

Dave Jarvis  
(via e-mail)

March 8, 2008

### **Thoughts on Torture**

Dear Prime Minister Stephen Harper,  
President George Bush,  
Honourable David Wilkins,  
Honourable Maxime Bernier, and  
Presidential Candidate Barack Obama,

On March 8, 2008, President Bush vetoed a waterboarding ban. He said the ban “would take away one of the most valuable tools on the war on terror.” He effectively admits that torture has been sanctioned for use by the United States government.

On August 2, 1955, the United States of America ratified the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949.

On October 21, 1994, the United States of America ratified the Convention Against Torture, drafted by the United Nations.

Ratification, to clarify, is the agreement to be bound by a treaty.

By resorting to torture, the United States of America has struck the words agreement, dignity, honour, integrity, righteousness, and truth from its dictionary. The U.S. government has been misdirected by its moldering morals so far beyond its founders original forethoughts that when the current government glances back, it will see only darkness.

Until their government walks with moral integrity, they should remain on the torture watch list.

And yes, Honourable Bernier, yes, it is embarrassing that the United States should be grouped with Syria, China, Iran, Afghanistan, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia. I, too, am embarrassed that the people of the United States have let their government take them tumbling down such contemptible terrain.

Yet I am more embarrassed that Canada would bend to the political pressure of a country content to wallow in hypocrisy and emulsified ethics.

The United States of America must find the beacons that once guided its great nation. It must find the lights that illuminated the path to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. To this end, I have selected four quotes from historically notable figures. These four men shaped the direction of liberty; these men defined moral and ethical decency with words that shine so bright you cannot help but to see the path they paved.

“Whilst the parties of men cram their tenets down all men’s throats whom they can get into their power, without permitting them to examine their truth or falsehood; and will not let truth have fair play in the world, nor men the liberty to search after it; what improvements can be expected of this kind? What greater light can be hoped for in the moral sciences?”

– John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690

“Government being, among other purposes, instituted to protect the consciences of men from oppression, it certainly is the duty of Rulers, not only to abstain from it themselves, but according to their stations, to prevent it in others.”

– George Washington, *Letter to the Quakers*, 1789

“An avidity to punish is always dangerous to liberty. It leads men to stretch, to misinterpret, and to misapply even the best of laws. He that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself.”

– Thomas Paine, *Dissertations on First Principles of Government*, 1795

“... there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.”

– Martin Luther King, *I Have A Dream*, 1963

Sincerely,

Dave Jarvis

cc: CTV News  
CBC Radio