

THE WATCHDOG'S WATCHDOG

Last month, just as CIA's IG and Director learned of the DOJ investigation into the torture tape destruction, the CIA also announced that Helgerson and Hayden had agreed on some measures to make the IG process "more fair."

The CIA has completed a controversial in-house probe of its inspector general and plans to make a series of changes in the way the agency conducts internal investigations, according to U.S. intelligence officials.

CIA Inspector General John L. Helgerson has consented to more than a dozen procedural changes designed to address complaints that investigations carried out by his office were unfair to agency employees, the officials said.

Right on schedule, yesterday the CIA announced those "procedural changes." The IG's office will have an ombudsman to act as a watchdog on the watchdog.

The CIA's inspector general has agreed to tighter controls over its investigative procedures, agency officials revealed yesterday, in what appeared to be an attempt to soften resentments among agency officials over the watchdog's aggressive probes into the legality and effectiveness of the CIA's counterterrorism efforts and detention programs.

The revisions, which include the appointment of a special ombudsman to oversee the IG's work, were disclosed by CIA Director Michael V. Hayden in an e-mail sent to employees, announcing the end of an unusual inquiry into the performance of Inspector General John L.

Helgerson, a 36-year CIA veteran and the man chiefly responsible for the spy agency's internal oversight.

Most interesting—or troubling, depending on how you look at it—is the requirement that the IG's office keep senior CIA officers informed of the status of investigations.

The changes include measures intended to speed up investigations and require the watchdog to keep CIA employees and managers informed about both the process and results of investigations.

Call me crazy, but I would imagine that if you tell the CIA Director that you're about to report that the "enhanced interrogation techniques" the CIA has been doing probably violate international law, then you're never going to be able to write a report to that effect. And certainly never going to be able to circulate to anyone who can do something about the violations of international law.