

GENERAL JOSEPH P. HOAR, USMC (RET.)
GENERAL DAVID M. MADDOX, USA (RET.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT G. GARD JR., USA (RET.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL HARRY E. SOYSTER (RET.)
MAJOR GENERAL PAUL D. EATON, USA (RET.)
REAR ADMIRAL DON GUTER, USN (RET.)
MAJOR GENERAL THOMAS J. ROMIG, USA (RET.)
MAJOR GENERAL WALTER L. STEWART, JR., ARNG (RET.)
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BRIGADIER GENERAL JAMES CULLEN, USA (RET.)
BRIGADIER GENERAL GERALD E. GALLOWAY, USA (RET.)
BRIGADIER GENERAL DAVID R. IRVINE, USA (RET.)
BRIGADIER GENERAL ANTHONY VERRENGIA, USAF (RET.)

GENERAL CHARLES C. KRULAK, USMC (RET.)
GENERAL WILLIAM G. T. TUTTLE JR., USA (RET.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL CHARLES P. OTSTOTT, USA (RET.)
MAJOR GENERAL JOHN BATISTE, USA (RET.)
MAJOR GENERAL EUGENE FOX, USA (RET.)
MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM L. NASH, USA (RET.)
MAJOR GENERAL MURRAY G. SAGSVEEN, USA (RET.)
MAJOR GENERAL ANTONIO 'TONY' M. TAGUBA, USA (RET.)
BRIGADIER GENERAL DAVID M. BRAHMS, USMC (RET.)
BRIGADIER GENERAL EVELYN P. FOOTE, USA (RET.)
BRIGADIER GENERAL LEIF H. HENDRICKSON, USMC (RET.)
BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN H. JOHNS, USA (RET.)
BRIGADIER GENERAL STEPHEN N. XENAKIS, USA (RET.)

November 28, 2011

Dear Senator:

We are members of a nonpartisan group of forty retired generals and admirals concerned about U.S. policy regarding enemy prisoner treatment and detention. We ask you to vote no on Amendment 1068 to the National Defense Authorization Act.

We worked closely with Senator McCain in 2005 to pass the Detainee Treatment Act which banned torture and limited lawful interrogation to techniques listed in the Army Field Manual. In 2008, we shared our insights with Presidential candidates from both parties that torture, as well as cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, undermines our security at home and our moral standing in the world. Members of our group stood behind President Obama when he signed an Executive Order ending torture on his second day in office. The Executive Order mandated that all federal agencies comply with the military's high standards in the Army Field Manual.

Amendment 1068 to the defense bill would repeal the Executive Order banning torture, undermine a key aspect of the Detainee Treatment Act by permitting some service members to engage in interrogation techniques outside the Army Field Manual, and would send interrogation tactics by other agencies underground. Amendment 1068 sets the stage for a return to Abu Ghraib.

Waterboarding, and other "enhanced interrogation techniques," are torture. Waterboarding has been considered torture since at least the Spanish Inquisition.

Torture is unreliable because anyone who is tortured will lie to make the torture stop, or will provide false and misleading information which can lead investigators to waste crucial time.

Torture is counterproductive because our enemies use the indelible images of torture to recruit more terrorists, and our allies refuse to extradite terror suspects to the United States when we do not uphold the law, letting terror suspects escape U.S. justice.

Secret lists of torture tactics never remain secret for long when detainees describe the cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment they endured.

We deeply appreciate President Reagan's leadership in securing ratification of the Convention Against Torture in the United States. Torture, including enhanced interrogation techniques, violates both U.S. and international law.

We applaud our leaders who seek to keep Americans safe, but we should not overreact. Policy and practice should be based on evidence, not fear. We believe that to secure our nation, the United States must always lead by our core principles; that means the United States must never engage in torture or abuse.

Sincerely,

General Joseph P. Hoar, USMC (Ret.)
General Charles C. Krulak, USMC (Ret.)
General David M. Maddox, USA (Ret.)
General William G. T. Tuttle Jr., USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Robert G. Gard Jr., USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Charles P. Otsstott, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Harry E. Soyster (Ret.)
Major General John Batiste, USA (Ret.)
Major General Paul D. Eaton, USA (Ret.)
Major General Eugene Fox, USA (Ret.)
Rear Admiral Don Guter, USN (Ret.)
Major General William L. Nash, USA (Ret.)
Major General Thomas J. Romig, USA (Ret.)
Major General Murray G. Sagsveen, USA (Ret.)
Major General Walter L. Stewart, Jr., ARNG (Ret.)
Major General, Antonio 'Tony' M. Taguba, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General John Adams, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General David M. Brahms, USMC (Ret.)
Brigadier General James Cullen, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Evelyn P. Foote, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Gerald E. Galloway, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Leif H. Hendrickson, USMC (Ret.)
Brigadier General David R. Irvine, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General John H. Johns, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Anthony Verrengia, USAF (Ret.)
Brigadier General Stephen N. Xenakis, USA (Ret.)