

New CIA Deputy Director Once Ran 'Black Site' Prison



Washington, February 3 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump has named Gina Haspel, a veteran CIA clandestine service officer who once ran a "black site" prison, deputy director of the spy agency. Haspel's selection has won applause inside the CIA and from many career intelligence officials as the first woman to reach the agency's second-highest position.

However, Haspel was once in charge of a CIA prison in Thailand where two suspected al-Qaeda members were waterboarded. Her promotion came amid reports that Trump is preparing an executive order to reopen the overseas "black site" prisons, where the CIA held terrorist suspects before former President Barack Obama closed them.

Christopher Anders, the deputy director of the Washington office of the American Civil Liberties Union, said he was "gravely concerned" about CIA Director Mike Pompeo's decision to pick Haspel as his deputy.

"Pompeo must explain to the American people how his promotion of someone allegedly involved in running a torture site squares with his own sworn promises to Congress that he will reject all forms of torture and abuse," Anders said.

Haspel has worked in a number of overseas posts, including as chief of a major CIA station, and served

as the acting head of the National Clandestine Service in 2013 before Senator Dianne Feinstein of the intelligence committee blocked her permanent promotion to that job.

"I appreciate Ms. Haspel's many years of service at the CIA, yet I want some reassurance from her that she intends to comply with both the spirit and the letter of the law, like Director Pompeo testified that he would during his confirmation process," said Senator Mark Warner of the Senate intelligence committee.

President Trump has said he is considering reinstating the use of torture, including the banned interrogation technique of waterboarding against terrorist suspects. Trump said late week he believed torture "absolutely" works and that the U.S. should fight "fire with fire."

Pompeo and Defense Secretary James Mattis have both rejected the so-called "enhanced interrogation techniques."

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