

The American Psychological Association's Interference with U.S. Military Capability

We the undersigned, together having more than 990 years of military service, wish to bring to your attention actions taken by the American Psychological Association (APA) that threaten the important role that military psychologists have played in supporting the Department of Defense's (DoD) interrogation and detention operations.

For more than ten years, trained doctoral psychologists have provided staff support to these operations. Their support has assisted in reducing abuse to detainees and, at the same time, producing valuable intelligence for our country. By bringing their specialized knowledge of human behavior to assist commanders, DoD's psychologists played a critical role helping commanders carry out guidance that detainees be treated in accordance with Common Article III of the Geneva Conventions.

Effective use of psychologists in these critical roles is independently documented in:

- Review of Department Compliance with President's Executive Order on Detainee Conditions of Confinement, (Walsh Report, February, 2009), pages 59-60.
- Assessment of Detainee Medical Operations for OEF, GTMO, and OIF, (Martinez-Lopez Report, April, 2005), pages 1-8 and 18-12.

This important support is now being threatened by persons operating under the belief, contradicted by numerous studies and reports, that military psychologists support the abuse of detainees in US custody. This belief has been asserted repeatedly in the press, in statements from APA leaders, and, most recently, in a purportedly objective but clearly one-sided report (the "Hoffman report") commissioned by the APA. Cumulatively, these materials imply that service members and civil servants who participate in any fashion in the interrogation of detainees are violating human rights and should be sanctioned. Our men and women in uniform, and their civilian counterparts, deserve better.

On August 7, this campaign culminated in a vote by the APA's Council of Representatives to, among other things, prohibit psychologists' involvement in any form of military national security interrogations¹. This vote threatens a resource that is critical to the intelligence collection process. For DoD psychologists who wish to continue serving their country, it means that they would have to withdraw from their profession's primary professional association or accept its formal disapproval of their service as unethical. There are currently many active duty psychologists who have to make that decision.

We ask your help in preventing this result. Specifically, we ask your support by:

- Contacting the President of the APA to voice your concern about the Council's action;
- Requesting the appropriate Congressional committees to review the Hoffman report and, if they conclude as we have that it egregiously distorts the facts about the role of psychologists in interrogations and about how those interrogations are now conducted, to issue a report to that effect; and
- Requesting the appropriate Congressional committees to invite APA representatives to appear before them to explain the APA's actions and discuss its impact on national security activities.

Signed:

¹ For the purposes of this policy statement, "national security interrogations" refer to the interrogation of any detainee in the custody of any agency or subsidiary agency that reports to the Director of National Intelligence, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of Homeland Security, or the National Security Council, including joint elements such as the High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group. This also includes any operations by those agencies with any allied governments or non-state actors, including private contractors. This does not include those detainees held under domestic law enforcement where Miranda Rights and the U.S. Constitution apply.

Very respectfully,

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