

Is “Torture” Ever Justified?

Let’s not spend a lot of time debating whether enhanced interrogation techniques, which include waterboarding, amount to torture. For the sake of this discussion, let’s say they do. Though I don’t believe it for a minute.

And let’s not argue over whether waterboarding yielded information that led to the courier who led the Navy Seals to Osama bin Laden. Instead, let’s say the jury is still out on that; that’s it’s too soon to know for sure.

Instead, let’s ponder this not-so-new question, which has surfaced again in the wake of the bin Laden take-down: Is torture, at the hands of CIA interrogators, or any other American authorities, *ever* justified?

✘ The New York Times, the most reliable daily publication of liberal thinking, says the answer is no. “There are many arguments against torture,” a recent editorial explained, before re-hashing its own old arguments. “It is immoral and illegal and counterproductive.”

This is the basic liberal view of torture. That it is always wrong because, most of all, it violates what liberals call, “American values.” Some go so far as to say there’s no difference between waterboarding and eye-gouging. Never mind that one leaves the prisoner with no eyes while the other leaves him merely gasping for breath –and only for a short time at that.

So, let’s examine the liberal case against torture – first, that it is illegal. Yes, but only because, well, only because there are laws against it. But that can easily be changed. All Congress has to do is pass new laws stating very clearly that under certain circumstances, and only with presidential approval, torture – or enhanced interrogation – is permissible. I’m not saying this will happen. And with our

current president in the White House, he almost certainly would veto such a law. But to argue that torture is wrong because it is illegal, isn't much of an argument. For a long time, mixed racial marriage was illegal in parts of our country. Surely, the Times wouldn't argue that because it was illegal it was also wrong.

What about torture being counterproductive? That one, as I say, is off the table at the moment – even though more than a few high-ranking officials have come forward to say that waterboarding did indeed play an important role in the discovery of bin Laden's hideout. That leaves us with “immoral.”

Forgive me for stating the obvious, but what is immoral to the liberals at New York Times and their acolytes on the Upper West Side of Manhattan isn't necessarily immoral to several hundred million other Americans. But let's pursue the allegation anyway.

Let's say a terrorist operation is underway to explode an atomic bomb in Times Square on New Year's Eve where a million people are gathered to have a good time. And let's also say that U.S. officials have in custody a terrorist suspect whom they believe knows where the bomb is hidden. But he refuses to talk.

I know, I know. You've heard all this before. It's the “ticking time bomb” scenario. The liberal case tells us that if we torture this suspect, we are committing an immoral act. Besides, we're told, we could get the information by other means (a dubious argument at best). But what those sensitive liberal souls don't answer is a question that goes to the very heart of the discussion:

Why it is *moral* to allow the bomb to go off killing hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians?

And exactly what American values are *upheld* by letting the

bomb go off. I can't think of any.

If liberals want to make the case that waterboarding is immoral no matter how many innocent lives are saved – even if the target is a yellow school bus filled with third graders on their way to the museum – then Man Up and make the case, with no apologies.

Nonetheless, like my liberal friends, I'm against torture. Really! They're against it 100 percent of the time. I'm against it 99 percent of the time. I'm against it to punish jay-walkers and litterbugs and car thieves. In fact, I'm against it to punish *anybody* for *any* crime, no matter how heinous, if the crime already has been committed. But if waterboarding, or some other enhanced interrogation technique, could save innocent American lives, I'm all for it. For me, *that's* the moral position.