

OCTOBER 3, 2005

*RETIRED MILITARY LEADERS' LETTER TO SENATOR MCCAIN IN SUPPORT OF HIS
AMENDMENT TO BAN CRUEL, INHUMAN AND DEGRADING TREATMENT*

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October 3, 2005

Senator John McCain
241 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

We strongly support your proposed amendments to the Defense Department Authorization bill concerning detainee policy, including requiring all interrogations of detainees in DOD custody to conform to the U.S. Army's Field Manual on Intelligence Interrogation (FM 34-52), and prohibiting the use of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by any U.S. government agency.

The abuse of prisoners hurts America's cause in the war on terror, endangers U.S. service members who might be captured by the enemy, and is anathema to the values Americans have held dear for generations. For many years, those values have been embodied in the Army Field Manual. The Manual applies the wisdom and experience gained by military interrogators in conflicts against both regular and irregular foes. It authorizes techniques

that have proven effective in extracting life-saving information from the most hardened enemy prisoners. It also recognizes that torture and cruel treatment are ineffective methods, because they induce prisoners to say what their interrogators want to hear, even if it is not true, while bringing discredit upon the United States.

It is now apparent that the abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo and elsewhere took place in part because our men and women in uniform were given ambiguous instructions, which in some cases authorized treatment that went beyond what was allowed by the Army Field Manual. Administration officials confused matters further by declaring that U.S. personnel are not bound by longstanding prohibitions of cruel treatment when interrogating non-U.S. citizens on foreign soil. As a result, we suddenly had one set of rules for interrogating prisoners of war, and another for “enemy combatants;” one set for Guantánamo, and another for Iraq; one set for our military, and another for the CIA. Our service members were denied clear guidance, and left to take the blame when things went wrong. They deserve better than that.

The United States should have one standard for interrogating enemy prisoners that is effective, lawful, and humane. Fortunately, America already has the gold standard in the Army Field Manual. Had the Manual been followed across the board, we would have been spared the pain of the prisoner abuse scandal. It should be followed consistently from now on. And when agencies other than DOD detain and interrogate prisoners, there should be no legal loopholes permitting cruel or degrading treatment.

The amendments proposed by Senator McCain would achieve these goals while preserving our nation’s ability to fight the war on terror. They reflect the experience and highest traditions of the United States military. We urge the Congress to support this effort.

Sincerely,

General Joseph Hoar, USMC (Ret.)
General John Shalikhvili, USA (Ret.)
General Donn A. Starry, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Ron Adams, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Robert G. Gard, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Jay M. Garner, USA (Ret.)
Vice Admiral Lee F. Gunn, USN (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Claudia J. Kennedy, USA (Ret.)
Vice Admiral Al Konetzni, USN (ret.)
Lieutenant General Charles Otstott, USA (Ret.)
Vice Admiral Jack Shanahan, USN (Ret.)
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Rear Admiral Donald J. Guter, USN (Ret.)
Major General Fred E. Haynes, USMC (Ret.)
Rear Admiral John D. Hutson, USN (Ret.)
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Major General Robert H. Scales, USA (Ret.)
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Brigadier General David M. Brahms, USMC (Ret.)
Brigadier General James Cullen, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Evelyn P. Foote, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General David R. Irvine, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Richard O'Meara, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General John K. Schmitt, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Stephen N. Xenakis, USA (Ret.)
Ambassador/Former Vietnam POW Douglas "Pete" Peterson, USAF (Ret.)
Former Vietnam POW Commander Frederick C. Baldock, USN (Ret.)
Former Vietnam POW Commander Phillip N. Butler, USN (Ret.)