

PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

PsySR Statement on Latest Reports of APA-CIA Collusion

Previously undisclosed emails, made public in a [comprehensive report](#) last week in the *New York Times*, provide further evidence of collusion between the American Psychological Association (APA) and the CIA in the development of permissive ethics policies for psychologists, policies that provided crucial support for the Bush Administration's abusive "enhanced interrogation program." The correspondence reveals the extent to which senior leadership at the APA worked closely with representatives of the intelligence community and the White House – over a period of months and years – to facilitate the participation of psychologists in abusive detention and interrogation operations despite the profession's fundamental do-no-harm ethical foundation.

Today, Psychologists for Social Responsibility renews its call for transparency, accountability, and reform at the APA, the world's largest organization of psychologists. This must include a thorough and unbiased review of its ethics code and related policies. For far too long, failed leadership, bureaucratic intransigence, and the embrace of power and prestige over human rights and dignity have diminished the APA. This was certainly true a decade ago when the Board formally authorized the involvement of psychologists in national security detention and interrogation operations, and it is still true today as the APA aggressively pursues ever closer ties with the military and intelligence community.

The misguided priorities and well-documented misdeeds of APA's executive leadership in this critical arena continue to undermine the valuable work of dedicated psychologists, the nascent aspirations of future members of our profession, and the essential trust the public bestows upon us as caring and expert teachers, researchers, and practitioners. Most tragically, detainees who have undergone "enhanced" interrogations have suffered directly and grievously, as have their families, due to the involvement of psychologists in U.S. war-on-terror operations. A dramatic change of course at the APA is urgently needed to make sure that this does not happen again.

Without further delay, we call for the formation of a distinguished panel of experts in psychological, research, and medical ethics; organizational dynamics; and international law, appointed by an independent and authoritative body. Distinct from the ongoing review by attorney David Hoffman, this working group's charge should be to thoroughly and transparently investigate the institutional structures, group processes, and leadership decisions that facilitated the exploitation of psychologists as degrading instruments of torture and abuse. The APA should cooperate fully with this investigation, which will hopefully lead to thoroughgoing reform of the Association.

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