



January 6, 2017

Donald J. Trump
President-elect of the United States of America
Trump Tower
735 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear President-Elect Trump,

We are a group of 176 retired flag officers from all branches of the United States military. We have over six thousand years of combined experience in commanding and leading American men and women in war and in peace, and believe strongly in the values and ideals that our country holds dear. We know from experience that U.S. national security policies are most effective when they uphold those ideals.

For these reasons, we are concerned about statements made during the campaign about the use of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment of detainees in U.S. custody. The use of waterboarding or any so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques” is unlawful under domestic and international law. Opposition to torture has been strong and bi-partisan since the founding of our republic through the administration of President Ronald Reagan to this very day. This was reinforced last year when the Congress passed the McCain-Feinstein anti-torture law on an overwhelmingly bi-partisan basis.

Torture is unnecessary. Based on our experience—and that of our nation’s top interrogators, backed by the latest science—we know that lawful, rapport-based interrogation techniques are the most effective way to elicit actionable intelligence.

Torture is also counterproductive because it undermines our national security. It increases the risks to our troops, hinders cooperation with allies, alienates populations whose support the United States needs in the struggle against terrorism, and provides a propaganda tool for extremists who wish to do us harm.

Most importantly, torture violates our core values as a nation. Our greatest strength is our commitment to the rule of law and to the principles embedded in our Constitution. Our servicemen and women need to know that our leaders do not condone torture or detainee abuse of any kind.

We look forward to working with you in the future on this and any other issue as you serve our great country.

Sincerely,



GENERAL KEITH B. ALEXANDER, USA (RET.)
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY, 2005-2014 AND
COMMANDER, U.S. CYBER COMMAND 2010-2014

GENERAL WALTER E. BOOMER, USMC (RET.)
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, 1992-1994

ADMIRAL ARCHIE R. CLEMINS, USN (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. PACIFIC FLEET, 1996-1999

GENERAL JOHN R. "JACK" DAILEY, USMC (RET.)
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, 1990-1992

GENERAL DOUGLAS FRASER, USAF (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, 2009-2012

GENERAL RONALD H. GRIFFITH, USA (RET.)
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY, 1995-1997

GENERAL RICHARD D. HEARNEY, USMC (RET.)
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, 1994-1996

GENERAL JOSEPH P. HOAR, USMC (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND 1991-1994

GENERAL JAMES L. JAMERSON, USAF (RET.)
DEPUTY COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND, 1995-1998

GENERAL PAUL J. KERN, USA (RET.)
COMMANDING GENERAL, U.S. ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND, 2001-2004

GENERAL CHARLES C. KRULAK, USMC (RET.)
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, 1995-1999

GENERAL STANLEY A. MCCHRYSAL, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES AFGHANISTAN, 2009-2010

GENERAL MERRILL A. MCPeAK, USAF (RET.)
CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE, 1990-1994

GENERAL MONTGOMERY C. MEIGS, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY EUROPE, 1998-2002

GENERAL THOMAS A. SCHWARTZ, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY FORCES COMMAND, 1998-1999

GENERAL LARRY O. SPENCER, USAF (RET.)
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE, 2012-2015

GENERAL CHARLES F. "CHUCK" WALD, USAF (RET.)
DEPUTY COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND, 2002-2006

LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICK BEDNAREK, USA (RET.)

VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD H. CARMONA, USPHS (RET.)

GENERAL JOHN R. ALLEN, USMC (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES AFGHANISTAN, 2011-2013

ADMIRAL FRANK "SKIP" BOWMAN, USN (RET.)
DIRECTOR, NAVAL NUCLEAR PROPULSION, 1996-2004

GENERAL WILLIAM W. CROUCH, USA (RET.)
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY, 1997-1998

GENERAL HOWELL M. ESTES III, USAF (RET.)
COMMANDER, NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE
COMMAND AND UNITED STATES SPACE COMMAND, 1996-1998

GENERAL CARLTON W. FULFORD JR., USMC (RET.)
DEPUTY COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND, 2000-2002

ADMIRAL JOHN C. HARVEY, JR, USN (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. FLEET FORCES COMMAND, 2009-2012

GENERAL JAMES T. HILL, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, 2002-2004

ADMIRAL BOBBY RAY INMAN, USN (RET.)
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY, 1977-1981 AND
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE, 1981-1982

GENERAL WILLIAM F. KERNAN, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. JOINT FORCES COMMAND, 2000-2002

GENERAL WALTER KROSS, USAF (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND, 1996-1998

GENERAL DAVID M. MADDOX, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY EUROPE, 1992-1993

GENERAL BARRY R. MCCAFFREY, USA (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, 1994-1996

ADMIRAL WILLIAM H. McRAVEN, USN (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND, 2011-2014

GENERAL DENNIS J. REIMER, USA (RET.)
CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY, 1995-1999

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CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, 1997-2001

ADMIRAL JAMES G. STAVRIDIS, USN (RET.)
COMMANDER, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, 2006-2009
NATO SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, 2009-2013

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BRIGADIER GENERAL BLAKE E. WILLIAMS, USA (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL DANIEL P. WOODWARD, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL SCOTT E. WUESTHOFF, USAF (RET.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL FREDERICK A. ZEHRER III, USAF (RET.)