

'Liberal' Establishment Whitewash Former CIA/NSA Director Michael Hayden

By [Mohamed Elmaazi](#)

Global Research, November 26, 2018

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

Michael Hayden, the former director of the CIA and NSA has been hospitalised following a stroke. Predictably, well-wishes and praise has been pouring in from national-security journos, self-proclaimed #resistance members, and other figures from across US 'liberal' society:

Olivia Gazis is a producer and national-security 'journalist' with CBS:

Very sad news – General Michael Hayden, former head of CIA and NSA, has been hospitalized after suffering a stroke.

Get-well wishes and messages of encouragement are welcome at hayden@gmu.edu. pic.twitter.com/Mwk6guYUKv

— Olivia Gazis (@Olivia_Gazis) [November 23, 2018](#)

Josh Marshall the publisher of the Talking Points Memo [news site](#) tweeted:

This is very rough to hear. Had the honor of meeting Hayden and his wife earlier this year when we recorded a podcast episode. Really wish him and his the best. <https://t.co/LHFWfFm18c>

— Josh Marshall (@joshtpm) [November 23, 2018](#)

David press is a [regular commentator](#) in establishment press circles. He is the Chief Operating Officer of the popular Lawfare blog and former CIA intelligence officer:

My heart aches for Jeanine and the Hayden family.

But the many people whose lives are better because of this great man know that his energy and his goodness will fuel his recovery. We're with you, General, as you've been there for us. pic.twitter.com/gPwtVm3eAK

— David Priess (@DavidPriess) [November 23, 2018](#)

Even actor Ron Perlman tweeted:

I, along with a grateful nation, pray for Mr Hayden's speedy and full recovery.
<https://t.co/yOt6lZF3XB>

— Ron Perlman (@perlmutations) [November 23, 2018](#)

The list goes on.

Whitewashing Hayden

Meanwhile, 'liberal' media outlets such as NBC, [Associated Press](#), [MSNBC](#), [ABC](#), and CBS have all been offering boilerplate statements that ignore the man's rather nefarious track-record as one of the most powerful people on the planet.

The former four star airforce general served as director of the National Security Agency (NSA) under former presidents Bill Clinton, George Bush and then as director of the CIA under Bush and then president Barack Obama.

As head of the CIA Hayden was [totally unrepentant](#) for the CIA torture programme which he [inherited and continued](#), as well as the drone programme which has killed thousands of civilians.

As journalist Glenn Greenwald [put it in 2013](#):

"The person who secretly implemented that illegal domestic spying program was retired Gen. Michael Hayden, then Bush's NSA director."

Greenwald [continued](#):

"That's the very same Michael Hayden who is now frequently presented by US television outlets as the authority and expert on the current NSA controversy - all without ever mentioning the central role he played in overseeing that illegal warrantless eavesdropping program."

A director of US state terror

The New York Times published a 2,000 word article by Hayden in which he defended the explosion of terror policies by the US government post-9/11. Hayden [wrote that](#):

"I think it fair to say that the targeted killing program has been the most precise and effective application of firepower in the history of armed conflict."

This would be the same programme that philosopher and activist Noam Chomsky aptly [called](#) "the most extreme terrorist campaign of modern times".

Even Mike Zenko of the hyper-establishment Council on Foreign Relations, [found a](#) "few troubling aspects" to Hayden's continued defence of the drone programme:

"as director of the CIA Hayden personally authorized an estimated 48 drone

strikes, which killed 532 people, 144 of whom were civilians.”

Only 2% killed were ‘high value targets’

On top of which, analyst Peter Bergen [testified before](#) the US senate in 2013 that only two percent of people killed by drones in Pakistan were senior Al-Qaeda leaders. And only six percent of those killed in Yemen were identified as ‘senior militants’. In other words the vast majority of people killed were either civilians or everyday ‘foot soldiers’ who posed absolutely no threat to the US or its allies.

Normalising the abhorrent

As part of The Intercept’s expose – The Drone Papers – award winning journalist Jeremy Scahill [explains that](#) Hayden pushed Obama to adopt these policies;

“Soon after he was elected president, Barack Obama was strongly urged by Michael Hayden, the outgoing CIA director, and his new top counterterrorism adviser, John Brennan, to adopt the way of the scalpel — small footprint counterterrorism operations and drone strikes. In one briefing, Hayden bluntly told Obama that covert action was the only way to confront al Qaeda and other terrorist groups plotting attacks against the U.S.”

It didn’t take Obama long to join the ranks of blood-soaked US presidents. As Scahill explains:

“In December 2009, the Obama administration signed off on its [first](#) covert airstrike in Yemen — a cruise missile attack that killed [more than 40 people](#), most of them women and children. “

Zenko is a senior fellow at the CFR and has followed drone policies closely for many years. Zenko lamented that:

“The Obama administration’s appearance of “[reforms](#)” presented in 2013 succeeded in permanently institutionalizing and normalizing what was—under Hayden’s early tenure at the CIA—a rarely used tactic.”

10 times more likely to kill civilians

Unfortunately it didn’t stop there. In a separate article on the ‘drone papers’ journalist at The Intercept Ryan Devereaux [writes](#):

“Research by Larry Lewis, formerly a principal research scientist at the Center for Naval Analyses, supports that conclusion. Lewis spent years studying U.S. operations in Afghanistan, including raids, airstrikes, and jackpots, all with an eye to understanding why civilian casualties happen and how to better prevent them”.

In other words Lewis was working for the US government to assess the nature of the drone programmes that Hayden celebrates.

Deveraux explains that Lewis [“uncovered” that](#) US airstrikes:

“delivered by machines thought to be the most precise in the Pentagon’s arsenal... in Afghanistan were 10 times more likely to kill civilians than conventional aircraft”.

“We assume that they’re surgical but they’re not”...

“Certainly in Afghanistan, in the time frame I looked at, the rate of civilian casualties was significantly higher for unmanned vehicles than it was for manned aircraft airstrikes. And that was a lot higher than raids.”

Far from being “the most precise and effective application of firepower in the history of armed conflict”, what Hayden helped to oversee was the unleashing of a perpetual terror-generating machine. A terror-generating machine that has been part of a wider faux ‘war on terror’ that has destroyed the lives of perfectly innocent hundreds of thousands of men, women and children.

It should then be unsurprising then that confirmed torturer and now director of the CIA Gina Haspel has expressed her well wishes for Hayden:

DCIA Haspel: On behalf of the men & women of CIA, I want to wish Gen. Hayden a speedy recovery. Mike’s long career of public service & commitment to national security continue to be an inspiration to all intelligence officers. Our thoughts are with Mike, Jeanine, & their family.

— CIA (@CIA) [November 23, 2018](#)

Embraced by Obama

As a matter of law Obama was obligated to initiated prosecutions against the Bush era war criminals, including those implicated in torture such as Haspel and Hayden. Instead, Obama involved the US in at least five more wars, expanded and institutionalised the National Security-Surveillance state, the drone wars and re-colonised the African continent with an ever expanding number of US military bases, soldiers, and special forces.

It may not be appropriate to celebrate the stroke of Mr Hayden, but nor should he be celebrated by those of us who genuinely support liberty, democracy and the Rule of Law.

A point made by journalists Glenn Greenwald:

I hope [@GenMhayden](#) fully recovers. Wishing ill on people is bad in many ways, especially for those who do it. But this event should not be exploited as an opportunity to convert him into an angel or hero. He ran Bush's post-9/11 CIA & NSA & presided over many evil & criminal acts <https://t.co/H1SDsIMLeo>

— Glenn Greenwald (@ggreenwald) [November 24, 2018](#)

and Ben Norton:

Liberal journalists are now praising former CIA and NSA Director Michael Hayden as a "Resistance"™ hero—but his own 2016 book shows his disdain for journos

He called [@GGreenwald](#) the devil and attacked Snowden, Seymour Hersh, Laura Poitras, and Jane Mayer <https://t.co/oAZrNgWI8Y>

— Ben Norton (@BenjaminNorton) [November 23, 2018](#)

#Resistance

The fact that Hayden is described as a ‘patriot’ and a ‘man of honour’ by the ‘liberal’ establishment exposes just how vacuous and shallow the ‘liberal’ establishment and their #hashtag resistance are. This includes the Democratic Party which has either endorsed, or failed to challenge, the worst policies of the Trump administration including its continuation of US imperial wars. Anyone under any illusions as to the nature of the Democratic Party should take [a look at the work of](#) journalist Patrick Martin at the World Socialist Website which revealed that the Democratic Party has been recruiting and backing a record number of ex-military and ex-CIA officials to its ranks. In fact, the latest ‘blue wave’ has seen [no less than](#) eleven veterans of the US military and the CIA. As journalist Patrick Martin [explained to](#) journalist Scott Horton these are merely the candidates who openly advertised their militarist backgrounds. There may be others who didn’t promote it as part of their candidacies. The point is, there are real heroes out there. Everyday men and women who challenge corruption, speak truth to power, and expose waste fraud and abuse. There is no reason to settle for a fake.

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