

# CIA says Torture No Longer Acceptable

by OICJ Staff

After admitting it taught its foreign agents how to use torture as recently as the early 1980s, the CIA said in January that it has banned the practice and now wants to help protect human rights. The Central Intelligence Agency made available a newly declassified 1983 training manual used in at least five Latin American countries to train local security forces at the height of President Ronald Reagan's anti-communist crusade. The manual discussed the use of "coercive" interrogation techniques such as physical strain, threats, disrupted sleep and varied meal patterns to destroy "the capacity to resist."

Repudiating its past instructions, the CIA had adopted a formal policy opposing the use of "inhumane treatment of any kind as an aid to interrogation" by 1985 and updated the manual to reflect this, an agency spokesman said. "Adherence to human rights principles is not only emphasized in our training but it is intrinsic to all of our activities," added the spy agency, long involved in instructing pro-U.S. security forces abroad in paramilitary operations and psychological warfare.

The U.S. chapter of the human rights group Amnesty International called for an independent investigation of responsibility for the declassified 1983 CIA training book. "Clearly, ill treatment and torture of detainees is contrary to international human rights and humanitarian standards," Amnesty spokesman Carlos Salinas said. "An independent investigation needs to be undertaken to establish responsibility for the creation, use and dissemination of the manuals."

The 1983 volume, along with a Vietnam War-era CIA counterspy interrogation manual dated July 1963, were declassified in response to a threatened lawsuit by the Baltimore Sun under the Freedom of Information Act. A June 8, 1988, memorandum, now declassified, showed that the training book had been used in Latin America but blacked out the names of the countries involved.

"Throughout his detention, subject must be convinced that his 'questioner' controls his ultimate destiny, and that his absolute cooperation is essential to survival," said the "Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual - 1983." The 1983 edition added that the "routine use of torture lowers the moral caliber of the organization that uses it and corrupts those that rely on it as the quick and easy way out." Instead, the CIA urged the use of "psychological techniques designed to persuade the subject to want to furnish us with the information we desire."

But until it was rewritten in 1994 and 1995 to reject coercion, the book discussed forcing prisoners to stand at attention or sit on a stool for long periods, holding them in solitary confinement and creating fear of physical harm. The book, prepared by a training arm of the clandestine Operations Directorate, which functions worldwide, discussed torture as "a contest between the subject and his tormentor. The pain which is being inflicted upon him from outside himself may actually intensify his will to resist," it said. "On the other hand, pain which he feels he is inflicting upon himself is more likely to sap his resistance."

Under current policy, "if we learn of human rights violations which occur in the course of a joint activity with a foreign government, the activity may be suspended or ended," Mark Mansfield, a CIA spokesman, said.