

January 6, 2017

Donald J. Trump
President-elect of the United States of America
Trump Tower
735 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear President-Elect Trump,

We are a group of 175 retired flag officers from all branches of the United States military. We have over six thousand years of combined experience in commanding and leading American men and women in war and in peace, and believe strongly in the values and ideals that our country holds dear. We know from experience that U.S. national security policies are most effective when they uphold those ideals.

For these reasons, we are concerned about statements made during the campaign about the use of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment of detainees in U.S. custody. The use of waterboarding or any so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques” is unlawful under domestic and international law. Opposition to torture has been strong and bi-partisan since the founding of our republic through the administration of President Ronald Reagan to this very day. This was reinforced last year when the Congress passed the McCain-Feinstein anti-torture law on an overwhelmingly bi-partisan basis.

Torture is unnecessary. Based on our experience—and that of our nation’s top interrogators, backed by the latest science—we know that lawful, rapport-based interrogation techniques are the most effective way to elicit actionable intelligence.

Torture is also counterproductive because it undermines our national security. It increases the risks to our troops, hinders cooperation with allies, alienates populations whose support the United States needs in the struggle against terrorism, and provides a propaganda tool for extremists who wish to do us harm.

Most importantly, torture violates our core values as a nation. Our greatest strength is our commitment to the rule of law and to the principles embedded in our Constitution. Our servicemen and women need to know that our leaders do not condone torture or detainee abuse of any kind.

We look forward to working with you in the future on this and any other issue as you serve our great country.

Sincerely,

GENERAL KEITH B. ALEXANDER, USA (RET.)
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY, 2005-2014 AND
COMMANDER, U.S. CYBER COMMAND 2010-2014

GENERAL JOHN R. ALLEN, USMC (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES AFGHANISTAN, 2011-2013

GENERAL WALTER E. BOOMER, USMC (RET.)
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, 1992-1994

ADMIRAL FRANK "SKIP" BOWMAN, USN (RET.)
DIRECTOR, NAVAL NUCLEAR PROPULSION, 1996-2004

ADMIRAL ARCHIE R. CLEMINS, USN (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. PACIFIC FLEET, 1996-1999

GENERAL WILLIAM W. CROUCH, USA (RET.)
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY, 1997-1998

GENERAL JOHN R. "JACK" DAILEY, USMC (RET.)
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, 1990-1992

GENERAL HOWELL M. ESTES III, USAF (RET.)
COMMANDER, NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND
AND UNITED STATES SPACE COMMAND, 1996-1998

GENERAL DOUGLAS FRASER, USAF (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, 2009-2012

GENERAL CARLTON W. FULFORD JR., USMC (RET.)
DEPUTY COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND, 2000-2002

GENERAL RONALD H. GRIFFITH, USA (RET.)
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY, 1995-1997

ADMIRAL JOHN C. HARVEY, JR, USN (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. FLEET FORCES COMMAND, 2009-2012

GENERAL RICHARD D. HEARNEY, USMC (RET.)
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, 1994-1996

GENERAL JAMES T. HILL, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, 2002-2004

GENERAL JOSEPH P. HOAR, USMC (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND 1991-1994

ADMIRAL BOBBY RAY INMAN, USN (RET.)
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY, 1977-1981 AND
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE, 1981-1982

GENERAL JAMES L. JAMERSON, USAF (RET.)
DEPUTY COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND, 1995-1998

GENERAL WILLIAM F. KERNAN, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. JOINT FORCES COMMAND, 2000-2002

GENERAL PAUL J. KERN, USA (RET.)
COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND, 2001-
2004

GENERAL WALTER KROSS, USAF (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND, 1996-1998

GENERAL CHARLES C. KRULAK, USMC (RET.)
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, 1995-1999

GENERAL DAVID M. MADDOX, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY EUROPE, 1992-1993

GENERAL STANLEY A. MCCHRYSAL, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES AFGHANISTAN, 2009-2010

ADMIRAL WILLIAM H. McRAVEN, USN (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND, 2011-2014

GENERAL BARRY R. MCCAFFREY, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, 1994-1996

GENERAL MERRILL A. MCPPEAK, USAF (RET.)
CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE, 1990-1994

GENERAL MONTGOMERY C. MEIGS, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY EUROPE, 1998-2002

GENERAL DENNIS J. REIMER, USA (RET.)
CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY, 1995-1999

GENERAL THOMAS A. SCHWARTZ, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY FORCES COMMAND, 1998-1999

GENERAL HUGH H. SHELTON, USA (RET.)
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, 1997-2001

GENERAL LARRY O. SPENCER, USAF (RET.)
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE, 2012-2015
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY FORCES COMMAND, 1998-1999

ADMIRAL JAMES G. STAVRIDIS, USN (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, 2006-2009
NATO SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, 2009-2013

GENERAL CHARLES F. "CHUCK" WALD, USAF (RET.)
DEPUTY COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND, 2002-2006

LIEUTENANT GENERAL STEVEN L. ARNOLD, USA (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICK BEDNAREK, USA (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL H. STEVEN BLUM, USA (RET.)

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL CHARLES OTSTOTT, USA (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GARRY L. PARKS, USMC (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID POYTHRESS, USA-NG (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL NORMAN R. SEIP, USAF (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HARRY E. SOYSTER, USA (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KEITH J. STALDER, USMC (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL MARTIN R. STEELE, USMC (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL MITCHELL H. STEVENSON, USA (RET.)

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REAR ADMIRAL JAMES J. CAREY, USN (RET.)

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MAJOR GENERAL PAUL D. EATON, USA (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL EUGENE FOX, USA (RET.)

REAR ADMIRAL DON GUTER, JAGC, USN (RET.)

REAR ADMIRAL JANICE M. HAMBY, USN (RET.)

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MAJOR GENERAL JIM H. KEFFER, USAF (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL STEVEN J. LEPPER, USAF (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL DONALD E. LORANGER, USAF (RET.)

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MAJOR GENERAL DEE ANN MCWILLIAMS, USA (RET.)

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REAR ADMIRAL MICHAEL E. SMITH, USN (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL ORLO K. STEELE, USMC (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES H. SWANNACK, JR. USA (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL W. SYMANSKI, USAR (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL THOMAS R. TEMPEL, USA (RET.)

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REAR ADMIRAL ROBERT O. WRAY, JR, USN (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL W. DAVIDSON, USA (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT S. DICKMAN, USAF (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL MARI K. EDER, USA (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL WILTON SCOTT GORSKE, USA (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL IRVING HALTER, USAF (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL MARCELITE HARRIS, USAF (RET.)

REAR ADMIRAL JOHN D. HUTSON, JAGC, USN (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL DENNIS LAICH, USAR (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL R. LEHNERT, USMC (RET.)

REAR ADMIRAL STEVEN W. MAAS, USN (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL ALBERT J. MADORA, USA (RET.)

REAR ADMIRAL WILLIAM J. MCDANIEL, USN (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL HOWARD J. MITCHELL, USAF (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL J. MICHAEL MYATT, USMC (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM L. NASH, USA (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL ERIC T. OLSON, USA (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL GALE POLLOCK, USA (RET.)

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MAJOR GENERAL DON T. RILEY, USA (RET.)

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MAJOR GENERAL JOHN P. SCHOEPPNER, JR., USAF (RET.)

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REAR ADMIRAL TIMOTHY S. SULLIVAN, USCG (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL ANTONIO M. TAGUBA, USA (RET.)

REAR ADMIRAL G. DENNIS VAUGHAN, USN (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL MARGARET WOODWARD, USAF (RET.)

MAJOR GENERAL DAVID T. ZABECKI, USA (RET.)

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BRIGADIER GENERAL DAVID M. BRAHMS, USMC (RET.)

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BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN W. DOUGLASS, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBERT J. FELDERMAN, USA (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL ALAN K. FRY, USA (RET.)

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BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN H. JOHNS, USA (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL JENENNE P. NELSON, USAF (RET.)

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BRIGADIER GENERAL LOREE K. SUTTON, USA (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL JANET THERIANOS, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL KENNETH E. TODOROV, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BLAKE E. WILLIAMS, USA (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL DANIEL P. WOODWARD, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL SCOTT E. WUESTHOFF, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL FREDERICK A. ZEHRER III, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN ADAMS, USA (RET.)

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BRIGADIER GENERAL JAMES P. CULLEN, USA (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL THOMAS V. DRAUDE, USMC (RET.)

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BRIGADIER GENERAL GERALD E. GALLOWAY, USA (RET.)

REAR ADMIRAL F. STEPHEN GLASS, USN (RET.)

REAR ADMIRAL DEAN H. HINES, USN (RET.)

REAR ADMIRAL GRADY L. JACKSON, USN (RET.)

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BRIGADIER GENERAL PAUL GREGORY SMITH, USA (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL HUGH B. TANT III, USA (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURDETT K. THOMPSON, USA (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL GEORGE H. WALLS, USMC (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL TERRENCE P. WOODS, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL KEVIN B. WOOTON, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL STEPHEN N. XENAKIS, USA (RET.)