



Donald Trump picks first woman for CIA boss

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President Trump's nominee for director of the CIA may make history as the first woman in the post — and will undoubtedly draw a spotlight for her controversial involvement in the agency's now-banned use of harsh interrogation techniques on terrorism suspects.

Gina Haspel, 61, is a career intelligence official who did not face Senate confirmation when she became the agency's deputy director last year.

But she will face a Senate panel for the CIA's top spot, and will likely be grilled about her tenure overseeing a secret post-Sept. 11 prison run by the CIA where terror suspects were waterboarded — a technique that simulates drowning.

Haspel also helped carry out an order to destroy recordings of the torture techniques. She did not face charges after a Justice Department investigation.

Trump in the past has defended waterboarding, saying "torture works."

"Trump's decision to elevate someone directly involved in the torture of other human beings to head the CIA raises an obvious question: Does Trump intend to violate the law and resume a torture program?" said Patrick G. Eddington, homeland security and civil liberties policy analyst at the Cato Institute.

Haspel will succeed Mike Pompeo, who is shifting to the State Department after the ouster of former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

Arizona Sen. John McCain, who chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee, noted that Pompeo vowed during his confirmation hearings to comply with laws barring the use of torture techniques.

"The American people now deserve the same assurances from Gina Haspel, whose career with the agency has intersected with the program of so-called 'enhanced interrogation techniques' on a number of occasions," McCain said in a statement. "The torture of detainees in U.S. custody during the last decade was one of the darkest chapters in American history."