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.)

GENERAL JAMES L. JAMERSON, USAF (RET.)

GENERAL PAUL J. KERN, USA (RET.)
Commanding General, U.S. Army Materiel Command, 2001-2004

GENERAL CHARLES C. KRULEK, USMC (RET.)
Commandant of the Marine Corps, 1995-1999

GENERAL STANLEY A. MCCRYSTAL, USA (RET.)
Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan, 2009-2010

GENERAL MERRILL A. MCPHAIL, USAF (RET.)

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.)

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, USA (RET.)

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

GENERAL HUGH H. SHELTON, USA (RET.)
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

LIEUTENANT GENERAL STEVEN L. ARNOLD, USA (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL H. STEVEN BLUM, USA (RET.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN CASTELLAW, USMC (RET.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN J. CUSICK, USA (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES DUBIK, USA (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT F. FOLEY, USA (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL WALLACE C. GREGSON, USMC (Ret.)
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VICE ADMIRAL JACK W. KLINN, USMC (Ret.)
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LIEUTENANT GENERAL GARRY L. PARKS, USMC (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL NORMAN R. SEIP, USAF (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL KEITH J. STALDER, USMC (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL MITCHELL H. STEVENSON, USA (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT "SAM" WETZEL, USA (Ret.)
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MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT S. DICKMAN, USAF (Ret.)
MAJOR GENERAL MARI K. EDER, USA (Ret.)
MAJOR GENERAL WILTON SCOTT GORSKE, USA (Ret.)
MAJOR GENERAL IRVING HALTER, USAF (Ret.)
MAJOR GENERAL MARCELITE HARRIS, USAF (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHAEL D. DUBE, USAF (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL VERN M. FINDLEY, USAF (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT G. GARD, JR., USA (Ret.)
VICE ADMIRAL KEVIN P. GREEN, USN (Ret.)
VICE ADMIRAL LEE F. GUNN, USN (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL MARK P. HERTLING, USA (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL ARLEN D. JAMESON, USAF (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL CLAUDIA J. KENNEDY, USA (Ret.)
VICE ADMIRAL CONRAD C. LAUTENBACHER, USN (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL CAROL A. MUTTER, USMC (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL CHARLES OTSTOTT, USA (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID POTHIER, USA-NG (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL HARRY E. SOYSTER, USA (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL MARTIN R. STEELE, USMC (Ret.)
VICE ADMIRAL EDWARD M. STRAW, USN (Ret.)
LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIE J. WILLIAMS, USMC (Ret.)
MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH T. ANDERSON, USMC (Ret.)
REAR ADMIRAL DAVID M. BOONE, USN (Ret.)
REAR ADMIRAL JAMES J. CAREY, USN (Ret.)
MAJOR GENERAL JOHN T. CROWE, USA (Ret.)
MAJOR GENERAL DAVID P. DE LA VERNUE, USA (Ret.)
MAJOR GENERAL PAUL D. EATON, USA (Ret.)
MAJOR GENERAL EUGENE FOX, USA (Ret.)
REAR ADMIRAL DON GUTER, JAGC, USN (Ret.)
REAR ADMIRAL JANICE M. HAMBY, USN (Ret.)
MAJOR GENERAL ALBERT C. HARVEY, USMCR (Ret.)
Rear Admiral John D. Hutson, JAGC, USN (Ret.)  
Major General Dennis Laich, USA (Ret.)  
Major General Michael R. Lehner, USMC (Ret.)  
Major General Albert J. Madora, USA (Ret.)  
Major General Dee Ann McWilliams, USA (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Donald K. Muchow, USN (Ret.)  
Major General Roger A. Nadeau, USA (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral David R. Oliver, Jr., USN (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Stuart Platt, USN (Ret.)  
Major General William D. Razz Waff, USA (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Markham K. Rich, USN (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Stephen W. Rochon, USCG (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Chris Sadler, USN (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Michael E. Smith, USN (Ret.)  
Major General Orlo K. Steele, USMC (Ret.)  
Major General Charles H. Swannack, Jr. USA (Ret.)  
Major General Antonio M. Taguba, USA (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral G. Dennis Vaughan, USN (Ret.)  
Major General Margaret Woodward, USAF (Ret.)  
Major General David T. Zabecki, USA (Ret.)  
Brigadier General John Adams, USA (Ret.)  
Brigadier General Robert Beletic, USAF (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Robert E. Besal, USN (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Michael J. Browne, USN (Ret.)  
Major General Jim H. Keffer, USAF (Ret.)  
Major General Steven J. Lepper, USAF (Ret.)  
Major General Donald E. Loranger, USAF (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Archer M. Macy, Jr., USN (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral William J. McDaniel, USN (Ret.)  
Major General Howard J. Mitchell, USAF (Ret.)  
Major General J. Michael Myatt, USMC (Ret.)  
Major General William L. Navi, USA (Ret.)  
Major General Eric T. Olson, USA (Ret.)  
Major General Gale Pollock, USA (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Robert D. Reilly, Jr., USN (Ret.)  
Major General Don T. Riley, USA (Ret.)  
Major General Thomas J. Romig, USA (Ret.)  
Major General John P. Schoepfner, Jr., USAF (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Raymond Smith, USN (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Timothy S. Sullivan, USCG (Ret.)  
Major General Michael W. Symanski, USAR (Ret.)  
Major General Thomas R. Tempel, USA (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral James M. Walley, Jr., USNR (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral Robert O. Wray, Jr, USN (Ret.)  
Brigadier General Bruce A. Adams, USA (Ret.)  
Rear Admiral James A. "Jamie" Barnett, USN (Ret.)  
Brigadier General Bruce Berwick, USA (Ret.)  
Brigadier General David M. Brahms, USMC (Ret.)  
Brigadier General Stephen A. Cheney, USMC (Ret.)
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BRIGADIER GENERAL THOMAS V. DRAUDE, USMC (Ret.)

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BRIGADIER GENERAL ALAN K. FRY, USA (Ret.)

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BRIGADIER GENERAL KENNETH E. TODOROV, USAF (Ret.)

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. ZEHRRER III, USAF (Ret.)