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

February 15, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to urge you to personally and publicly support declassification of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's (SSCI) study of CIA interrogation and detention practices post 9/11.

Your leadership in 2009—by issuing an executive order on your second day in office banning torture and closing the CIA's secret sites where torture occurred—put an end to a shameful chapter in our nation's history. Many of us signing this letter stood behind you in the Oval Office on that day. We are committed to ensuring that our Nation never adopts the policies of torture and abuse that you so rightly rejected. And we are convinced that this cause requires an honest assessment of past practices, so that we do not repeat mistakes of the past.

Until the SSCI study is made public, those who argue that torture was necessary and instrumental in the fight against terrorism and the elimination of Osama bin Laden will continue to find adherents. Gen. Michael Hayden, former director of the CIA, John Rizzo, former deputy counsel of the CIA, and Jose Rodriguez, the former director of the National Clandestine Service at the CIA, continue to argue in favor of the CIA's torture program, touting its value in saving lives.^[1] These people are intent on ensuring that the CIA be allowed to torture again.

SSCI Chair Senator Dianne Feinstein has said, "I...believe this report will settle the debate once and for all over whether our nation should ever employ coercive interrogation techniques."^[2] We understand that the decision to make the report public rests with the committee. The committee, though, has asked for the administration's and CIA's comments by February 15th. It is vital, therefore, that you support efforts to declassify the SSCI study so that the American people can understand the scope of the torture program and what—if anything—was gained from it.

This kind of self-examination is indispensable to ensuring a durable national consensus against torture. And there is certainly precedent for it. In December 2008, the Senate Armed Services Committee published its report on torture, which the Pentagon declassified soon thereafter with few

redactions. We supported the committee's decision to declassify that report, because we believe that accountability is a hallmark of a strong democracy. Fear of embarrassment is no excuse to hide. As Chairman Levin said at the time, "Our investigation is an effort to set the record straight on this chapter in our history that has so damaged both America's standing and our security. America needs to own up to its mistakes so that we can rebuild some of the good will that we have lost."^[3]

Senator Feinstein said in December 2012 that the SSCI study shows "that coercive and abusive treatment of detainees in U.S. custody was far more systematic and widespread than we thought."^[4] The study must see the light of day. You said it so well in 2008: "When I am president, America will once again be the country that stands up to these deplorable tactics. When I am president we won't work in secret...."^[5]

Thanks to your leadership, the United States no longer has a policy of torture and official cruelty. Now we need to end the *debate* about torture. It corrodes our forces and our national character. We ask you to make absolutely clear that you support declassifying the SSCI study, and we pledge to support your ongoing efforts to ensure that our nation never again accepts torture as an option.

Sincerely,

General Joseph P. Hoar, USCM (Ret.)
General Charles C. Krulak, USMC (Ret.)
General David M. Maddox, USA (Ret.)
General Merrill A. McPeak, USAF (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Robert G. Gard, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Arlen D. Jameson, USAF (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Charles Otstott, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Harry E. Soyster, USA (Ret.)
Major General Eugene Fox, USA (Ret.)
Rear Admiral Don Guter, JAGC, USN (Ret.)
Rear Admiral John D. Hutson, JAGC, USN (Ret.)
Major General Melvyn S. Montano, USAF (Ret.)
Major General William L. Nash, USA (Ret.)
Major General Thomas J. Romig, USA (Ret.)
Major General Walter L. Stewart, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Major General Antonio M. Taguba, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General John Adams, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General David M. Brahms, USMC (Ret.)
Brigadier General Stephen A. Cheney, USMC (Ret.)
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[1] <http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/washington-whispers/2013/01/29/former-cia-officials-who-oversaw-torture-pick-apart-inaccuracies-in-zero-dark-thirty>

[2] http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-12-13/world/35812850_1_harsh-interrogation-measures-network-of-secret-prisons-coercive-interrogation

[3] <http://www.fas.org/irp/news/2008/12/levin121108.html>

[4] http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-12-13/world/35812850_1_harsh-interrogation-measures-network-of-secret-prisons-coercive-interrogation

[5] <https://my.barackobama.com/page/community/post/scottgiordano/ChJl>