

September 19, 2007

Dr. Sharon Stephens Brehm  
President  
American Psychological Association

Dear Dr Brehm:

You recently distributed a letter from Dr. Olivia Moorehead-Slaughter to members of the American Psychological Association (APA) that has spread to many APA listservs and other outlets. There are serious distortions, inaccuracies and misrepresentations in this letter, and our aim here is to correct these errors, as well as those in a related letter by former APA President Gerald Koocher, and to encourage you to distribute the correction.

At the August, 2007 Convention in San Francisco, at the invitation of the American Psychological Association's mini-convention planners, Dr. Jean Maria Arrigo presented a paper on the PENS Task Force process. In that paper and presentation, Dr. Arrigo offered a critique of the PENS process, which included the results of her consultation with two counterintelligence experts. Amy Goodman, producer of the public television and radio program *Democracy Now!*, played a portion of Dr. Arrigo's presentation on her program (August, 20, 2007) <sup>1</sup>.

Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter and Dr. Koocher, each of whom have held positions of leadership in the APA, and both of whom were participants in the PENS process, have written open letters attacking Dr. Arrigo's scholarship, integrity, and in one instance, her mental stability. Although these attacks were personal, we will focus on the substance of their attempts to challenge Dr. Arrigo's critique of the PENS process.

As you know, Dr. Arrigo deposited copies of the PENS listserv and documentation materials at the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University in August 2006, and made these materials available to certain historians and investigators, including the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Coalition for an Ethical APA. The PENS documentation includes the full text of the listserv communications of the PENS Task Force and observers over a fifteen month period, as well as notes and documents pertaining to the Task Force meeting and the ensuing Report. Having studied these materials, we can attest that the PENS documents support Dr. Arrigo's interpretation of the data and refute many of the statements made by Drs. Koocher and Moorehead-Slaughter. The purpose of this letter is to provide you and the public with the evidence that refutes these unfounded assertions.

### **Dr. Arrigo's Critique of the PENS Task Force Process**

Dr. Arrigo's critique of the PENS Task Force Process included the following points:

1) Dr. Arrigo asserted that the PENS Task Force was created in response to press reports stating that psychologists were involved in interrogation abuses at Guantánamo and elsewhere. Neil Lewis, for example, in the November 30, New York Times <sup>2</sup>, cited a report by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This report stated that psychologists and other health professionals were participating in abusive interrogations "tantamount to torture." The article further reported that these

health professionals utilized medical records to guide the processes of such interrogations. During their visits to Guantánamo in early 2003, the ICRC found these practices to be such egregious violations of medical ethics that they refused to return for six months. The article further reported that the teams of interrogation supervisors, Behavioral Science Consultation Teams (BSCTs), singled out by the ICRC, consisted primarily of psychologists and/or were trained and supervised by psychologists. This has since been validated by a Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General report, 2006<sup>3</sup>.

2) Dr. Arrigo pointed out that the task force was not an independent body. Six of the nine voting PENS members were in the employ of the Department of Defense at the time of the meeting. Three held positions in the very chains of command during a critical period when, according to the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Behavioral Analysis Unit of the FBI, the abusive interrogation techniques were nothing less than “standard operating procedures.”

3) Dr. Arrigo expressed concern that two APA officials holding leadership positions in the organization, neither of whom were members of the Task Force, took dominant roles in task force proceedings. Her observation was that these APA leaders guided the direction, focus, and conclusions of the task force at multiple critical points, and marginalized minority opinion. In the room, too, and privy to listserv communications, were four other unacknowledged observers, who had been APA lobbyists to the DoD and to Congress. While it is not unusual to have observers at Presidential Task Force proceedings, the presence of observers who had been lobbyists on issues that overlapped with the mission of the Task Force constitutes a further conflict of interest and potential source of bias. This is magnified by the fact that their activities included directly lobbying one of the Task Force members, who had been the Director of the Psychology Unit of the highly secret DoD Counterintelligence Field Activity Unit (CIFA) (See APA’s ‘Science Policy Insider News’ [SPIN] October, 2004<sup>4</sup>.)

4) Dr. Arrigo also pointed out that the Task Force proceedings, the names of the members, and, in particular, the names of the observers, although shared with Council, were kept from the membership and from the public in a manner that is unusual for Presidential Task Forces.

5) Dr. Arrigo also presented the results of her consultation with two former counterintelligence professionals, skilled in tracing covert influences and who had not been part of the PENS process. They agreed to review the PENS procedures and staffing. Both counterintelligence professionals independently found the process consistent with “a typical legitimization process for a decision made at a higher level in the Department of Defense.”

### **Assessment of Dr. Koocher’s Remarks**

[Dr. Koocher’s letter is available at: [http://psychoanalystsopposewar.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2007/09/koocher\\_open\\_letter\\_to\\_amy\\_goodman.pdf](http://psychoanalystsopposewar.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2007/09/koocher_open_letter_to_amy_goodman.pdf)]

Dr. Koocher charges Dr. Arrigo with “*a substantial number of false and defamatory allegations regarding me [Dr. Koocher] and other members and staff of the American Psychological Association.*” He then does what should be unthinkable for an ethicist, former President of the APA, and current APA Board Member. He attempts to undermine the validity of Dr. Arrigo’s

conclusions by asserting bias due to a troubled past. Dr. Koocher's letter contains distortions and in some cases outright fabrications, such as the following:

1. *"Dr. Arrigo stated that she, 'was one of the three civilian members of the 2005 PENS Task Force.' That statement is patently false... Six of the ten task force members and both members of the APA Board of Directors who participated in the meetings were civilians."*

In point of fact, Dr. Arrigo made no such statement; the quote is from Ms. Goodman.

What Dr. Arrigo did say was, *"A third matter is an unbalanced task force. Six of the ten members were highly placed in the Department of Defense, as contractors and military officers."* There is no disputing Dr. Arrigo's statement. Drs. Banks, James, and Lefever were all active in the military at the time<sup>5</sup>. Dr. Gelles worked for the Naval Criminal Intelligence Service. Dr. Shumate was chief psychologist for Department of Defense Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA), and Dr. Fein was a consultant to CIFA on "effective" interrogation methods, responsible to Dr. Shumate. Although it is true that the latter three were civilians, this is irrelevant to Dr. Arrigo's point, which had to do with conflict of interest due to DoD involvement. All three were involved in military or intelligence interrogations or interrogation effectiveness research, and could suffer career harm, including loss of security clearance, if they were to reject DoD policies. Although Dr. Arrigo said nothing about the Board liaisons' connections with the military, it is worth pointing out that although Dr. Barry Anton, the other Board liaison mentioned by Dr. Koocher, was a civilian at the time of the meeting, he had been a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army Reserve for 22 years. Dr. Koocher not only misquotes Dr. Arrigo, he does so in the interest of obscuring an issue that is valid and relevant: the fact of the DoD employment and/or affiliation of six of the nine voting Task Force members.

2. Dr. Koocher goes on to state that *"Dr. Arrigo also conveniently ignores the fact that the task force's report was reviewed, edited and approved by the completely independent APA Ethics Committee."*

Dr. Koocher is making the claim that whatever conflicts of interest might be evident in the PENS Task Force are somehow overridden by review of the *"completely independent APA Ethics Committee."* But, in fact, the Chair of the PENS Task Force, Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter, was then Vice-chair of the Ethics Committee, and the PENS Task Force Report was actually written by Stephen Behnke, the Director of the APA Ethics Office. Dr. Behnke was designated one of two spokespeople for the Report. (The other was APA public relations director Rhea Farberman.) Other members were discouraged from speaking. As Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter wrote to the PENS listserv on July 7, 2005:

*"[W]e agreed to let our Report speak for us, and that we would not share the substance of our discussions further than what the Report contains, I ask that we all refer any questions from the media concerning the Task Force to Steve and Rhea, even if we're asked to speak off the record or "on background."*

Further, as Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter wrote on the listserv on June 25, 2007, the Ethics Committee, in reviewing the document, had an extremely narrow mandate:

*“The Ethics Committee is reviewing the Report this afternoon, for the purpose of determining whether our twelve statements are "appropriate interpretations and applications" of the APA Ethics Code.”*

3. Dr. Koocher asserts that *“Because Dr. Levant could not attend the meeting, I (as 2006 President) represented him at the start of the meeting to help the group understand its charge and I was present for only the first six hours of the two day meeting... Such was the nature of my alleged "strong controlling" behavior.”*

A reading of the PENS Listserv documentation shows, on the contrary, that Dr. Koocher was a dominant member of the PENS process from the very start of email communication, two months before the meeting, and he continued in this role to the very end. Here are examples of Dr. Koocher’s comments on the PENS listserv, one from six weeks before the meeting, and one from six weeks after:

*May 6, 2005: “In many of the circumstances we will discuss when we meet the psychologist's role may bear on people who are not "clients" in the traditional sense. Example, the psychologist employed by the CIA, Secret Service, FBI, etc., who helps formulate profiles for risk prevention, negotiation strategy, destabilization, etc., or the psychologist asked to assist interrogators in eliciting data or detecting dissimulation with the intent of preventing harm to many other people. In this case the client is the agency, government, and ultimately the people of the nation (at risk). The goal of such psychologists' work will ultimately be the protection of others (i.e., innocents) by contributing to the incarceration, debilitation, or even death of the potential perpetrator, who will often remain unaware of the psychologists' involvement.”*

*July 6, 2005: “I have zero interest in entangling APA with the nebulous, toothless, contradictory, and obfuscatory treaties that comprise "international law." Rather, I prefer to see APA take principled stands on policy issues where psychology has some scientific basis for doing so.”*

Dr. Levant, on the other hand, contributed only one post to the listserv, on January 16, 2006, six months after the Report was published, and three months after his visit to Guantánamo at the invitation of the Department of Defense. In this sole communication he asked Task Force member Mike Wessells to reconsider his resignation from the Task Force.

4. Dr. Koocher included in his letter the following allegation: *“During the introductions Dr. Arrigo disclosed that her father served as a military officer during the Korean War, he interrogated and tortured people, and he committed suicide. She has therefore made it her life's mission to campaign against torture and interrogation.”*

Here we will allow Dr. Arrigo to speak for herself (personal communication, September 7, 2007):

*“Dr. Gerald Koocher’s assertions about my background and motivations do not connect with reality. My father is not a suicide but alive, at 93 years of age, in San Francisco, where I visited him during the APA Convention. He is proud of his military service, not ashamed. My research and peace work focus on moral voices and moral reasoning within the military and intelligence community, not, as he asserted, on torture victims.”*

Further, the fact that Dr. Arrigo has attended and even organized a number of conferences in collaboration with military and intelligence professionals, as well as with professional interrogators demonstrates the falseness of the claim that she "campaign[s] ... against interrogation."

5. Last, Dr. Koocher stated that, *"Until now, I had remained respectfully silent in public regarding Dr. Arrigo's biases, history of personal trauma, and lack of boundaries, but will no longer do so."*

Alas, it is not true that Dr. Koocher remained "respectfully silent" in public about this matter. When a reporter from the *Washington Monthly*, Art Levine, was investigating the alleged biases of the PENS Task Force in September 2006, and asked Dr. Koocher about Dr. Arrigo's report, Dr. Koocher told this same story about her father. Mr. Levine emailed Dr. Arrigo to investigate Dr. Koocher's allegation. Dr. Arrigo easily demonstrated its inaccuracy. When Mr. Levine was then interested in reporting the fact that the then-President of the APA had tried to plant a smear against a critic in the press, Dr. Arrigo asked him not to do so, and the matter was dropped.

### **Assessment of Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter's Remarks**

[Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter's letter is available at: <http://psychoanalystsopposewar.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2007/09/omoorehead-slaughter-letter-w-brehm-intro.pdf>]

Like Dr. Koocher, Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter sidesteps Dr. Arrigo's evidence of conflicts of interest in the PENS process and focuses on innuendos that are falsely attributed to Dr. Arrigo. Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter begins her letter with a 300 word defense against allegations she claims came from Dr. Arrigo, but that in fact were never made.

Thus, Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter states that she did not work *"in any capacity for the CIA,"* was not paid *"monies or compensation"* for her time, was not covertly *"providing information to the military,"* and that any implication to the contrary is *"an insult to my integrity."* But not a single one of these charges can be found in Dr. Arrigo's remarks (nor in Ms. Goodman's, for that matter). Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter's insinuation that such charges were made presents a false picture of Dr. Arrigo's argument and serves the purpose of impugning her veracity, while sidestepping the conclusion that Dr. Arrigo did draw from the proceedings: that there was conflict of interest among certain members of and observers to the PENS Task Force.

Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter in her letter quotes an email Dr. Arrigo sent to the PENS listserv in which Dr. Arrigo expresses polite praise for the PENS report:

*"The depth, scope, and wisdom of this document are indeed impressive, and I approve it as a Task Force member. Also, I appreciate its literary grace (owing to Steve). As mentioned previously, I have felt uneasy with some elements, primarily omissions. Fulfillment of the Task Force recommendations would relieve my concerns, and I hope for an opportunity for further participation. Thanks to the APA ethics committee, board, and staff members who have mobilized for swift review and dissemination of the PENS report."*

Dr. Arrigo provided us an explanation of her thinking:

*"Dr. Olivia Moorehead-Slaughter's interpretation of my approving comment on the penultimate draft of the PENS report is misleading. First, I spoke well of it in polite prelude to three serious objections—all of which were overruled by Dr. Koocher. Second, in June 2005 I did have positive*

*feelings about the full PENS Report. Following its statement of twelve ethical principles, the PENS Report stated nine recommendations for action. I had initiated three of these, including the call for a PENS casebook, and was led to expect these recommendations would be implemented expeditiously. Fulfillment of the recommendations would have compensated, in a diplomatic manner, for gaps in the principles. Two years later there is still no casebook.” (For a more detailed critique of the PENS process, see Drs. Arrigo’s and Dr. Wessells letters to Council, February 2006, in an appendix to this letter.)*

In her letter, Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter disputes Dr. Arrigo’s assertion that there were “*significant conflicts of interest*” in the PENS Task Force membership. We have already addressed the fact that the PENS listserv reveals that the majority of Task Force members were in the employ of the Department of Defense. At this point, however, it is important to add further evidence of conflict of interest: that the process appears to have been vetted by the DoD itself. One military/intelligence member wrote on the PENS TF listserv on January 23, 2006:

*“As with all publicly released information, DoD and other Governmental officials have to have their work reviewed by various elements within the Government, and in this case specifically by the Department.”*

On January 31, 2006, Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter acknowledged without objection this “*process of approval and clearance.*”

Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter states in her letter, “*The notion that either the names of Task Force members or their biographical descriptions were not publicly available until a year after the Task Force met is completely false.*”

But this point is flatly contradicted by the fact that the PENS Report is the only Presidential Task Force Report, to our knowledge, to be released to the public without the names of the members or the observers listed. Although it is true that the names and bios of the members, after being made available to Council representatives, were posted on the Division 48 listserv, this was not acknowledged by the APA leadership, Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter, or Dr. Behnke until after the names were released in the press. Attempts were made by members of the APA and the press to obtain the Task Force membership. After the report was published, all requests were turned down.

Evidence for this comes not only from APA members and reporters, but also from the PENS listserv. This post is from August 22, 2005 by a military/intelligence member of the Task Force:

*“ I wanted to leave a short note regarding the Ethics in National Security Panel presentation at the APA Conference on Friday. While this was not related to the Task Force, there were many questions and comments regarding the Task Force report posed to Dr. Steve Behnke who chaired the panel. I was once again impressed with how Dr. Behnke eloquently represented our work and **insured the confidentiality of the panel, despite pressure to reveal the identities of the task force members and the process that unfolded during the Task Force meetings.** Steve was respectful, gracious and polite in response to some very direct and provocative questions and comments.” [emphasis added]*

Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter responded to the above email by stating, also on August 22, 2005, “*I have no doubts that Steve [Behnke] was respectful and masterful in preserving the integrity of our Task Force process.*”

Finally, Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter asserts that there could be no conflict of interest given that the military/intelligence members of the Task Force have been “*described in publicly available documents as taking central roles in fighting detainee abuse.*”

First, this point is irrelevant to the question of conflict of interest. The task facing the PENS Task Force was to investigate the APA’s response to psychologists’ roles in detainee abuses, as well as the question of whether ethical issues were raised by psychologists’ participation in detainee interrogations. The fact that the majority of PENS members (six of the nine voting members) were already directly or indirectly involved in such interrogations and their careers were dependent on such interrogations, constitutes the very definition of conflict of interest. This conflict is only exacerbated by the fact that at least three PENS members were in the direct chains of command when and where the Department of Defense<sup>3</sup>, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)<sup>2</sup>, and the Behavioral Analysis Unit of the FBI, all reported that these abuses had occurred. While considerable new evidence on the nature and extent of psychologist involvement in abusive interrogations has recently come to light, many of these reports were already in the public domain at the time of the PENS Task Force formation. In fact, as we have already noted, it was ICRC reports of abuse at Guantánamo that precipitated the formation of the PENS task Force in the first place. To put those in the Guantánamo interrogation chain of command on PENS after these reports were available is, by definition, a conflict of interest.

The public record is quite explicit that abuses were observed during the time when at least three PENS Task Force members were a part of the implicated chains of command. For example, there are documented reports of abuses by the CIA Counterterrorism Center taking place over an extended period while one PENS member was its chief operational psychologist. While that PENS member is reported by *Vanity Fair*<sup>5</sup> (as Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter correctly notes) to have stated that he had been “disgusted” by the abuse he witnessed and to have left the scene of the abuse, the article goes on to note that the abuse became more extreme after he left, and there is no report that he made an attempt to stop it, much less that his engagement (or disengagement for that matter) led to an end to abuse.

One military Task Force member’s statement on the PENS Listserv (May 23, 2005) that “*since Jan 2003, where ever we have had psychologists no abuses have been reported*” has been flatly contradicted by independent bodies with thorough access to Guantánamo detainee conditions. Multiple reports, for example, from FBI agents at Guantánamo document abusive interrogations during this period:

*“In late 2002 and continuing into mid-2003, the Behavioral Analysis Unit raised concerns over interrogation tactics being employed by the U.S. Military. As a result, an EC dated 5/30/03, was generated summarizing the FBI’s continued objections to the use of SERE (Search, Escape, Resistance, and Evasion) techniques to interrogate prisoners.”<sup>8</sup>*

In a June, 2004 report, the Red Cross (ICRC) noted, according to the *New York Times*, that,

*“investigators had found a system devised to break the will of the prisoners at Guantánamo... and make them wholly dependent on their interrogators through “humiliating acts, solitary confinement, temperature extremes, use of forced positions... Investigators said that the methods used were increasingly “more refined and repressive” than learned about on previous visits”<sup>2</sup>.*

This describes Guantánamo interrogations during and immediately following the period Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter refers to as “Task Force members...taking central roles in fighting detainee abuse,” and during the period where those members asserted that the abuses stopped.

Apparently, the psychologists on the PENS task force hold very different definitions of what constitutes abuse from the ICRC, the FBI and the DOD Inspector General (OIG). The OIG report states that in August 2003 interrogators from Guantánamo attempted to teach these abusive techniques to interrogators in Iraq:

*“In August 2003, the Joint Chiefs of Staff J3 requested the U.S. Southern Command to send experts in detention and interrogation operations from Guantánamo to Iraq to assess the Iraq Survey Group’s interrogation operations...Based on interviews with cognizant personnel, the JTF-Guantánamo assessment team reportedly discussed the use of harsher counterresistance techniques with Iraq Survey Group personnel”<sup>3</sup>.*

This history supports Dr. Arrigo’s contention that the PENS Task Force psychologists who were involved in interrogations could not be expected to offer an independent assessment of the ethics of psychologists’ involvement in detainee interrogations.

Dr. Brehm, you have disseminated Dr. Moorehead-Slaughter’s letter widely, giving the Presidential imprimatur to its contents. We request, in the interest of scholarly integrity, honesty, and fairness, that you send this letter to the same distribution networks. Our position is (a) that it is necessary to attend to the evidence that psychologists have been implicated in detainee abuse; (b) that the APA must do all it can do to condemn the psychologist-led abuses that have taken place and the use of psychological knowledge for the purposes of abuse; and (c) that the APA’s history of addressing this issue has been tainted by conflicts of interest that have compromised the ethical integrity of our commitment to end these practices.

The recent resolution passed by the Council of Representatives last month, Substitute Motion 3<sup>5</sup>, is a step forward in bringing the APA in line with international standards of human rights and medical ethics, but loopholes exist in the language of the resolution that can be interpreted as permitting psychologists to continue participation in ‘enhanced’ and abusive interrogations; language that has been condemned by the ACLU<sup>9</sup>, Physicians for Human Rights<sup>10</sup>, and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims<sup>11</sup>. We would like to work with you and the Board to close those loopholes to prevent any implication that the APA might condone abuses, enhanced interrogations, or ‘torture lite.’ We hope that you will distribute this letter to the APA membership, and that you will ask the Board to establish a working group dedicated to aligning APA policy with the highest standards of medical ethics and human rights.

Sincerely,

Steven Reisner  
Stephen Soldz  
Brad Olson  
For the Coalition for an Ethical APA

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## Appendix

February 12, 2006

Dear Olivia,

Please attach to your February 1, 2006, letter to Drs. Koocher and Levant, Mike Wessells' letter of resignation from the Task Force and my letter below, for a representation of the minority voices on the original Task Force. Mike withdrew on January 15, 2006, "because continuing work with the Task Force tacitly legitimates the wider silence and inaction of the APA on the crucial issues at hand." Below, I outline my disagreement with the majority opinion in your letter.

I appreciate your graciousness as moderator.

Jean Maria

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Addendum to Dr. Morehead-Slaughter's February 1, 2006, letter to Drs. Koocher and Levant on behalf of the PENS Task Force

I disagree with two major assertions in this letter: (1) that the "Ethics Committee is the most appropriate group" for writing the casebook/commentary, and (2) that the Task Force "has provided the American Psychological Association the best service it is able." Also, I remark on two related concerns: (3) lack of independence of the Task Force and (4) lack of Task Force transparency.

### 1. Authorship of the casebook.

Creation of the casebook is more demanding of specialized knowledge concerning interrogations than is articulation of the general ethical principles, because of the legal and political ramifications. Task Force members whose defense department affiliations prevent them from participating in the casebook can defer to their colleagues and myself to provide realistic examples for the casebook and to assist the Ethics Committee in formulating realistic advice. Without the participation of the Task Force members with defense department affiliations, the ecological validity of the casebook is apt to be low or absurd. What psychologists know about culture, setting, organizational roles, social influence, and so on, points to the need for insiders to provide the sample cases from domains clouded in secrecy. In my view, a body of illustrative examples for the Final Report is a crucial contribution of Task Force members affiliated with the national security system and would justify their majority presence on the Task Force.

### 2. Task Force fulfillment of service

For best service to the APA, from the beginning I have urged that the Task Force expand the scope of its inquiry. The Final Report narrowly focuses on ethical decision making by morally autonomous military psychologists faced with interrogatees at a detention center under U.S. authority. This scenario captures only a fragment of psychological ethics related to interrogation of

terrorist suspects. Central topics are missing: (a) interrogation outside of premises controlled by the U.S. military, where interrogators and consultants have to maneuver gingerly with foreign counterterrorist police and military units; (b) utilization of Behavior Specialists, mental health counselors, and other paraprofessionals trained in psychology, who may easily be substituted for psychologists; (c) career and financial pressures on psychologists, for instance, on recipients of national security scholarships, fellowships, and internships; and (d) other institutional arrangements that may support psychologists' unethical participation in interrogation, for opportunities and procedures persist in large bureaucracies. I think that the model of the morally autonomous psychologist in the U.S. detention center, as put forth in the Final Report, will fade as soon as realistic cases are examined.

### 3. Independence of the Task Force as an advisory body

APA sources have consistently characterized the Final Report as the product of deliberations by the ten named members of the Task Force. Dr. Koocher voiced strong opinions on the Task Force listserv and during the final deliberations in Washington. There was a continuous presence of APA functionaries, as informational resources, at the other end of the conference table. I presume these circumstances accord with APA by-laws and traditions. Nevertheless, any implication that the Task Force served as an independent advisory body to the APA President is simply false.

In my view, the external social pressure prevented the Task Force from reviewing the ethical implications of its limited mandate, a mandate that excluded investigation of the participation of psychologists in coercive interrogation.

The present letter from the Task Force chair, addressed to Drs. Levant and Koocher, informs Dr. Koocher of a decision in which he substantially participated.

### 4. Transparency of the Task Force

Confidentiality of Task Force proceedings was advanced on two grounds: the members with national security affiliations could not sufficiently inform our deliberations except under a promise of confidentiality, and a united Task Force position would diffuse divisive and counterproductive criticism of the APA, both from within and without. I think the first reason was valid, but the second has worked against resolution of the question of psychologists' involvement coercive interrogation. To many APA members, as evidenced by public letters from Divisions 48 and 51, the Task Force appears to be a tool of appeasement, created by the APA leadership to obscure members' demands for an investigation. Honest discussion from Task Force members about the conflicted proceedings (preserving confidences related to national security) would have been much more fruitful than the gag rule. Such discussion would have been a valid step in addressing members' concerns. We can still take that step.

Jean Maria Arrigo

**From:** Mike Wessells

**Date:** January 15, 2006 12:55:10 PM PST

**Subject:** PENS work

**Reply-To:** Presidential Task Force on Psychological Ethics and National Security

Dear Olivia,

I've been meaning to write you in regard to my participation in the continuation of the PENS work but my schedule has consistently interfered. Now, with the teleconference being scheduled for next week, I wanted to write at least a brief note.

Out of ethical concerns, I have decided to step down from the PENS Task Force because continuing work with the Task Force tacitly legitimates the wider silence and inaction of the APA on the crucial issues at hand. At the highest levels, the APA has not made a strong, concerted, comprehensive, public and internal response of the kind warranted by the severe human rights violations at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay. The PENS Task Force had a very limited mandate and was not structured in a manner that would provide the kind of comprehensive response or representative process needed. In serving initially on the Task Force, I had hoped that the APA would treat PENS as one element in a strong, proactive, comprehensive response affirming our professional commitment to human well-being and sounding a ringing condemnation of psychologists' participation not only in torture but in all forms of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of detainees, including the use or support of tactics such as sleep deprivation. In the past six months, no such response has come from the Association, which has tended to treat the PENS Task Force as its primary response to the situation. Even the requirement by the APA Council for wide publicity of APA's 1986 resolution on human rights and torture has not been answered adequately. The quiet, timid approach the APA has taken on these issues is inappropriate to the situation, inconsistent with the Association's mission, and damaging to our profession. It has been encouraging to see a more robust statement recently from the President of the American Psychiatric Association. This is the kind of leadership warranted in the situation we face.

My concerns reflect no ill feelings toward the PENS group, which I felt honored to have worked with. Also, my concerns do not relate primarily to the PENS Task Force report. Although the report could have been stronger in many ways, I thought it made a contribution relative to the terms of reference given to the Task Force.

Sincerely,

Mike Wessells