

US doing 'scientific research' to boost interrogations

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An elite US interrogation unit will conduct "scientific research" to find better ways of questioning top suspected terrorists, US intelligence director Dennis Blair said Wednesday.

"It is going to do scientific research on that long-neglected area," Blair told the House Intelligence Committee, without elaborating on the nature of the techniques being tested.

A spokesman for Blair, Ross Feinstein, also declined to detail "specific research projects" but stressed that any such projects would follow US law, which forbids torture, and abide by internal review safeguards.

Blair said the task would fall to an interagency group of top US interrogators from across the intelligence community dubbed the High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group (HIG).

"We've given it the responsibility of doing the scientific research to determine if there are better ways to get information from people that are consistent with our values," he said.

Blair said the HIG charter required it to abide by the US Army Field Manual, which forbids abusive interrogation techniques.

US [interrogation](#) tactics in the global war on terrorism have drawn heavy scrutiny in the United States and overseas because of the past use of techniques like waterboarding that meet international definitions of

torture.

Obama formally abolished such methods shortly after taking office, drawing fire from former vice president Dick Cheney, who described them as critical to thwarting terrorist attacks in the wake of the September 11, 2001 strikes.

Asked to detail the research, Feinstein replied: "We are not going to discuss specific research projects, but Intelligence Community-sponsored research is performed in accordance with the law and institutional review board processes."

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