

Gina Haspel sworn in as first female CIA director despite torture questions



Washington, May 22 (RHC)-- Gina Haspel has been sworn in as the first woman to lead the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, with a pledge to send more officers into the field and strengthen the agency's working relationships with U.S. allies.

Haspel, a career CIA operative, said Monday that she was honored to be chosen to lead the intelligence agency. Her nomination was fraught with controversy because of her past role in the CIA's torture program and interrogation of terror suspects after the September 11, 2001 attacks. She was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on Thursday, with a vote of 54 to 45.

Gina Haspel, who joined the CIA in 1985, was once in charge of a black site in Thailand accused of torturing detainees. Haspel's critics on Capitol Hill complained that anyone who was a part of that program should not be promoted to the top job. According to records recently declassified, Haspel supervised the torture of detainees, including the use of waterboarding, and ordered the destruction of the video evidence of those practices.

The most controversial part of her career came after the 9/11 attacks, when she was put in charge of a

secret CIA black site in Thailand, where at least two al-Qaeda suspects were tortured during interrogation.

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