

Video: Gina Haspel to Head the CIA, a GRTV interview with Ray McGovern

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Global Research, May 25, 2018

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Gina Haspel, a 33 year veteran of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has gotten clearance to head the agency.

The U.S. Senate approved the hire on May 17th in a 54-45 vote, which included six Democrats.

Haspel's nomination was controversial, owing to her involvement in 'enhanced interrogations' of terrorism suspects. These included use of 'waterboarding' on a single detainee at a secret U.S. site in Thailand. Haspel was also implicated in the destruction of videotapes of interrogations that had been characterized as torture.

At her May 9th Senate confirmation hearing, a few citizens stood up and spoke out against the nomination, citing her record of overseeing torture.

One of those citizens was Ray McGovern.



McGovern found himself being dragged out of the hearing room and violently restrained by Capitol police. Video of his 'take down' outside the courtroom was captured by Allie McCracken, a campaigner with Amnesty International.

Mr. McGovern (78) will appear in Criminal Court on Friday May 25th at 9:30 am EDT to face charges of 'Disrupting Congress' and 'Resisting Arrest.'

In the days leading up to Friday's hearing, GRTV got hold of Mr. McGovern and tapped his

thoughts about the significance of the appointment, his insights into the Agency's history and internal dynamics, his understanding of the forces directing U.S. foreign policy, and his appraisal of a near future conflict with Iran.

Ray McGovern is a 27 year veteran of the Agency who served as an analyst, and provided President Ronald Reagan with his Presidential Daily briefing. Following his retirement, McGovern became an outspoken activist and founded a group called [Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity](#), which has since early 2003 been questioning many government talking points being used to justify war or similar provocative actions. His website is [raymcgovern.com](#)

Interview video courtesy of [Paul S. Graham](#).

Transcript- Interview with Ray McGovern

Global Research: So Gina Haspel has been approved by the Senate, as of last Thursday, as director of the CIA. This 33-year veteran has, in fact, a record of having overseen Enhanced Interrogation Techniques, which were a focus of controversy in her appointment, and, of course, there were a number of individuals that attended the May 8th hearing, including my next guest, who was very opposed to this decision.

Ray McGovern is a 27-year veteran of the CIA. He presented the presidential daily briefing to President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s and was one of the cofounders of Veterans Intelligence Professionals for Sanity. He joins us now, just a few days before he's expected to go to court in relation to the way he was dealt with in that hearing.

So, Ray McGovern, it's a pleasure to have you on our program.

Ray McGovern: Thank you.

GR: Now, first of all, maybe just give us a bit of an update in terms of what happened there. What precisely were the charges they brought up against you?

RM: Well, they charged me with the obstruction of congress and resisting arrest, which if you see the video, you can see is a kind of a sick joke. I was not under my own power when they dragged me out of the hearing room and then took me to ground, as the personal notes of the arresting officer puts it. I have the notes. They're in his own handwriting

GR: It's been, well, I guess a couple of weeks. I mean, to what do you attribute that.. what looks like on video to be rather excessive use of force? I mean, it's not like you were rushing the, running up to Miss Haspel or anything like that. What makes...?

RM: Well, clearly they had instructions. Now, the senator who's the chair of the senate intelligence committee, Richard Burr, he was giving hypocrisy a bad name when he started out by saying now we have a public hearing here, and I suppose, some of you will want to make a statement, so go ahead. Make it quick, make it swift, and be gone.

And I said to myself, wow, I never heard an opening statement like that from a senate chair. I may have to take advantage of that. And as things went along, Haspel was allowed to bob

and weave with the support of many of the committee members, and when she was finally asked by Ron Wyden, who apparently cares about torture, Ron Wyden, the senator from Oregon, he said, now, Miss Haskell I'm running out of time, now tell me, just yes or no, were you supervising the water boarding of al-Nashiri in Thailand, yes or no.

Senator, I wish I could tell you, but that's classified. Now, if Wyden had some more time he certainly would have said, now tell me Miss Haspel, who classified that? And she would have had to say well, Senator, I did.

The whole thing was a charade. Now Wyden was out of time so he's forgiven. But the chair? Richard Burr from North Carolina? He should have intervened in there: now, Miss Haspel, we have the documents. You have the documents. You know that we know so please, yes or no, were you supervising the waterboarding of al-Nashiri in Thailand? And she would have had to say well yes, or I still think that's classified, and he'd say well did you classify this, and she would say yeah I classified it.

So we had this ridiculous charade of the nominee being able to classify incriminating evidence that should have disqualified her, that did disqualify her according to Senator McCain and many others from being the head of the CIA.

So, when there was the opportunity, when the policeman between me and Haspel left, probably to go to the bathroom or something, I went up and I said, I'm sorry to interrupt, but I think that Senator Wyden is due a straight answer to his question. She was.. of course, you know that...then rather than letting me make my first statement then be gone, I was be gone quickly by these four Capitol Police who dragged me out, took me to ground and so forth.

So it was an unwelcome interruption by me. And of course they threw the book at me.

Usually, of course, you get released that same day. I was forced to spend well, all told, 27 hours in conditions that I would suggest every white American should subject themselves to, to understand what it means to be marginalized. What it means to be dehumanized. What it means to be in the total power of people that don't give a rat's patootie about you.

So anyhow, I was released the following day after appearing in court before the judge, so I... You know, people say what did you think you could achieve? Well, I suppose, when it comes right down to it, I have nine grandchildren, and I see how this is playing out. And I want to be able to tell them that I did all I could, including throwing my body into it, to make sure that the world knew that somebody cared about Haspel's torture, her record of torture and, just as I did in May of 2006 when I gave my big Intelligence Commendation Medallion back to the head of the House Intelligence Committee, say, I don't want to be associated with the agency I worked with for 27 years, since it's openly identified with torture, and now we have the director herself being Queen of the May, so to speak, queen of the torture regime.

You know it's not only, well, I like to say that yeah, it's illegal, of course it's illegal. The US law and the UN convention on international law. But it's not wrong because it's illegal. It's illegal because it's wrong. Human beings don't do those things to other human beings. It falls in the category of what we learned in philosophy and theology: intrinsic evil. Slavery. Rape.

GR: I was wondering if you could comment then on, I mean given that, I think that this idea

that torture is wrong, that covers the entire political landscape, it doesn't fit into any particular ideologies, so what do you make of the fact that the Senate actually ended up approving of this nomination in spite of all of the facts that are out there.

RM: Instead of being an oversight committee looking at what the CIA and others are doing, the Senate Intelligence Committee, not the house just now, but the Senate Intelligence Committee, is the overlook committee. They're afraid of the ones they're supposed to be watching and supervising. It was really hard to watch the senators, including my senator from Virginia, Mark Warner, do all kinds of little charades to make sure that she wrote the right letter to him, and he said, oh, well, now I'm convinced you would never torture.

Well, you know, she's all, the president ordered me to torture. Well, give me a break. The president thinks torture works. And he said we should do waterboarding and worse. Now why would that same president pick Gina Haspel if she's going to, like, really disobey the president when he tells her to do that?

It defies belief. You know the business of "it works," okay, unfortunately most Americans sadly, very sadly, most Americans think that torture works. Why do they think that? Because of Hollywood, because of the TV programs and all that kind of stuff. It doesn't work, okay?

Now there are lots of reasons why that doesn't work, but I like to quote the head of army intelligence, John Kimmons. Now, this is back in 2006. They were leaks about the black sites, and George Bush was going to come before the cameras and the microphones on the 6th of July to explain Enhanced Interrogation Techniques. Which most people don't realize is a literal translation of *Verschärfte Vernehmung*, sharpened interrogation, right out of the Gestapo manual. I have the manual - it's the chapter heading. *Verschärfte Vernehmung*, Enhanced Interrogation Techniques.

Anyhow, John Kimmons, the head of army intelligence, learned that this was supposed to happen. And so on the morning, about an hour before George Bush got up, he got up at his own press conference in the Pentagon, and he said this:

"No good intelligence has ever come from abusive techniques. History shows that and the experience, the empirical experience, of the last five years, hard years, also demonstrates that."

The last five years 2006, minus 5, 2001 when Haspel and her betters, her uppers, in the CIA Enhanced Interrogation Techniques, most of which appeared in that gestapo manual. So, that's what Kimmons said. And I think Kimmons knows a lot more than Dick Cheney or George Bush, or anybody else about the effectiveness of harsh techniques, so we call them.

The other thing of course is we know that this is the biggest recruitment tool for Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. And we know that Matthew Alexander was a major in the Air Force and he led the interrogation camp right in the middle of Iraq when the Jihadis were coming in from abroad, and most of the people captured were foreign Jihadis, and to a man almost about 90% says Matthew Alexander, when they asked well, why'd you come in here, they said, Guantanamo, they said, Abu Ghraib.

So maybe this... It's hard to believe, it's just so cynical. But you want to keep these wars going? You want to keep the recruitment lines before, in front of Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations? No better way to do it than to keep Guantanamo open and appoint a

known torturer as head of the CIA.

GR: So I'm wondering if you could give us some insights into...I mean, as a veteran of the CIA, maybe you could take us into the Sausage Factory, so to speak.

RM: Well, it's a long story, and I'll try to be brief. Truman set the CIA up for one purpose and one purpose only. To have his own assessment group, his own analysis group, that would give him the straight story on what was going on in the world, without any shading, without any slant. He didn't want to hear from the Pentagon that the Russians were 10 ft tall, he didn't want to hear from the State Department stuff that always defends their policy.

We reported directly to the president okay? Now, through the National Security advisor but sometimes directly to the president. So what happened was these swashbuckling guys to the office of strategic services, not to demean them, they did an incredible job during the war, imaginative, enterprising, great. So they came back after the war and they said well, how about us? Should we hang around here or should we go back to our law firms, our corporations, academe? Is there a job for us?

And George Kennan head of the state department policy planning said, my god, the Russians are always overthrowing governments and doing all kinds of nefar-of course we need you! We got to be able to do that.

Now, they couldn't set up with department for overthrowing governments. That just didn't sound quite right, at least in those days. And so they s- I know what we'll do, some idiot, and I use the term advisedly, I know what we'll do, we'll put these overthrowers of government in with these analysts, and we'll all just be one big happy family. Yeah, you could see structural fault from the beginning, okay.

In the beginning, when I started in 1963, there were turnstiles between the assessment or the analysis part and the operation part. You needed a special little code to get through the turnstiles. So we kept separate. And I relished that because I didn't know half of what was going on on the other side of those turnstiles. I learned it from The New York Times. But the end result here is that all the money gradually got to go to the overthrowers of governments, Iran 53, Guatemala 54, Chile 68, or whatever it was, and, you know, you get people that are really devoted to action and provocation and making wars or targeting drones and people who are supposed to be watching important things like Soviet strategic forces.

Now, the mind boggles that the first the US Intelligence Committee really learned about these incredibly sophisticated Russian strategic weapons was when Putin got up on the 1st of March and told them that. Hello? Now what were they doing? Were they probably targeting drones, these analysts? Or maybe they were looking for ties between Russia and the the Trump campaign? So even the assessments, even the analysis part of the agency, is suborned, is kind of bent into a shape which supports the action which is in turn is ordered by very strange people like John Bolton.

And so that's what's come...now, 11 years ago we were just about to attack Iran. Don't take my word for it. Read George W Bush's memoir. Now what happened? He kept saying Russians are about to get a nuclear weapon. They're going to get a nuclear weapon real quick. Now that was in September of 2007. Meanwhile some honest intelligence analysts were working on what we call a National Intelligence Estimate, the highest genre of

intelligence analysis, and they concluded and published and gave to the Congress the results which said both Iran stopped working on a nuclear weapon at the end of 2003, so four years prior, and has not resumed work on a nuclear weapon.

This was unanimous - all 16 intelligence agencies at the time expressed with high confidence. Whoa - what happened? Well, it leaked, of course, and George Bush writes in his memoirs - this was eye-popping. How could I authorize an attack on a country that the intelligence community says has no active nuclear weapons program? Bummer. Now, you would think that if he was really worried about that. the reaction would have been wow really? And he check that out? Call the Israelis! Hey!

No. Now, at the end of 2007 when that hit the fan, when the estimate was published, Bush went off to Tel Aviv, and he said, you know, I don't agree with that estimate, I don't agree with it, but a lot of people think it's right, so we can't do what we plan to do. This was all on the record. And it's happening again, that's why I mention it. Eleven years later, but you know, what the difference is there's no honest broker.

There's no honest chair for this intelligence estimate, which there was back then. He wasn't from the CIA. They had all kind of been discredited. His name was Tom Fingar, he was from State INR, the intelligence shop over there, he was the assistant Secretary of State, and to his credit, he did an honest bottom-up estimate and found out that Iran had stopped working on a nuclear weapon at the end of 2003, and every year since then, the honest directors of National Intelligence have reaffirmed and updated that judgment. So Bibi Netanyahu goes before the cameras with a slideshow based on contrived evidence which we can prove was manufactured by Mossad his own intelligence unit. Give me a break! And The New York Times are, oh my God, look what the Iranians...

The Iranians are not working on a nuclear weapon. The International Atomic Energy Agency has certified it. So what's Pompeo's evidence? There isn't any evidence. It's just as much a crock as Weapons of Mass Destruction before Iraq. and it's dangerous. It's more dangerous and I'll tell you why if you're interested.

GR: Sure. Ray, that brings the question to mind, since you're bringing up the issue of Iran, what drives American foreign policy if it's not..if intelligence is you know, somewhat, almost a sideshow. They seem to have some other forces that are driving this, and I mean I don't know, is it Israel, is that what they call the neocons? What is behind the whole focus on rattling sabres at Iran when it seems pretty clear that nukes is not the issue here?

RM: Well, clear to us, not clear to anyone reading The New York Times, and that's part of the big problem.

GR: Well, what about the people on the other side... I'm just wondering what's driving the policy? The people aren't, right?

RM: It's the same thing as before the catastrophic invasion of Iraq which just left that whole area in shambles. At the time, people ask me, okay you were right, the weapons of mass destruction was not a mistake it was fraud, which it was, demonstrably fraud, and there were no ties between Iraq and al Qaeda. That was also a fraud. So what was it.

And I came up with an acronym: OIL. Now Jon Stewart, to his great credit, made great fun of that on one of those evening things. OIL McGovern is violating the rules for acronyms! You

can't have an acronym OIL meaning, well, it went on for 10 minutes but he left the OIL up there.

I testified before Congress, and I said O for oil, I mean, oil has to play a role, Iraq sits on the second largest deposit of oil in the world, Israel, now when I said Israel, all the Congress people there, and they're all Democrats, this was Conyer's committee, they started to go just... I said Israel... we'll come back to Israel, I said L for Logistics, the permanent, later we called it enduring, enduring sounds better than permanent, military bases that we coveted in Iraq.

So let's come back to Israel. I said, I see you are all very nervous about Israel. You know, you keep talking about Israel as an ally, you know, you ought to look up the definition of ally. It is a country with which your country has a mutual defense treaty. Is there one? No, there isn't any one.

So, why do you keep calling it... Now, you should realize that we offered Israel a treaty, a mutual defense treaty, with the, at the time, the sole indispensable country in the world, the United States of America, that was after '73, when the Arabs did attack Israel. We don't want that to happen again, Kissenger and those guys said, well, we know what we'll do, we'll devise a treaty and then no Arabs are going to attack Israel ever, ever again. And they approached it to the Israelis, and the Israelis said - I know people who were involved in this, okay? The Israelis said all that so sweet that's so sweet but thanks, but no thanks.

Now, I ask you, why would any country, much less Israel, turn down a mutual defense treaty with the United States of America? Two reasons. One is that such treaties require mutually internationally recognized borders. The Israelis had occupied all those territories in 1967, and the last thing they wanted to do is talk about International borders. The second one, well if the Israelis can always do what they want, you know, without asking, but maybe saying they're sorry, it's a mutual defense treaty requires each party, if they're going to start a war somewhere else, if Israel's going to attack Syria, it's sort of de rigueur that they would go to their allies and say, now don't be surprised and blindsided by this, but next week we're going to attack Syria.

The Israelis didn't want any part of that. They like the system where you say sorry rather than asking for permission. So those were two reasons they turned us down. So they're not an ally, so get that through your head, it's not an ally. And you know, what I was immediately, some of them left right away, trotted off to the press: I disassociate myself from McGovern. He's anti-semitic, he's anti-semitic.

So, just because I said that and also that the main policy is simply to ensure that Israel and the United States dominate that part of the world, well that was beyond the pale. But here I am, I'm not running for anything, running for any office, I don't need any more money than I already have, I'm an intelligence analyst. And I look at it, the C-Span cameras and the the CNN and say wow you know what...really going on here, and so I said all that.

So I thought the same thing fast forward here, fast forward to last, well, the ninth of May when I was at the hearing with Haspell. And she was allowed to dance around and not answer a direct question as to whether she's supervised waterboarding. And that's why I got up, because I said, well maybe the cameras will record what I said. In the event, I'm not sure any of them got my actual meaning, but I'm glad I did it anyway.

GR: I guess I only have time for one more question, but it's something I want to raise and you look at some of the figures in place, and now we have Gina Haspel as head of the CIA. You've got former CIA director Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State, you've got James Mad Dog Mattis and you've also seen certain other people like Mike Flynn and Rex Tillerson left by the wayside. If structure is strategy in slow-motion, does that mean that we are looking at pretty much a guarantee of some sort of a military conflict with Iran in the next couple of years?

RM: Next couple of years? Some of my very expert colleagues predict next couple of months. Saudi Arabia, the Emirates and Israel are driving our policy. Whether the people in charge know enough to realize that or not is problematic. I don't know. They're not the brightest people, they're not the sharpest knives in the drawer.

Now what's going on here? They're operating out of an old paradigm. A good example is this: after the first Gulf War when we be that Iraqi Nation so glorious and...General Wesley Clark, who had been head of NATO, came to talk to Paul Wolfowitz, one of the NATO cons at the Pentagon. Paul! Great job there, great job! What's the main lesson that you learned?

You know what Wolfowitz said? He said we learned that we can do these things and the Russians won't stop us. 1991 folks. Fast forward 2014 we mount a coup in Ukraine to get Ukraine into NATO, Russia stops us. We're causing all kinds of mischief in Syria, Russia stops us. They're acting out of this old 1991 paradigm, when it's not only Russia that can stop us, but there is an alliance.

You know where I heard this first okay? There is an alliance, a de facto alliance. No mutual defense treaty needed here between China and Russia. This is a sea change that has happened over the last five decades. When I used to monitor the Sino-Soviet dispute, that was a big thing, and they hated each other. We thought they would hate each other forever.

So what happened? Well, the Chinese defense minister just appointed goes to Moscow during all this turmoil a month ago, and he says, I'm here to show support for my Russian colleagues. They are the same in their policy towards Syria, the Chinese support their policy towards Ukraine, and, if there's a dustup, and I just wish I could talk to these guys in the White House, if there's a dustup, if there's some sort of clash between Russian and American troops in Syria or sort of proteges in Iraq or in Iran or anywhere else in that part of the area, it's not only Russia. It will be Russia primarily, but you can expect a lot of trouble in the South China Sea, mark my words, the Chinese are sailing habitually around Taiwan now, that's another flashpoint, so that the only hope here, you mentioned Mad Dog Mattis, well, I don't think he's a strategic expert, but he doesn't like to get into wars that he can't win, okay? Now we haven't gotten into a war that we could win since World War II, when I was just a little guy.

Now is he going to want to order his Marines up the cliffs at the Strait of Hormuz? Is he going to want to order his Marines to do something with respect to those fortified islands in the South China Sea all at the same time? I think not. The question is whether with this array of, well we used to call them a lot of things, but we call them the neocons really strange things, and... are they going to prevail or people like Mattis who has some sense with the strategic realities here going to prevail.

And I haven't even mentioned in this context the new evidence that the Russians have strategic weaponry that will defeat any us defense. That doesn't mean we won't keep

spending more money, more money on ABM systems, but if they can be defeated, it just proves that this is the largest corporate welfare system ever devised by man and it's not benefiting the workers it's benefiting the high-tech corporations, the CEOs of which make 30 million dollars a year.

GR: Ray McGovern, we really appreciate these insights, and I'm glad you were able to make some time for this interview. We really appreciate it. Is there a website that people can go to if they want to see more of your writing?

RM: Yes, Ray McGovern.com is my website. What most people don't realize is it's easily searchable, and there's a search button right there. They can just click on anything they like, and it's got about 13 years of articles I've written, interviews I've given and speeches I've made, and occasionally some really good articles from other folks. Ray McGovern.com

GR: Well, all the best for your upcoming court case on the 25th.

RM: Thanks Michael.

GR: I'm speaking with Ray McGovern, a 27-year veteran of the CIA and co-founder of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity.

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