

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIRTY YEARS OF CRISIS AND CONTROVERSY AS A CIA LAWYER



WEDNESDAY, 4 DECEMBER
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John A. Rizzo

RETIRED CHIEF LEGAL ADVISOR, CIA

John Rizzo's career as a lawyer at the CIA spanned more than three decades (1976–2009). This period coincided with the modern history of the CIA, and Rizzo was an observer or participant in every major crisis and controversy affecting the agency during that time. In a 2009 profile, the *Los Angeles Times* described him as “the most influential career lawyer in CIA history.” His forthcoming memoir *Company Man* chronicles his CIA career (January 2014). Shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Rizzo became the chief legal

advisor for CIA, a position he held until his 2009 retirement. As the legal architect for counterterrorist activities like the enhanced interrogation program and the CIA secret prison system, he became a hugely controversial public and political figure in his final years. During the first quarter century of his career, Rizzo was a key figure in all of the major events involving the CIA, including the Iran-Contra affair and the Aldrich Ames spy scandal. He was the prime legal overseer for all covert operations conducted by the agency.