

BlueWolf: Prosecuting our own inquisition

Contributed by James BlueWolf
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A recent local newspaper reader's opinion that the contemplation of prosecuting torturers and their superiors for utilizing the fanciful scribbling of a few morally bankrupt lawyers to justify their outrages is a fools errand demonstrates how far down the path toward psychopathic one segment of the American population has traveled.

In an examination of the historical record we find this point of view reoccurring time and time again throughout the American experiment always with a record book asterisk that it represents an unacceptable premise and that the American Dream is above that type of behavior – even in wartime.

To be fair, the American government has prosecuted – on occasion – its soldiers for war crimes and has certainly encouraged or participated in the prosecution of foreign nationals for war crimes against American military or civilian personnel. Historically, water-boarding was common in Europe during the Middle Ages and the Inquisition utilized it frequently.

The Dutch East India Co. used it as did 19th century prisons. During the Spanish American War, a U.S. military officer was court-martialed for using it and President Truman publicly called for efforts to “prevent the occurrence of all such acts in the future.” It was a favorite tactic of both the Gestapo and the Japanese during World War II and a Japanese military officer was prosecuted for waterboarding an American Captain in 1946.

Vietnam-era U.S. soldiers frequently used the process until a collective group of American Generals opposed the tactic and at least one soldier was court-martialed. Of course, this moral ambivalence in some areas of our populace is understandable.

With the Inquisition and Middle Age Europe approving such behaviors it's predictable that it should loom large over the shoulder of descendant Christianity. It's also predictable that non-military, fanatic, nationals might resort to the tactics of previously despised enemies to achieve the selfsame goals, albeit with ineffective and counterproductive results.

Despite Vice President Cheney's vehement assertions to the contrary, no experienced interrogator has ever testified to any kind of torture being effective at gathering usable intelligence from hardened military personnel.

The reason civilians, a la Cheney, think waterboarding is an effective tool is more because they know that in their own soft and cushy lives – with none of their own families ever serving in combat – these processes would definitely be effective against them!

New information released in the last week shows that much of the intelligence gleaned from the prominent terrorists was revealed well before any “torture techniques” were utilized, leading to questions as to why they were necessary at all. Armchair warriors like Bush and Chaney ignored the protestations of generals and interrogators in their own military hierarchy to continue down this path of idiocy. Now they all should be held accountable.

It fascinates me that our society scrunches up our moral noses in disgust at visible sexuality yet sits placidly by while our

children are exposed to endless hours of watching human beings killing each other.

Americans have a choice these days – to continue being the country that talks out of both sides of its mouth when it comes to ethics and morality – or to choose to elevate itself to practicing what is right and not what is, in the end, simply a flashy pretense of toughness devoid of any effective results.

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