

Bipartisan Opposition to Torture

- ✓ **President Barack Obama.** “I can stand here today, as President of the United States, and say without exception or equivocation that we do not torture, and that we will vigorously protect our people while forging a strong and durable framework that allows us to fight terrorism while abiding by the rule of law.”¹
- ✓ **Vice President Joe Biden.** “The President shut down secret prisons overseas, banned torture, and in doing so demonstrated that we don’t have to choose between protecting our country and living our values; and, as a consequence of those decisions, enhanced the security of our own soldiers abroad and the power of our persuasion around the world.”²
- ✓ **Senator John McCain (R-AZ).** “It is my hope that we can reach a consensus in this country that we will never again engage in these horrific abuses, and that the mere suggestion of doing so should be ruled out of our political discourse, regardless of which party holds power.”³
- ✓ **Senator Rand Paul (R-KY).** “I’m opposed to torture, and I think our country should have a higher ideal than that. And I would oppose it and make that part of – actually it is officially part of our Army Manual not to do it. We just don’t pay attention to our own rules. But yeah, I think that torture is always wrong and shouldn’t be performed.”⁴
- ✓ **Kenneth A. Duberstein (Chief of Staff, Reagan Administration) and Richard Armitage (Deputy Secretary of State 2001-2005).** “We will not win the war on terror merely by being brutal or tough. We must build policies that are first and foremost effective. Torture undermines our effectiveness in this struggle because it debases us. It reduces us to the same brutality as our enemies, and it alienates people around the world who, as General Colin Powell wrote, are ‘beginning to doubt the moral basis of our fight against terrorism.’ America must keep itself free and secure by explicitly and unequivocally rejecting torture.”⁵
- ✓ **Jon Huntsman, former Governor of Utah.** “We diminish our standing in the world and the values that we project which include liberty, democracy, human rights, and open markets when we torture. We should not torture. Waterboarding is torture. We dilute ourselves down like a whole lot of other countries. And we lose that ability to project values that a lot of people in corners of this world are still relying on the United States to stand up for them.”⁶
- ✓ **Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI).** “Through World War II, the example of Britain, in the shadow of Hitler’s Nazism, throwing out of their secure intelligence facility somebody who had the nerve to lay hands on one of their prisoners, partly because they knew it was bad practice in intelligence-gathering, partly because it wasn’t who they were ... And I think the fact that over and over again they refused to use those techniques is actually a measure of their strength.”

¹ http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/21/us/politics/21obama.text.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

² <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/04/26/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-foreign-policy-campaign-event>

³ http://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressOffice.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=95e0a445-d569-80f9-f216-89ec7a7b6928

⁴ <http://antiwar.com/radio/2009/05/17/rand-paul/>

⁵ <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2008/0801.durbensteinarmitage.html>

⁶ http://blogs.suntimes.com/sweet/2011/11/_cbsnational_journal_gop_debat.html

- ☑ **Governor Asa Hutchinson (R-AR).** "This [Senate] report has a stamp of authority and breadth to it that a private-sector report cannot accomplish. This report had access to classified information; it had access to all the CIA documents so it's much more authoritative ... But it is certainly consistent with [the Constitution Project task force report.]"⁷
- ☑ **General Colin Powell, USA (Ret.).** "We do not torture people. It is against American policy. You can always debate what torture is. I know what torture is ... We can't be a nation that is lawless. We cannot be a nation that simply ignores our obligations to ourselves, our obligations to our Constitution, our obligations to our own moral standing in the world."⁸
- ☑ **Admiral Mike Mullen, USN (Ret.).** "[A]t no time have I ever supported torture, and that has been very clear and remains ... I share Senator McCain's concern that these techniques could be used against us, and have for a considerable period of time."⁹
- ☑ **General Stanley McChrystal, USA (Ret.).** "[The ends justify the means' is] one argument that can be made and I'm not really prepared to accept that argument. What I would say is my personal conclusion is, the ends, if you use mistreatment, they cost too much. The effect of torture is really on the torturer. Where an organization either uses it occasionally or if it begins to make it policy, as the French found in Algeria, it corrodes the moral fiber of the force."¹⁰
- ☑ **General David Petraeus, USA (Ret.).** "What sets us apart from our enemies in this fight is how we behave. In everything we do, we must observe the standards and values that dictate that we treat noncombatants and detainees with dignity and respect.... Some may argue that we would be more effective if we sanctioned torture or other expedient methods to obtain information from the enemy. They would be wrong. Beyond the basic fact that such actions are illegal, history shows that they also are frequently neither useful nor necessary."¹¹
- ☑ **General Peter Pace, USMC (Ret.).** "[The effect of Abu Ghraib] was devastating. Despite all the hard work of millions of individuals that was positive and good and properly focused, relatively few did enormous harm to the credibility of the United States and the U.S. armed forces. It was, in fact, a disaster."¹²
- ☑ **Major General Paul Eaton, USA (Ret.).** "Torture is the tool of the lazy, the stupid, and the pseudo-tough. It's also perhaps the greatest tool that the terrorists have."¹³
- ☑ **Brigadier General James Cullen, USA (Ret.).** "In 2004, I started to talk to other military officers about abuses - not just at Abu Ghraib but in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay and other parts of Iraq too. The officers I spoke to were universally opposed to the use of Gestapo tactics to get detainees to talk. History has shown repeatedly that torture does not work. It produces poor information; it weakens the morale of the forces that employ it; and it turns local populations against you."¹⁴
- ☑ **Brigadier General David Irvine, USA (Ret.) and Former FBI Agent Joe Navarro.** "The myth that brutal techniques are either necessary or effective is resilient. But inhumane interrogation methods hurt rather than assist effective interrogations. If a skilled interrogator approaches a detainee who has been abused, it is very hard to repair the damage. The methods of the [Army] Field Manual are sometimes mocked as simplistic "rapport building." But they are in fact a battery of tried and true, refined techniques which use a variety of psychological ploys to obtain truthful, actionable information. As intelligence professionals we do not want – or need – any other tools."¹⁵

⁷ <http://www.arktimes.com/ArkansasBlog/archives/2014/12/10/asa-hutchinson-a-voice-of-reason-on-torture-report>

⁸ http://www.politico.com/blogs/politico-live/2013/01/powell-talks-zero-dark-thirty-torture-154021.html?hp=11_b1

⁹ <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4413>

¹⁰ <http://video.msnbc.msn.com/meet-the-press/50498571#50498571>

¹¹ http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/documents/petraeus_values_051007.pdf

¹² <http://ethix.org/2008/10/01/the-truth-as-i-know-it>

¹³ <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/tny/2009/01/behind-the-executive-orders.html>

¹⁴ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brigadier-general-james-p-cullen/standing-behind-a-ban-on_b_161314.html

¹⁵ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/news/2008/080213-state-of-the-art.htm>