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### 'NY Times' Finally Publishes Op-Ed 'Redacted' by C.I.A.

By E&amp;P Staff

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**NEW YORK** For days, it was an open secret that The New York Times was holding an Op-Ed piece after the Central Intelligence Agency objected to publication of parts of it. It's written by Flynt Leverett, a former senior director for Middle East affairs at the National Security Council, and Hillary Mann, a former Foreign Service officer.

The Times finally published it Friday -- with sections literally blacked out. A full (redacted) version can be found at the paper's Web site, [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com). The intro/explanation by the authors follows.

Here is the redacted version of a draft Op-Ed article we wrote for The Times, as blacked out by the Central Intelligence Agency's Publication Review Board after the White House intervened in the normal prepublication review process and demanded substantial deletions. Agency officials told us that they had concluded on their own that the original draft included no classified material, but that they had to bow to the White House.

Indeed, the deleted portions of the original draft reveal no classified material. These passages go into aspects of American-Iranian relations during the Bush administration's first term that have been publicly discussed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; former Secretary of State Colin Powell; former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage; a former State Department policy planning director, Richard Haass; and a former special envoy to Afghanistan, James Dobbins.

These aspects have been extensively reported in the news media, and one of us, Mr. Leverett, has written about them in The Times and other publications with the explicit permission of the review board. We provided the following citations to the board to demonstrate that all of the material the White House objected to is already in the public domain. Unfortunately, to make sense of much of our Op-Ed article, readers will have to read the citations for themselves.

The decisions of the C.I.A. and the White House took us by surprise. Since leaving government service three and a half years ago, Mr. Leverett has put more than 20 articles through the C.I.A.'s prepublication review process and the Publication Review Board has never changed a word or asked the White House for permission to clear these articles.

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What's more, we have spent a collective 20 years serving our country as career civil servants in national security, for both Republican and Democratic administrations. We know firsthand the importance of protecting sensitive information. But we also know the importance of shared knowledge. In the entrance to the C.I.A.'s headquarters the words of the Gospel of John are inscribed, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

| This week's top stories

National security must be above politics. In a democracy, transparency in government has to be honored and protected. To classify information for reasons other than the safety and security of the United States and its interests is a violation of these principles. It is for this reason that we will continue to press for the release of the article without the material deleted.

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*E&P Staff*

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