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Dr. Neil Altman, PhD
Dr. Uwe Jacobs, PhD
Dr. Steven Miles, MD

Dear Drs. Altman, Jacobs, and Miles,

Thank you for your correspondence, in response to my letter to Drs. Altman and Moorehead-Slaughter. I appreciate your commitment to this issue and hope that we can find common ground in our approach. It is clear to me that we all seek the same goal: An ethical means of eliciting accurate and reliable information in order to prevent acts of violence and loss of life. I must say, however, that based upon my extensive work in consulting to law enforcement, police and military around the world, including in Guantanamo Bay, Iraq and Afghanistan, the position you set forth in your letters and the questions you pose rest upon substantial misconceptions about the nature of interrogations, the role of psychologists in national security settings, and the likely impact of APA disengaging from this critical debate and of APA members withdrawing from the practice of interrogations.

Please allow me to begin by emphasizing: Psychologists should *not* defer to lawyers on the question of what constitutes torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. I believe Dr. Altman's resolution is considerably off the mark on this score. I took action when I learned of abusive behaviors. I didn't go through a legal analysis, nor did I consult with attorneys even though many were present and, like me, troubled by what was occurring. I became involved because *behaviors* that were wrong came to my attention, not because an attorney intervened or a definition in a legal text had been violated. APA should focus on specific behaviors, not on legal definitions.

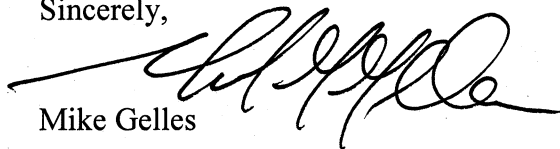
Moreover, nothing in my experience supports your concern that psychologists will be forced to engage in behaviors they believe to be unethical. I am not aware of any psychologist who has been ordered to support a coercive interrogation or to train interrogators in abusive processes, nor am I aware of any psychologist who has been disciplined for communicating concerns or refusing to participate in a consultation. In the time since I reported concerns to my chain of command—an action that was followed by a promotion—ethics has become a focus for psychologists being trained for this role. Current Department of Defense policy makes explicit reference to APA's PENS report and includes the actual report itself. The community of military psychologists, together with

civilians who consult to national security and law enforcement, have formed a tight network where didactic seminars and peer consultation on ethics are frequent. Through the PENS Task Force and subsequent Council of Representative actions, APA is playing a critical role in bringing moral clarity to the debate over what constitutes an ethical consultation to an interrogation, as well as science to the practice of interrogations. Removing psychology and psychologists would stop the steady and measurable progress we have made and are making. From my perspective, a moratorium would be to abdicate rather than to embrace our ethical responsibilities.

In his thoughtful letter, Dr. Jacobs states that “our professional organization has to protect our own.” I wholeheartedly agree. We are a professional association whose members have extensive experience and expertise in a broad range of practice areas—an aspect of APA that is to our decided advantage. If we want to protect psychologists working in detention facilities, let’s ask our colleagues who are most familiar with operations in these settings: military psychologists, police psychologists and correctional psychologists. What protection do our colleagues working in these settings and in these areas of practice believe they need? What steps do they think APA can take that will best offer that protection? Does a moratorium offer the protection that military psychologists seek? Let’s begin our discussions by respecting the experience and expertise that resides within these communities—in the same manner we would proceed with a complex treatment intervention only after having consulted at length with the psychologist who knows the patient best.

Dr. Jacobs quotes Alberto Mora and asks whether I agree with his statement, “To my mind, there’s no moral or practical distinction between cruelty and torture ... cruelty ... destroys the whole notion of individual rights.” I have an enormous admiration and respect for Alberto Mora. This quotation captures the essence of what we are talking about: Torture, cruelty and abuse have no role in interrogations. They are wrong. They violate human rights. They *increase*—not decrease—the long-term likelihood of violence. This is Alberto Mora’s position. This is my position. This is APA’s position. Let us assert and emphasize that position at every opportunity, in every venue possible, *especially* where interrogations are taking place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Gelles", written over a horizontal line.

Mike Gelles