

Tips on Writing a Letter to the Editor on Gina Haspel

Please be brief (150 words or less). If possible, consider personalizing your letter with a short personal anecdote, or with a mention of your faith or your moral reasons for opposing torture.

TALKING POINTS:

President Trump nominated Gina Haspel to be the next CIA Director.

Ms. Haspel has had a more than 30 year career at the CIA – almost all of which is classified.

We know two things about her career:

1. She supervised the waterboarding of a detainee, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, at a CIA black site (secret prison) in Thailand.
2. She participated in the destruction of the CIA videotapes documenting torture at that CIA black site in Thailand (the tapes were destroyed before any Members of Congress, including those on the Intelligence Committees, were able to see them).

If confirmed, Ms. Haspel would be the first CIA Director – indeed the first cabinet level official in the modern era – to be known to have had an operational role in the use of torture.

Other forms of torture that were used at the CIA black site that Ms. Haspel ran included forced nudity, walling, and cramped confinement boxes. We don't know whether or not she also supervised the use of these.

CIA records describe lower level interrogators at the Thai black site as “at the point of tears and choking up” due to the emotional impact of the severity of the torture that was applied to detainees at that site.

President Trump has repeatedly said that he would like to restart the torture program. Ms. Haspel participated in the torture program.

Confirming a CIA Director who used torture would send a message to the world – our friends and allies would doubt our opposition to torture, and tyrants and dictators would be emboldened to more freely abuse the human rights of their people.

SENDING YOUR LETTER:

Provide complete contact information: The newspaper may contact you to verify that you wrote your letter. You must include your full name, mailing address, e-mail, and phone number on the letter.

Submit the letter in the body of your e-mail: Generally, editors prefer to have your letter printed within the body of your message, and not as an attachment. The e-mail address for submissions is usually printed in the editorial section of your paper or it is available on the newspaper's website.

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