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A new independent review has revealed extensive details on how members of the American Psychological Association, the world's largest group of psychologists, were complicit in torture, lied and covered up their close collaboration with officials at the Pentagon and CIA to weaken the association's ethical guidelines and allow psychologists to participate in the government's "enhanced" interrogation programs after 9/11. The 542-page report was commissioned by the association's board of directors last year based on an independent review by former Assistant U.S. Attorney David Hoffman and undermines the APA's repeated denials that some of its 130,000 members were complicit in torture. The Guardian reports the new details could provide grounds to file ethics charges against members of the APA

. We speak with Dr. Stephen Soldz, professor at the Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis and co-founder of the Coalition for an Ethical Psychology. Earlier this month, he was invited to address the APA's board of directors, along with Coalition for an Ethical Psychology co-founder Steven Reisner, on the APA's response to the anticipated Hoffman report. And we're joined by Dr. Jean Maria Arrigo, a social psychologist, oral historian, and a member of the Coalition for an Ethical Psychology. She participated in the 2005 APA

task force that condoned psychologists' involvement in "enhanced" interrogations, and later blew the whistle. She has since established the

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Debate Collection at University of Colorado at Boulder Archives.

**AMY GOODMAN:** We begin today's show with a story *Democracy Now!* has been closely following for about the past decade. A new independent

[review](#)

has revealed extensive details on how members of the American Psychological Association,

the world's largest association of psychologists, were complicit in torture and lied and covered up their close collaboration with officials at the Pentagon and

CIA

to weaken the association's ethical guidelines and allow psychologists to participate in the government's so-called enhanced interrogation programs after 9/11. The 542-page report was commissioned by the association's board of directors last year based on an independent review by a former assistant U.S. attorney, David Hoffman. It undermines the APA's repeated denials that some of its more than 130,000 members were complicit in torture. The report's

[findings](#)

were first revealed Friday in

*The New York Times*

and conclude the association's, quote, "principal motive in doing so was to align

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and curry favor with

DOD

"—that's the Department of Defense.

Among the leading officials it implicates are the director of the APA Ethics Office, Stephen Behnke. After the

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received the Hoffman report, Behnke reportedly departed his position last Wednesday. It's unclear whether he was fired or resigned. He has now hired former Clinton

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Director Louis Freeh to defend him.

We invited a representative from the American Psychological Association to join us, but they declined.

Meanwhile, *The Guardian* [reports](#) the new details could provide grounds to file ethics charges against members of the APA. Recommendations for reform are expected to be made ahead of the APA's annual convention in Toronto next month.

For more, we're joined by two guests. In Boston, Dr. Stephen Soldz is with us, a professor at the Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis and co-founder of the Coalition for an Ethical Psychology. Earlier this month, he was invited to address the APA's board of directors with Steven Reisner on the organization's response to the anticipated Hoffman report. And from Irvine, California, we're joined by whistleblower Dr. Jean Maria Arrigo. She's a social psychologist and oral historian, and a member of the Coalition for an Ethical Psychology. She participated in the 2005 APA task force that condoned psychologists' involvement in

"enhanced" interrogations, and later blew the whistle. She has since established the APA PENS Debate Collection at University of Colorado, Boulder, Archives.

We welcome you both back to *Democracy Now!* Let's begin with Dr. Stephen Soldz in Boston. Can you explain the scope of the Hoffman report and what he found?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** Well, as you know, Amy, and those who have watched the show for years, since at least 2005, there's been a major debate in the association and the profession about the role of psychologists in national security interrogations and torture. The association has denied it, as you said. So, the report says that the association was wrong; the so-called dissidents, the critics were right.

So the main findings are that there was a years-long conspiracy to collude between the leadership of the association and representatives of the Bush administration intelligence agencies, the Defense Department and CIA; second, that there was a major duplicitous PR campaign to falsely present the APA as being concerned about human rights and detainee welfare, when, as Mr. Hoffman shows in the report, their actions were not motivated by that at all; thirdly, they—while claiming that they would investigate all claims of abuse, in fact they dismissed, without any reasonable investigation, claims of abuse that were filed with their Ethics Office. So, those are the main findings. There are many more. This 500-page report has extensive detail. They conducted over a hundred interviews. There are—you know, they had probably thousands of emails that documented this collusion in great detail.

And one of the things we find is that virtually every word in APA policy was approved by Defense Department officials before it was submitted to the membership or the Council of Representatives. It was all, as Mr. Hoffman calls it, pre-vetted. Everything was pre-vetted by the Defense Department to make sure that it did not in any way constrain the Defense Department psychologists, the military psychologists, active at Guantánamo and elsewhere, while sounding like it was opposing torture.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Explain who David Hoffman is and how this report came into being, Dr. Soldz.

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** Well, David Hoffman is an attorney at a law firm in Chicago, an expert in institutional corruption; as you said, a former federal prosecutor; and former inspector general of Chicago. So, last October, James Risen of *The New York Times* published a book in which he—one of his chapters reported on emails between Scott Gerwehr, a deceased

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contractor, and

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officials and White House and Defense Department officials, that demonstrated collusion between the groups. The

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initially dismissed Risen's claims; however, after a month, they backtracked and said, "Well, we think we're—they're not true. We know they're not true, but we've got to show it. So we've hired this independent investigator to conduct a review of charges of collusion between us and the Bush administration." So, Hoffman and his team of six have been active for the last seven months. I know I and my colleagues decided to help him. We had a number of phone meetings and gave him all the documents we had, and encouraged others to do so. We were hopeful that he was the real deal, and it turns out that he was.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I want to read from part of the press release issued by the APA in response to the report. They said, quote, "The organization's intent was not to enable abusive interrogation techniques or contribute to violations of human rights, but that may have been the result. The actions, policies and the lack of independence from government influence described in the Hoffman report represented a failure to live up to our core values. We profoundly regret, and apologize for, the behavior and the consequences that ensued." Is that enough, Stephen Soldz?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** No, especially if—there are two things wrong with the APA's statement. That first sentence, while it is true that—as the report shows, it wasn't exactly about torture. The APA didn't care about what was happening to the detainees. What it was about was making the Defense Department happy so that they would help psychology as a profession. So, in that sense, yes. But Mr. Hoffman also shows that there was a strategic decision made within the APA to not obtain any information about abuses occurring at Guantánamo, in CIA

, elsewhere. In other words, they deliberately turned their heads the other way. So, they can't claim that, you know, it was completely inadvertent, especially when there were thousands of people in the association and around the world telling them that this wasn't working.

The other thing, which is elsewhere in there, is they blame a small group. And while this small group is like 20 of the top leaders of the association who were directly involved in the collusion, including the CEO, the deputy CEO, the current president, the director of their public affairs, their—as you said, their Ethics Office, the former science directorate, former practice directorate—in other words, the whole structure—but the report also documents that the group engaged directly in the collusion, were carrying out APA policy to make the Defense Department—to please the Defense Department. So, the association can't claim it was just this group of rogue people. It was not. They were creative, let's put it this way, in how they carried out the APA policy. But that they were carrying out the policy was clear. And the report documents that top leaders knew many of the things that were being done. So, we're still open to see. I think the association has made many positive steps, come far from where they were, but they still have far to go.

**AMY GOODMAN:** We're going to break and then come back to this discussion, and we'll be joined by one of the original whistleblowers in a 2005 task force of the American Psychological Association, what she exposed about this task force that weakened—recommended weakening the guidelines for the APA in dealing with torture. We'll be speaking with Dr. Jean Maria Arrigo in addition to Dr. Stephen Soldz. Stay with us.

[break]

**AMY GOODMAN:** "Waterboarding," Jonathan Mann. Back in 2009, the musician wrote a song a day for the entire year. That was song 109, with the lyrics taken from the torture memos of the Bush administration. This is *Democracy Now!*, [democracynow.org](http://democracynow.org), *The War and Peace Report*. I'm Amy Goodman.

We are talking about this stunning [exposé](#), this report that was commissioned, an independent report, by the American Psychological Association, significant globally because it's the largest association of psychologists in the world with more than 130,000 members. We're joined by Dr. Stephen Soldz, Coalition for an Ethical Psychology co-founder, and Dr. Jean Maria Arrigo. She is a social psychologist and oral historian who was asked to participate in the APA task force that convened in 2005, that ended up condoning psychologists' involvement in "enhanced" interrogations, what would

become known as torture. Later, she would blow the whistle. She established the  
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Debate Collection at University of Colorado, Boulder, Archives. She's joining us from Irvine, California.

Start out by telling us what this PENS task force was, Dr. Jean Maria Arrigo. But first, your response to this report? Do you feel you have been vindicated?

**JEAN MARIA ARRIGO:** Yes, but that's not my principal concern. My concern is that there's significant reform in the APA. And so, we can all be vindicated and can be happy with the report, but unless there's some progress from here, it's just, you know, a kind of media event.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So, tell us about this report back in 2005, how you came to be a part of it and what actually took place.

**JEAN MARIA ARRIGO:** It was a presidential advisory committee, a task force that was set up under President Ron Levant at that time. And it was in response to—we were told, into the reports of psychologists possibly being involved at Abu Ghraib or wherever and that there was a great clamor among the membership. And so, they were asking for the leadership to give some response to this, and so the task force was the response. And I appreciate your saying that I was invited to participate; in fact, I was appointed to be duped, OK? Speaking frankly.

So, 10 of us met. One of them was the—Olivia Moorehead-Slaughter, who was the chair of the meeting. And I think it's been described before that six of the other nine were in the national security sector. Some were military officers in uniform. That was significant to me, because I didn't expect that officers in uniform would lie to us in that context. And so, we met for about three days, and we produced this report at the end.

And there were a lot of platitudes in it, but the heart of it was, as far as the operational aspect, was that operational psychologists, the BSCT psychologists, Behavioral Science Consultation Team psychologists, who were in the detainee centers, detention centers—the gist of the report, or the heart of it, was that psychologists had a legitimate reason to be there—to keep

interrogations safe, legal, ethical and effective. That was one part. And the other part was that the psychologists would adhere to the definition of torture—torture was outlawed, of course—would adhere to the U.S. definition of torture, which was under the Yoo memos, instead of the international definition of torture under the conventions against torture.

**AMY GOODMAN:** When you say you were appointed to be duped, what do you mean?

**JEAN MARIA ARRIGO:** What I meant was that, apparently, as we see in the Hoffman report, that we were—there were background checks on us. We were looked at. I was supposedly—I thought that I was brought in because of my great expertise, OK? And this fantasy was brought home to me by the ethics director, Stephen Behnke. I was brought in, supposedly, according to the Hoffman report, as a Latina, for diversity. Unfortunately, Latina here meant someone with Sicilian Mafia background, instead of cross the border.

And the manipulation began very early on. So, for instance, I was seated—seating was not at random or by choice. I was seated between, on the one side, Morgan Banks, who was the head of the BSCT psychologists, and, on the other side, the now-president Barry Anton, who was at that time the liaison from the APA board to the task force. And as I felt later, not at the time, and as was borne out in the Hoffman report, Banks, especially, was the person chosen to manipulate me, and as well as Behnke. So we could see, for instance, in the hallway, that one of them would come up to me and say, "Oh, Dr. Arrigo, we're so gratified that you're here, with your other point of view, your dissident point of view. We really need to hear from you. Please keep informing us. What we're doing here right now, you understand, is just a first stage, and the ideas that you're bringing up will continue to the later, more important stages." So, both Michael Wessells, who was also a peace psychologist, and I were strung along with this idea.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Now, you, Dr. Jean Maria Arrigo, in this room, you attempted to take notes. You are known as being a prolific note taker. What happened? And how did the report get written that came out of this task force?

**JEAN MARIA ARRIGO:** OK, well, first, let me say that in a task force, normally, everyone is taking notes, and normally there is an agenda. In our task force, besides, you know, the 10 or so—I don't know—eight or 10 never-acknowledged observers at the end of our long table, none of the task force members had any papers on the table and taking notes. And we were given no agenda. And, in fact, the person who set out to—who was the nominal chair did not

actually run the meeting. That was another unacknowledged person. So, the fact that I was taking notes became very conspicuous in this stark situation.

I am a habitual note taker. I have, you know, notebooks always. I'm an oral historian. I take notes. Before I went into this meeting, also, I had talked with Brad Bauer, who was the archivist at Hoover Institution Archives, where I had—was archiving oral histories of moral development of intelligence professionals. And he said, "Well, maybe this will be a significant event, maybe not, but it's a good thing to just collect everything while you're there." You know, this would be good archival practice.

So, in fact, I did collect everything, just as a matter of good form. I had no clue that there was anything suspicious going on, beginning. It would be as if somebody had called a task force: "We are going to talk about school bullying," or something, so I had no clue that there was any sabotage afoot. But it's normal for me to take notes and to collect everything, and so I happened to have all of those things. But I did not at all go at this suspiciously.

**AMY GOODMAN:** You [told us](#) on *Democracy Now!* years ago—you talked about the unbalanced nature of this task force. You said, "Six of the 10 members were highly placed in the Department of Defense, as contractors and military officers. For example, one was the commander of all military psychologists. Their positions on two key items of controversy in the PENS

report were predetermined by their DOD

employment, in spite of the apparent ambivalence of some. These key items were: [a] the permissive definition of torture in U.S. law versus the strict definition in international law, and, second, [the] participation of military psychologists in interrogation settings versus nonparticipation." You talked about the conflict of interest between the people who were participating, the observers who were higher-ups, who would be putting pressure on those who were participating. The significance of this in shaping

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policy for the next 10 years?

**JEAN MARIA ARRIGO:** All of this, I came by later. All right? At the time, I wasn't somehow tipped off by having all the military people there. I'm accustomed to working with military people and have had a lot of respect for them, was an annual participant in the Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics for a long time. And I thought, "Well, at least here we've got some people who know what's going on." And in the years after the PE  
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task force meeting, when I was invited to give talks places, I always invited an interrogator along to speak with me, or some other intelligence person. So, I wasn't alarmed by their being there, to begin with. I was just later shocked by their duplicity.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I want to go back to 2005—we have been covering this issue for a long time—to [Stephen Behnke](#), the director of ethics at the American Psychological Association, until last week, his appearance on *Democracy Now!*

**STEPHEN BEHNKE:** I don't have firsthand knowledge of what went on at Guantánamo. I know that the APA very much wants the facts, and that when APA has the facts, we will act on those facts.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That is Stephen Behnke. Now, apparently, he was either forced out, he was—or he resigned last week. The significance, Dr. Stephen Soldz, of Stephen Behnke's role in all of this?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** Well, he was—according to the report, he's described in the report as the chief of staff of this collusion. He was the one—it was all centered around him. But I want to emphasize that the entire or large portion of the upper leadership of the organization was involved. But he was the mastermind of it.

So, in that quote you have there, "we want the facts," well, Mr. Hoffman, in the report, details that in fact they tried very hard to never be exposed to those facts, that they systematically ignored the facts when they were there, that on the task force, for example, the notes show that Jean Maria tried to get them to examine what psychologists were actually doing at Guantánamo, and she was slammed by the then-president-elect, Gerald Koocher, for doing that. In fact, he said, "If that's what you want to do, you should have stayed home." So they were very careful to avoid learning those facts. And as the facts became public, they simply denied them and ignored them over and over again.

But Behnke was a mastermind at wordsmithing, among other things, so that as critics tried within the association to modify, to come out with anti-torture resolutions, he systematically

worked with DOD officials to nuance the wording so that it would actually not constrain the military psychologists one bit, so that they would have these nice-sounding anti-torture things that actually did not mean a word. There were some of us at the time who were saying that. Of course, we were always described as "those who will never be satisfied." Well, the report shows that those of us who would never be satisfied were right, that those nice-sounding statements were just that, nice-sounding statements, but had no bite.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Explain who Jessen and Mitchell was, very quickly, as we begin to wrap up this discussion, and what David Hoffman, in this report—now, again, this report was—is this right? Commissioned by the American Psychological Association—

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** Yes.

**AMY GOODMAN:** —to look at it, an independent report, that has just been released? The question is: Will there be indictments? What will come out of this?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** Yeah. And it's to their credit that they did commission this, definitely.

Mitchell and Jessen are two psychologists who designed and implemented much of the CIA's "enhanced" interrogation program. They were retired military psychologists. One thing the report shows is that in 2003, that the top psychologists in the CIA's own Office of Medical Services raised questions about what Mitchell was doing as he was torturing people. So, Mitchell got a Mel Gravitz, a psychologist who was a CIA contractor, we learn in the report, and who was also very connected to the

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, to evaluate and write a memo saying that the "enhanced" interrogation program, the torture program, was in fact consistent with

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ethics, and Mitchell was allowed to go on torturing people. So here we have

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ethics explicitly used to protect the torturer. And

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had a number of contacts with Mitchell and Jessen over the years that, until this report, they've hidden. We've tried to call attention to them. They've completely ignored it.

The report also shows that an ethics complaint was filed against James Mitchell in 2005. The Ethics Office looked in the membership directory—you can't make this stuff up. They looked in the membership directory, saw that there were three James Mitchells, and they did nothing further. And they allowed Mitchell to resign, which you're not supposed to be able to do while you're under ethics investigation. You know, they would not even try and figure out which of the three it was, even though they had extensive contacts with them. They were on a first name basis, that he was Jim Mitchell to the staff. But, you know, they said, "There are three James Mitchells. We can't tell who it is. Case closed."

**AMY GOODMAN:** Back to Stephen Behnke, who just left his position last week and has hired Louis Freeh, the former FBI director, as his legal counsel, the report said that while working at the APA, head of the ethics division—the report says the Pentagon gave Behnke a secret contract to help train interrogators. Is that news to you, Dr. Soldz?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** We learned it a couple of months ago. Psychologist and journalist Jeff Kaye wrote about it, and then we also heard about it from other sources. He was training the so-called BSCT psychologists, the behavioral science consultants, those who consult to interrogations at Guantánamo, at Fort Huachuca, which is the military facility which trains interrogators. This was evidently an APA contract. The money went to APA. And so, they were directly working—now, I want to say, the amount of money was not big. The big story here is not financial corruption, but it's how close the ties were, that he was actually working for them—

**AMY GOODMAN:** Ultimately—

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** —and the APA did not have trouble with that.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Dr. Stephen Soldz, ultimately, what did the APA have to gain by doing this? And you talked about turning a blind eye. But didn't the involvement of American psychologists in the torture program actually allow it to continue, gave it the legitimacy that the Bush administration needed to continue this program, with the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association both saying they would not participate?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** Definitely. In addition to Mitchell and Jessen doing the interrogations and designing it, another major role for health professionals, including psychologists, was in the Justice Department torture memos. The basic argument is, if a health professional says it won't cause severe and long-lasting harm—the U.S. definition—then—you know, even if it does cause severe and long-lasting harm, you can't be accused of torture, because you were told by a health professional that it wouldn't. So it was vital to have the psychologists present to say that it would not cause harm, to supposedly monitor. Safe, legal, ethical and effective was the mantra, and that's what safe, legal and ethical meant. It meant we will say it won't cause harm, so we'll keep it legal, and we'll keep it safe for the torturers.

**AMY GOODMAN:** What would satisfy you now, Dr. Stephen Soldz, for your association, the American Psychological Association?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** Well, that's a long list that I'm sorry I can't go over all of it. But we need—we need to see that they really understand the depth of what went wrong, to come to terms with what was wrong in the association that this could go on for so many years, change the policy—and they have proposed doing that, to ban psychologists participating in interrogations. There are possible loopholes, that we're—that we have some concerns about that, that need to be worked out. But the whole culture of the APA needs to change. It's a culture of getting along and doing whatever the leadership wants and not raising questions. And that allowed this to go on for a decade. That allowed even people in the top, who were told over and over again something's not right here, to close their eyes to it. And we can't have that happen again.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Will there be firings?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** There better be. Behnke was fired. But we gave them a list of eight people from the report that, we believe the report documents, were involved enough in the collusion that they need to be fired, including—

**AMY GOODMAN:** Who are those people?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** Among them are the CEO and the deputy CEO, the chief of the public relations office.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Who is that?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** Rhea Farberman. I believe you've probably dealt with her in the past. You know, these people and the others were all shown to be deeply involved in the collusion. They were working with Behnke. They were informed of much of what Behnke was doing. They helped him. They helped select the members of the PENS task force, to vet them. They worked on the policies. They undermined the will of the membership, systematically, over and over again. And they have to go. If they remain—and then there's another—

**AMY GOODMAN:** Do you think there should be indictments?

**STEPHEN SOLDZ:** There should be a legal investigation. You know, whether there were crimes, there's issues of statute of limitations, but if the conspiracy continued to the last few years, then that would be overdone. Another thing there has to be is there's a larger group of people who—in governance, who are not paid staff, who have to be banned from future roles in governance, because they systematically participated in the manipulating the governance structures to undermine the will of the membership.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Dr. Stephen Soldz, I want to thank you for being with us, professor at the Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis, co-founder of the Coalition for an Ethical Psychology. And thanks also to Dr. Jean Maria Arrigo, the social psychologist, oral historian, who participated in the 2005 APA task force that condoned psychologists' involvement in torture. She would later blow the whistle.