

**Editor's Note:** *The following letter was sent today to the Judiciary Committee to the attention of Senator Arlen Specter and Senator Patrick Leahy. It represents the views of former US Government and military officials who served in the CIA, in the Army, in the Air Force, at the Department of State and the FBI. It represents a consensus view that torture is an ineffective and immoral practice. -TO*

## Letter From Intelligence and Military Professionals on Use of Torture

truthout | Letter

Tuesday 26 September 2006

United States Senate  
Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

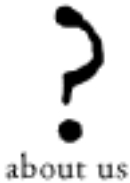
The Honorable Arlen Specter, Chairman  
The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Ranking Democratic Member

Dear Senators:

We write as experienced intelligence and military officers who have served in the frontlines in waging war against communism and Islamic extremism. We fully support the need for proactive operations to identify and disrupt those individuals and organizations who wish to harm our country or its people. We also recognize that intelligence operations, unlike law enforcement initiatives, enjoy more flexibility and less scrutiny, but at the same time must continue to be guided by applicable US law.



We are very concerned that the proposals now before the Congress, concerning how to handle detainees suspected of terrorist activities, run the risk of squandering the greatest resource our country enjoys in fighting the dictators and extremists who want to destroy us—our commitment as a nation to the rule of law and the protection of divinely granted human rights.



Apart from the moral considerations, we believe it is important that the Congress send a clear message that torture is not an effective or useful tactic. As noted recently by the head of Army Intelligence, Lt. Gen. John Kimmons:

No good intelligence is going to come from abusive practices. I think history tells us that. I think the empirical evidence of the last five years, hard years, tells us that.

Our nation was created in response to the abuses visited on our ancestors by the King of England, who claimed the right to enter their homes, to levy taxes at whim, and to jail those perceived as a threat without allowing them to be confronted by their accusers. Now, 230 years later, we find our own President claiming the right to put people in detention centers without legal recourse and to employ interrogation methods that, by any reasonable legal standard, are categorized as torture.

We ask that the Senate lead the way in upholding the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence and affirmed in the Geneva Conventions regarding the rights of individuals and the obligations of governing authorities towards those in their power. We believe it is important to combat the hatred and vitriol espoused by Islamic extremists, but not at the expense of being viewed as a nation who justifies or excuses torture and incarceration without recourse to a judicial procedure.

The US has been in the forefront of the human rights campaign throughout the 20th century, led by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. The end of World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust inspired the United States to take the lead in making the case that human rights were universal, not parochial. Until recently the policy of our country was that all people, not just citizens of the United States, were entitled to these protections. It is important that the world understand that we remain committed to these principles. In fighting our enemies we must wage this battle in harmony with the traditional values of our society that were enshrined in the opening clause of the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident...."

Respectfully yours,

**CIA Officers:**

Milton Bearden, Directorate of Operations  
Ray Close, Directorate of Operations  
Vincent Cannistraro, Directorate of Operations  
Philip Giraldi, Directorate of Operations  
James Marcinkowski, Directorate of Operations  
Melissa Mahle, Directorate of Operations  
Paul Pillar, Directorate of Intelligence  
David MacMichael, Directorate of Intelligence  
Melvin Goodman, Directorate of Intelligence  
Ray McGovern, Directorate of Intelligence  
Mary O. McCarthy, DCI professional staff

**US Military and Department of Defense:**

W. Patrick Lang, (Colonel, US Army retired, Director Defense Humint Services, retired)  
A. D. Ackels, (Colonel, US Army, retired)  
Karen Kwiatkowski, (Lt. Colonel, USAF, retired)

**US Department of State:**

Thomas R. Maertens, Deputy Coordinator, Office of Counter Terrorism, US Department of State  
Larry C Johnson, Office of Counter Terrorism, US Department of State

**Federal Bureau of Investigation:**

Christopher Whitcomb, Hostage Rescue Team

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