



US Enhanced Interrogation

Methods: Illegal, Immoral,

Necessary, or Justified? [Boston](#)

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*Position papers

are due by the beginning of the committee on March 6th. They can be submitted either by email to either of the addresses below, or turned in to the chair at the beginning of the committee.*

Chairs:

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Meet Your Chairs

Hello Delegates, my name is Owen Hartford and I will be your head chair for the US Enhanced Interrogation Methods Committee. I am currently a senior here at BC High, and have been a part of the Model UN community since my 7th grade year in Milton, and a part of BCHigh Model UN since my freshman year. I have been to many conferences and been a part of many committees, however my favorite out of them all would have to be my very first conference at Suffolk University in Boston. Some fun facts about me are that I love to ski, and am originally from here in Dorchester. This march will be my second time chairing a committee, and I could not be more excited for our debate. I look forward to reading your position papers and hearing your debates in March.

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Hello Delegates, my name is Evan Downey, and I will be one of your co-chairs for this committee. I am a junior here, and this is my second year in Model UN. My favorite conference was the BC High 2020 Conference, where I had a role on crisis staff. While I definitely enjoyed that experience, I look forward to changing it up and co-chairing for the first time this year. Fun facts about me are that I have four siblings, and I play on the volleyball team here at BC High.

I'm excited about the topic of our committee, and look forward to hearing your arguments.

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History of the Topic

During the heightened tensions in the period after the events of September 11th 2001, departments of the US government, specifically the CIA, authorized the use of enhanced interrogation methods. These inhumane and horrifying torture methods included water boarding, walling, sleep deprivation, solitary confinement for extended periods of time, etc. Though these were a conscious decision by members of the US government, such actions were for a period of time kept a secret from the people of the US and the world. Unfortunately, since the banning of the interrogation methods, the CIA has still found ways around the anti-interrogation laws put in place by the George W. Bush Administration in 2007 and the Obama Administration in 2009. The CIA's usage of rendition– the process of kidnapping a foreign criminal or terrorist suspect, and bringing them out of the country in order to interrogate them freely– is still used today. It was not until 2014 that the true and horrifying actions of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were revealed.

The U.N. Torture Declaration defined the word torture as: “an aggravated and deliberate

form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” Though both the CIA and those previously affiliated with the organization describe their actions as “enhanced interrogation techniques,” they are simply dodging the question, dulling down the severity of it. The CIA authorized and carried out methods of torture against foreign personnel, and even in some situations, residents of the US.

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Guantanamo Bay and CIA Rendition

To carry out the torture of these personnel covertly, the CIA elected the use of the Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp, situated on an island off the coast of Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The detention camp, established by President Bush in 2002 during the aftermath of the events of September 11th and the War on Terror, served as a holding center and place of torture for war criminals. In the camps, prisoners received little to no entitlement to the Geneva convention, something that attracted the attention of the UN. Even when being prosecuted by the UN and called to shut the program down, the US refused and the camp remained open. Furthermore, even after the Obama administration pledged to and carried out efforts to close the camp, they met strong opposition in congress. Even so, the Obama administration managed to cut the number of prisoners being detained drastically. Even so, the events of the Guantanamo Bay facilities resulted in 9 deaths among the detainees.

The CIA’s “extraordinary rendition” and detention program was the process of kidnapping a foreign criminal or terrorist suspect, and bringing them out of the country in order to interrogate them freely, without the constraints of constitutional rights. The United States

constitution entitles the right to a fair trial before detention. Something to break this constitutional right would be deemed criminally unconstitutional, which is why the CIA found the alternative of rendition. Over 50 foreign countries participated in this program by the time it was over, including Poland, Lithuania, Greece, and Spain, just to name a few. What's most disturbing however, is that some of the global participants in the program were actually adversaries of the US, such as Syria and Iraq. The fact that the US government was willing to go to such lengths throughout the War on Terror is disturbing.

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Prosecution

Since the height of the CIA's interrogation methods, several officials have been put on trial for their developmental actions in the field. One such official is Dr. James Mitchell, who gave evidence before a military tribunal in Guantánamo Bay. He and a larger group of psychologists are the ones that took methods that were previously used in anti-interrogation training, and reverse engineered them into offensive methods of physical and psychological torture alike. Unfortunately, since the outing of the interrogation methods, the CIA has still found ways around the anti-interrogation laws put in place by the Bush administration in 2007, as well as those put in place by the Obama administration in 2009. There are still even today, CIA representatives who have faced little to no prosecution for their actions.

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Current Issue

In recent years, new information has come to light about the use of enhanced interrogation methods by United States agencies and forces in the years following the 9/11

attacks. It has been revealed that high level officials approved the use of these techniques by agents of the government in order to prevent future terrorist attacks. It is the belief of some that the United States agencies abused these powers in ways that were either not approved or overlooked.

Many people are coming out to condemn the methods used in these “enhanced interrogations” as torture. Under international law, torture is never permitted, no matter the case. If it is decided that the methods used do indeed fit the definition of torture, this would be a direct violation of human rights. Opposers point to the reports of abuse and torture in facilities such as Guantanamo Bay and the Abu Gharaib prison. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1984 opposed any and all use of torture, and this remains the United Nations position today.

However, some people argue whether or not the methods utilized constitute torture. The guidelines outlined by the CIA, and backed by the United States Department of Justice, the enhanced interrogation techniques, when following with specified instructions, are not overly painful, nor do they cause any permanent or lasting physical damage. Torture is defined in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment as “any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having

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committed, or

intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.”

The task of this committee is to determine whether or not the United States should face repercussions for the use of Enhanced Interrogation Methods. It is up to you, as delegates, to determine if the techniques utilized by the agents from the American government constitute torture.

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Obstacles

Obstacles the delegates may encounter when debating, might include contrasting personal and moral opinions. Delegates must keep in mind that they are debating from the point of view of the country they are representing, not themselves. These views will unfortunately not always be morally right in the eyes of human rights, however these events did happen, and it is important to remember some countries defended these methods of enhanced interrogation.

Weaknesses

One weakness of this debate will undoubtedly include the information and sourcing being used. It is important to remember that the events described above were for a long time kept from the larger public, and as a result mixed accounts and fake news on the matter have surfaced. Delegates must check their sources thoroughly to ensure a smooth and accurate debate on the matter.

Questions to Consider

- How has your country reacted to domestic extreme interrogation methods in the past? -

Has your country ever been a victim of US rendition? If so, what was the reaction? -

What can your country do to ensure this doesn't occur any further, in any country? -

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Figures



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ENHANCED INTERROGATION TECHNIQUES

APPROVED BY JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IN 2002 AND
RESCINDED BY OBAMA ADMINISTRATION IN 2009

- 1) ATTENTION GRASP
- 2) WALLING
- 3) FACIAL HOLD
- 4) FACIAL SLAP
- 5) CRAMPED CONFINEMENT
- 6) WALL STANDING
- 7) STRESS POSITIONS
- 8) SLEEP DEPRIVATION
- 9) INSECTS PLACED IN A CONFINEMENT BOX
- 10) WATERBOARD

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