

# Intelligence Veterans Write to President on Torture

By [Global Research](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

September 27, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

FROM: Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)

SUBJECT: Accountability for Torture

We write you, Mr. President, as former intelligence professionals to voice strong support for Attorney General Eric Holder's authorization of a wider investigation into CIA interrogation. We respectfully disagree with the direct appeal to you by seven former CIA directors to quash that wider investigation.

The signatories of this Memorandum are former intelligence officers and analysts who have worked with CIA directors going back as far as Allen Dulles. Our cumulative experience totals more than 200 years.

We are encouraged by your own support for Attorney General Holder's decision to have federal prosecutor John Durham investigate possible criminal activity by individuals engaging in torture and other violations of international agreements on the treatment of detainees.

From our own experience in intelligence, both as field operators and as senior analysts, we know that personal accountability is vital to maintaining an effective intelligence service that reflects our best traditions and the rule of law.

Among the former CIA directors who, by letter of September 18, asked you to "reverse" the attorney general's decision are some who were cognizant of and involved in decisions that led to the abuses in question. We find that troubling.

Clearly, the role of CIA directors in issuing orders that led to inappropriate behavior, and their failure to hold officers accountable, helped create the environment in which abuses occurred—the ones detailed in the Special Review of the CIA Inspector General, for example.

No analytical leap is required to conclude that those particular CIA directors might have understandable interest in blocking investigation of their own complicity. They include, first and foremost, George Tenet—many of whose misdeeds are already a matter of public record. To mention just a few:

—Tenet was the chief enabler of torture. He also oversaw widespread kidnapping ("extraordinary rendition"), which in some cases led to torture.

—Our sources tell us that Tenet knew about the overstepping of the guidelines approved by

the lawyers and that he knew the people doing it. Rather than restrain them, he pushed them still harder, in an attempt to please his masters.

We strongly believe that investigations of possible wrongdoing cannot, in all fairness, be limited to the proverbial “bad apples at the bottom of the barrel.” Rather, in our view, such investigations must be allowed to go wherever the evidence leads.

The inquiry last year by the Senate Armed Forces Committee provides a good model for doing precisely that. The main conclusion of the committee’s “Inquiry Into the Treatment of Detainees in U.S. Custody,” approved last fall without dissent, was captured in its first subhead: “Presidential Order Opens the Door to Considering Aggressive Techniques.”

The Hollywood version of the CIA portrays amoral spies willing to do anything without regard to ethics or human rights. Our own long experience persuades us that the intelligence community has an abundance of men and women of outstanding character, who are committed to the rule of law, and whose primary desire is to serve the nation and protect the American people.

However much former CIA directors and other people at risk might wish to derail an investigation into possible war crimes, we believe the moral standing of our nation requires that we apply the same standards to offenses by U.S. officials as we would to accusations of war crimes by those in other countries.

For all these reasons, we strongly endorse efforts by the Department of Justice to investigate allegations of torture and human rights abuses by any Americans—CIA officers and contractors included.

Please regard this Memorandum as follow up to the more extensive comments on torture in the VIPS review prepared for you in late April. A copy of that Memorandum was eventually posted at Consortiumnews.com (see <http://tinyurl.com/cvvr2x>).

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