

November 3, 2005

Dear President Bush and Conferees for the 2006 Defense Authorization Act:

We, the undersigned local and regional government bodies, organizations, and individuals urge you to affirm that the United States may not, through its own actions or through others acting on its behalf or behest, engage in any acts of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment anywhere in the world. The degrading practices that have been used in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, and elsewhere, and the practice of rendering prisoners to countries known to use torture, are absolute wrongdoings in themselves. In addition to inflicting pain, these acts have made both our country and the world less safe from terrorism in the following ways:

- They place U.S. military and allied personnel at even greater risk;
- They damage our country's reputation in the eyes of the world, and may discourage other countries from supporting and assisting us in combating terrorism;
- They fuel hatred for the United States, giving ammunition to our nation's enemies; and
- They allow governments known to abuse human rights to cite the example of the United States as justification for their disregard of human rights.

Furthermore, according to the Army Field Manual on Intelligence Interrogation, "The use of force is a poor technique, as it yields unreliable results, may damage subsequent collection efforts, and can induce the source to say whatever he thinks the interrogator wants to hear." And, Army Regulation 190-8 entitled "Enemy Prisoners of War, Retained Personnel, Civilian Internees and Other Detainees" prohibits the following as "inhumane treatment": "murder, torture, corporal punishment, mutilation, the taking of hostages, sensory deprivation, collective punishments, execution without trial by proper authority, and all cruel and degrading treatment" such as "rape, forced prostitution, assault and theft, insults, public curiosity, bodily injury, and reprisals of any kind."

The United States is a party to the Geneva Conventions, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Under congressional guidance, the United States is bound to prevent "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" to the extent that phrase means the cruel, unusual, and inhuman treatment or punishment prohibited by the United States Constitution's Fifth Amendment ban on self-incrimination; Eighth Amendment ban on cruel and unusual punishment; and Fourteenth Amendment guarantee of equal protection under the law.

For more than a century, United States policy prohibited torture. The prohibition served us well and must be restored in U.S. policy and practice. U.S. engagement and complicity in torture and inhumane treatment are grave legal and moral wrongs. In addition, they have made the world a more dangerous place, especially for members of our armed forces, and have diminished our country's standing and the example we set for other countries. We, the signatories, ask that you restore adherence to our Constitution, which you have pledged to uphold and defend, and to the aforementioned international treaties and conventions against torture and inhuman treatment by ensuring that all U.S. government agencies enforce them and by enacting legal and agency enforcement procedures.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations:**

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination  
Committee  
American Humanist Association  
American Library Association  
Amnesty International USA  
American Muslim Voice  
Asian American Justice Center (formerly the  
National Asian Pacific American Legal  
Consortium  
Association of Pakistani Physicians of North  
America  
Bill of Rights Defense Committee  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Center for Democracy and Technology  
Cities for Progress, a project of the Institute  
for Policy Studies  
Commission on Social Action of Reform  
Judaism  
DemocracyRising US  
First Amendment Foundation  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
(Quaker)  
Independent Institute  
The Multiracial Activist  
National Coalition Against Repressive  
Legislation  
National Immigrant Solidarity Network  
National Lawyers Guild  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social  
Justice Lobby  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington  
Office  
The Rutherford Institute  
Torture Abolition and Survivors Support  
Coalition (TASSC) International  
Unitarian Universalist Association of  
Congregations  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
United Electrical Union

Washington Defender Association's  
Immigration Project  
World Organization for Human Rights USA  
(new name for World Organization  
Against Torture USA)

**Local Governments:**

Amherst (MA) Selectboard  
Bloomington (IN) Human Rights  
Commission  
Eugene (OR) City Council (via resolution  
passed 4/11/05)

**Veterans Groups:**

Veterans For Peace (National) and the  
following chapters:

- Chapter 032 (South Florida) (expected to sign on at 4/16 meeting, per Patrick McCann, pres.)
- Chapter 033 (Southern Connecticut)
- Chapter 050 (Northern Michigan)
- Chapter 060 (Tappan Zee Brigade, Westchester-Rockland, New York)
- Chapter 078 (Gainesville, Florida)
- Chapter 099 (Western North Carolina)
- Chapter 105 (Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter, Baltimore, Maryland)

**Individuals:**

Kevin J. Barry, Captain, U.S. Coast Guard  
(Ret.)  
John D. Hutson, Rear Admiral (Ret.);  
currently President and Dean of Franklin  
Pierce Law Center  
Ann Wright, Army Reserves Colonel (Ret.)  
and former Foreign Service Officer

**cc: Members of Congress**