



THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Bringing Human Rights Abusers To Justice.

August 26, 2010

Dr. Stephen Behnke  
Director, Office of Ethics  
American Psychological Association  
750 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

*Via Facsimile (202-336-5500) and Federal Express (attachments via FedEx only)*

Re: Ethical Complaint against Dr. John F. Leso, APA member

Dear Dr. Behnke:

CJA represents Dr. Steven Reisner in a complaint before the New York State Office of Professions, calling for an investigation of Dr. John Leso for his participation in abusive interrogation and torture, and for revocation of his psychologist's license on that basis. We understand that at least one complaint, filed on April 15, 2007, regarding Dr. Leso's conduct at Guantánamo is under review by the APA Ethics Office. We also understand that it is your position that resolution of that complaint requires additional time because it "entails careful consideration of what information is available, or is likely to become available that may be relevant to the matter." March 17, 2010 Behnke correspondence, Attachment A.

We believe that enough relevant information about Dr. Leso has come to light to enable you to resolve the matter now. Indeed, a great deal of information has become publicly available since Dr. Bond originally filed her complaint. The United States Senate Armed Services Committee, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of Defense, among others, have released documents into the public domain that shed light on Dr. Leso's conduct. Specifically, the documents show that Dr. Leso, a Major in the U.S. Army, led the first team of mental health professionals tasked with supporting interrogation operations at the U.S. detention camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Further, the documents show that Dr. Leso recommended a series of escalating physically and psychologically abusive interrogation tactics to be used on detainees, personally supervised interrogations where his tactics were used, and actually participated in the application of these tactics.

The APA has unequivocally condemned the abusive interrogation tactics that Dr. Leso recommended, including sexual humiliation and exploitation of phobias, tactics that are "utterly inconsistent with Ethical Standard 3.04 in the APA Ethics Code, which obligates psychologists to avoid harm." Moreover, the APA has recently taken the position that any of its members proven to have committed acts such as sexual humiliation in an interrogation context "would be expelled." Further still, it would be [the APA's] expectation that the individual's state license to practice psychology would be revoked." June 30, 2010 Goodheart correspondence, Attachment B.

We believe that the evidentiary analysis presented in the enclosed accounting further substantiates Dr. Bond's contention that Dr. Leso engaged in patently unethical conduct during his time at Guantánamo Bay. *Licensing Complaint Against Dr. John Francis Leso, State of New York, Attachment C (available at <http://cja.org/article.php?id=876>)*. This evidence warrants Dr. Leso's sanction, expulsion, and recommendation for de-licensure.

With respect to sexual humiliation in particular, we would draw your attention to pages 13 and 14 of our evidentiary analysis, documenting how interrogators under Dr. Leso's supervision implemented his suggestion of "removal of clothing" as an interrogation technique. Interrogators implemented this technique, forcibly stripping Mr. al Qahtani as he resisted and making him stand naked in the presence of female interrogators. Mr. al Qahtani felt humiliated, and stated that "he did not like the females viewing his naked body while being searched and if [he] felt he could have done something about it then he would have." Other forms of sexual humiliation during Mr. al Qahtani's interrogation included forcing Mr. al Qahtani to look at pictures of women in bikinis, hanging pictures of swimsuit models around his neck, and calling Mr. al Qahtani a homosexual. Another form of sexual humiliation employed against Mr. al Qahtani was "invasion of space by a female interrogator," which included touching Mr. al Qahtani in close proximity and straddling him while he was held down. At one point, Mr. al Qahtani was forced to wear a woman's bra and had a thong placed on his head during the course of an interrogation.

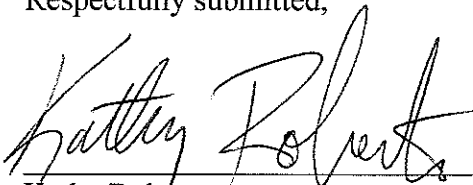
According to Article 1 of the APA Bylaws,

The objects of the American Psychological Association shall be to advance psychology as a science and profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare ... by the improvement of the qualifications and usefulness of psychologists through high standards of ethics, conduct, education, and achievement; by the establishment and maintenance of the highest standards of professional ethics and conduct of the members of the Association.

These objects have been seriously compromised by APA member Dr. John Leso's conduct. In accordance with the APA Ethics Committee's Rules and Procedures 3.3.10, we request that you inform us whether Dr. Leso has lost his membership due to unethical behavior or whether he has resigned while under ethics investigation.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathy Roberts

Nushin Sarkarati

Andrea Evans

Attorneys for Complainant Dr. Steven Reisner

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cc: Carol D. Goodheart, Ed.D., President, APA *via facsimile*: 609-987-8844 (letter only)