, MIS-Y, clearly took this guidance

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to heart. Operating without established doctrine, the dynamic and creative individuals who served as interrogators, analysts, and monitors developed an incredibly effective program, the product of which would soon be valued on par with the decisive intelligence generated by the vaunted Enigma communications intercept program.

The lessons I uncovered in my research<sup>1</sup> would, I believe, be of significant value in informing the American approach to interrogation in this contemporary era. These include:

- Interrogation is a complex, dynamic process that is as operationally vexing as any clandestine intelligence operation. MIS-Y responded to the challenge by recruiting a cadre of individuals with impressive academic credentials, successful life experience, knowledge of the language and culture, and adept at producing results in an environment marked by chaos and ambiguity.
- To maximize the return on investment, only those prisoners with access to, and knowledge of, information of critical intelligence value were ultimately selected for long-term examination at the Fort Hunt Facility. The multi-tiered selection process that developed can be described as both meticulous and judicious.<sup>2</sup>
- Exhaustive research and preparation prior to the conduct of every interrogation was standard. As the process evolved, three to six hours were invested in preparation for every *hour* spent in the actual interrogation. Interrogator—and their teams—became bona fide subject matter experts in the array of specialized and technical areas of intelligence interest.

Unfortunately, due to national security interests as the nation rapidly transitioned from World War II into the era of the Cold War, much of the corporate knowledge developed by the MIS-Y effort remained classified and largely unavailable until this treasure was once again declassified in the early 1990s. As a result, the stories of the American interrogation programs that emerged during subsequent conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf did so without the benefit of this extraordinary preceding chapter.

### **Effectiveness of Various Interrogation Approaches**

Much of the debate surrounding the topic of interrogation in recent times has focused on this very question. I think it would be safe to say that in viewing interrogation as both an art and a science, the discussion of effectiveness falls primarily within the province of the former. While the U.S. Government invested in the study of interrogation during the 1950s through the 1970s, those programs almost exclusively examined the intricacies of what was once labeled the *Communist Interrogation Model*. The initial intent, I would submit was honorable: if we could deconstruct the nature of this coercive model, perhaps we could identify effective counter-

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<sup>1</sup> A summary of my thesis has been made available to the committee's counsel.

<sup>2</sup> A total of 3,451 of prisoners-of-war passed through Fort Hunt from August 1942 to July 1945.

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strategies and therefore better prepare Americans going in harm's way who might find themselves detained by nations that did not conduct their affairs in a manner consistent with the Geneva Conventions relative to the treatment of prisoners.

Unfortunately, there was little interest in studying the nature of interrogation as a unique method of collecting critical intelligence information from foreign nationals detained by the United States. As a result, the interrogation strategies set forth in the current Army Field Manual are not based on scientific inquiry. Immersing myself in the archives, my best guess is that they are derived from lessons learned from tactical interrogations conducted during World War II. Those lessons—captured in such strategies as *Pride & Ego Up*, *Rapid Fire*, and *We Know All*—have since been codified into the various iterations of the Field Manual.

Arguments for or against the effectiveness of this paradigm are based almost exclusively on anecdotal evidence. The fact that Specialist Jones orchestrated the Emotional Love of Family approach and obtained information of intelligence is too often viewed as prima fascia evidence of the effectiveness of this strategy. Factors such as the interrogator's presence or personality, the physical setting, and the events experienced by the prisoner prior to interrogation lay beyond our ability to thus far measure.

While I believe I have observed effective interrogations—and would like to think I've been effective in conducting interrogations—the only conclusion I can state that would meet the standards of scientific rigor is this: we don't know if the methods we are employing are effective, nor do we know for certain what other strategies or methods might be more effective than what we are teaching today.

That said, the sum total of my experience suggests the most effective means of conducting interrogations—and by effective, I mean achieving consistent success in obtaining accurate, comprehensive, and timely information—is through what has been frequently described as a “relationship-based” model. Let me emphasize that this is far more than just establishing rapport; it involves the pursuit of *operational accord*. Employing non-threatening principles of persuasion and enlightened cultural finesse, the interrogator seeks to establish a productive, non-adversarial relationship wherein the source perceives his interests to be best served by engaging cooperatively with the interrogator.

Since issues relating to coercion and torture continue to occupy centerstage in the public debate over this country's interrogation policy, I feel compelled to briefly address this issue, especially as it relates to the question of effectiveness. I find it curious that in the debate involving the so-called “ticking bomb” scenario, there has been a pre-supposition that physical, psychological, and/or emotional coercion will compel a source to provide actionable intelligence, the only issues in contention being those legal and moral arguments in favor or in opposition. To the best of my knowledge, there is no definitive data to support that supposition and considerable historical evidence to suggest the contrary.

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Even the effort to define torture can be a most elusive game at best. The problem lies in the fact that interrogations are conducted in the theater of reality, not a virtual world of words. From this operator's perspective, I find myself in full agreement with the observations of author Mark Moyar as set forth in his account of the Vietnam-era Phoenix Program.

Some people define torture as the infliction of *severe* physical pain on a defenseless person. I define torture as the infliction of *any* pain on a defenseless individual because deciding which activities inflict severe pain is an excessively complicated and imprecise business.

### **Challenges Faced by the United States in Developing an Effective Interrogation Program**

It is this professional's opinion that the challenges before us—what I have described in my writings as *barriers to success*—are threefold:

The first is the *linguistic/cultural* barrier to success. The interrogator's ability to engage with a source with near-native fluency and acute cultural awareness is of vital importance. Distilled to its most fundamental form, interrogation is about information and relationships, with language and cultural intelligence serving as the primary instruments.

The second is the *specialized knowledge* barrier to success. Most experts agree that the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency are intelligence-driven activities where interrogation moves from the margins to assume a central role in intelligence collection. General Hayden recently noted, for example, that more than 70 percent of the human intelligence used in the National Intelligence Estimate pertaining to threats to homeland security was based on information obtained from detainees.

The nature of the information required in these realms, however, is profoundly different from that sought in a conventional battlespace. Rather than order of battle and lines of communications, interrogators need a detailed understanding of complex finance structures, amorphous cell networks, and communications systems. As with the cultural barrier to success, the specialized knowledge barrier to success is predicated on Sun Tzu's timeless exhortation to *know the enemy*.

Finally, there is what I've labeled the *interpersonal barrier to success*. The behavioral science consulting team concept resulted from a recognition that interrogation is an intense interpersonal dynamic bounded by complex informational and relational factors. Thus far, however, behavioral science consulting teams have been primarily comprised of clinical psychologists. To effectively overcome the myriad interpersonal challenges, the interrogator's methods should be informed by the full array of sound behavioral science, including at a minimum, such disciplines as social psychology and cultural anthropology.

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## Conclusions

It is likely evident from my foregoing remarks that I believe we have challenges before us in evolving the American way of interrogation. These challenges, however, are not unlike those facing the United States in 1942. In recommending a way forward, then, I rely in part upon the lessons I learned in studying the MIS-Y experience. Leaders at that time identified four key areas of emphasis to ensure mission success.

First, they needed to design an in-depth training program that transcended what was being taught in the basic interrogation courses. Today, this would require a comprehensive research effort and the systematic study of our interrogators who have demonstrated an ability to achieve consistent results.

Second, they would require an innovative and adaptable approach to interrogation. The prisoners they faced were often well-educated, conversant in several languages, and moved easily across cultures. This accurately describes many of the high-value detainees we have encountered. A more sophisticated strategic model mandates a more sophisticated approach to research.

Third, they needed to create a function-driven organization. I believe the Intelligence Community would be well-served by the creation of an organization of common concern vested with the responsibility for professionalizing the discipline of interrogation, managing a robust approach to studying the “science” of interrogation, and designing doctrine for incorporating the products of that research into field operations.

And fourth, they needed to establish a facility built to precise standards driven by both legal and operational requirements. To appreciate the importance of this step, one only need to reflect back upon the early difficulties experienced at the Guantanamo Bay facility.

My operational experience has convinced me that these four steps can be taken in a manner that meets even the most stringent interpretation of national and international law relative to the treatment of prisoners. Perhaps of more importance, I am equally convinced this course will enable us to meet current and emerging threats in a fashion consistent with the best moral traditions of this nation.

Napoleon once wrote that, in war, “the moral is to the physical as three is to one.” I believe this calculus to be true in equal measure with respect to the conduct of interrogation and should serve as a fundamental guide in the evolution of the American approach to this vital mission. In following this philosophical construct, I am confident that we would be able to do what some of our countrymen have come to believe is impossible: to conduct our operations in a manner that demonstrates to all that we are truly good, so that we might, as a nation, embrace our desire to be truly great.