



## Committee on International Justice and Peace

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3160

WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/JPHD • FAX 202-541-3339

March 17, 2014

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Intelligence  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Intelligence  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein and Senator Chambliss:

It has been 10 months since I last wrote to you urging release of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's report on interrogation practices, including torture, used by the Central Intelligence Agency. It is my understanding that this report has been reviewed by members of the Executive branch of government and perhaps has had changes incorporated to reflect additional information and perspectives. Since this report has been several years in the making, I hope now is the time to make it public. Only by acknowledging past practices can the United States move to regain the moral high ground as a protector and promoter of human rights.

The Catholic Church has long registered absolute opposition to torture. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* asserts: "In carrying out investigations, the regulation against the use of torture, even in the case of serious crimes, must be strictly observed: 'Christ's disciple refuses every recourse to such methods, which nothing could justify and in which the dignity of man is as much debased in his torturer as in the torturer's victim'. International juridical instruments concerning human rights correctly indicate a prohibition against torture as a principle which cannot be contravened under any circumstances."

A number of former CIA, FBI and military experts have stated that torture is not an effective technique for producing reliable information. Instead the use of torture is counterproductive as it undermines security cooperation with other nations that reject torture and can actually serve as a recruiting tool for terrorists who then attack us.

In 2009, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) was gratified when an executive order banning the practice of torture by the U.S. government was issued. Working with other groups, we have been advocating that this executive order become law. Having the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence release the full report on CIA interrogation techniques would help the public become aware of past practices and of the illegality and ineffectiveness of torture. Subjecting these practices to public scrutiny would assist in ensuring that our government does not engage in torture again.

I urge all the members of the Select Committee to vote to release the full report on CIA interrogation practices. It is time for the United States government to take a clear stance against torture so we can regain our moral credibility and standing in the world as a defender of human rights for all.

Sincerely yours,

+ 

Most Reverend Richard E. Pates

Bishop of Des Moines

Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace

Cc: Members of Senate Committee on Intelligence