
An Argument For and Against the Use of Torture on Suspected Terrorist

Introduction

Torture is an insidious practice and has been defined as an act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining information or a confession. U.S courts have consistently condemned the use of torture by government authorities to gain information from criminal suspects because it violates due process of law. The use of torture to extract information from terrorists who are suspected of having valuable knowledge regarding future attacks has been a constant intense debate. Although torture is illegal, it can however be preventing greater evil.

Torture is illegal under both the United States Constitution and under international law, however many officials believe it is considered an effective method for gathering knowledge or crucial information. The policy of whether or not to torture suspected terrorists should be assessed according to whether it is in the public's best interest. The U.S does exercise the use of torture on terrorists or anyone suspected to be a terrorist. The U.S is a part of CAT, which is a convention against torture program that ensures that all acts of torture are offences under criminal law, however the U.S has found ways around this and the Geneva Convention. The U.S will send suspected terrorists to other countries and have them tortured there, or claim they are not using torture; it is rather an intense interrogation practice.

I do not agree that suspected terrorists should be tortured.

Counter Argument

There have been claims that military officials have obtained valuable information from suspected terrorists through torture. When it is in the public's best interest in a situation when there is immediate danger then it is reasonable to use the torture method. The government makes decisions by balancing the value of one life over many because the needs of many outweigh the needs of the few.

If there is a large population's lives are at immediate risk and the suspect has been captured there is reason to use torture. Torture is used with the intent to create conditions favorable for successful interrogation, that is to break down one's will. Many agencies claim that torture has been a successful tool in obtaining valuable information and this is used to justify the illegal

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action the U.S chooses to practice. In the end it is argued that saving the lives of many justify the means of torture.

Torture is inhumane, dehumanizing and illegal under the Constitution and international law; therefore it should not be practiced in any country. There are other forms of interrogation and ways to extract information from suspected terrorists.

Torture is an unethical and intense approach to attempt to extract information from someone who only suspected to be a terrorist. Torture is illegal according to law and every detainee is not the actual person wanted and may not have any information at all. Unless there is immediate danger and millions of lives are at risk then the use of torture should not be exercised on a detainee who is only a suspected terrorist. It is not ethical to dehumanize a suspect who is possibly innocent. If any other country held our military in confinement and used the torture method, the U.S would be outraged and they would make it a known point that torture is illegal. This method is not always reliable because a detainee could give false information or hold off on giving information where it is enough time for the terrorist group to change their course of action.

My Argument

The definition of what exactly is considered a severe punishment has not yet been definitively resolved, therefore any torture methods used by the U.S are not claimed to be actual torture. If another country held our military in confinement and using torture methods the U.S would point out its illegality and do anything to prevent it. The only torture shown on media sources is the torture used in Middle Eastern countries, which makes the U.S seem as if they are not the bad guys. A U.S journalist, James Foley was beheaded by a man later known as Jihadi John for an ISIS propaganda video (James, 2016). Although Foley was not a suspected terrorist, the U.S does not like to see it's own citizens tortured, therefore the U.S cannot act against another country when they are using the torture method as well. Videos of Foley were sent all over which created an outrage (James, 2016), If the U.S were to send similar videos of the different torture methods they use, it would cause a similar uprising.

The methods used at Guantanamo Bay ignore human rights. The constitution clearly states torture is illegal and "the Geneva Conventions of 1949 were adopted after the Second World War, when it became apparent that combatants had been tortured, dehumanized and executed" (Schneider, 2004). Anyone who is just suspected to be a terrorist may not turn out to be a terrorist or hold any useful information at all. There are millions who are considered suspected terrorists, but they may not be affiliated with any terrorist group, it is completely unnecessary to take away the rights of someone who is just a suspect. The U.S has been tried for their use of torture at Guantanamo Bay and the result is that "various international

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agreements that could apply to protect the human rights of individuals detained in Guantanamo Bay and the examination of previous attempts to bring some cases before a court of law, it is clear that the future of the prisoners remains unresolved” (Schneider, 2004). The U.S is aware that the methods used are unethical because it has claimed many times that there is no clear degree of torture and they are send detainees to other countries to be tortured.

The use of torture is not always the most affective or reliable method of interrogation. Suspected terrorists can lie or say whatever they want just to be released. False confessions or false information that have gone “unrecognized are the dangers that come from undisciplined information gathering, that is from wrongly identifying people as terrorists (“false positives”). Fundamentally, identifying the wrong people can lead investigators away from the right people and make it more likely that any actual terrorists will be able to carry out their plans” (Foley, 2007). If suspected terrorists are not truthful, than this method is not affective and may cause unnecessary chaos among the public. In some countries terrorists are trained to be tortured and hold information for at least 48 hours. After 48 hours the terrorists groups are able to change their plan of action, making torture non-reliable interrogation method.

Conclusion

I believe that a national committee should have the authority to issue a torture warrant in a situation where the public is in immediate danger, but other than that type of situation torture should not be exercised on suspected terrorists.

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