

TORTURED TRUTHS

Written by Harvey M. Sapolsky

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<https://www.e-ir.info/2009/06/12/tortured-truths-2/>

HARVEY M. SAPOLSKY, JUN 12 2009

Hannah is right—torture is slippery slope. One officer told me that troops have to be watched all the time. Unsupervised 10% will do something stupid. Abu Ghraib involved untrained (reserve) soldiers working at night without supervision. Guards have power which can easily be abused.

Andrew do you think people will give true or false information under torture knowing that the information will be checked and that the torturer will be back if the information is false. It is not torture and release.

Jamie—demonizing opponents is part of war. War requires killing. Normal people do not do that easily. Presumably our enemies are being taught to hate us. Certainly their speeches are full of hatred toward us. If it were just good and good, and not good and evil, triggers would be hard to pull.

About the author:

Harvey M. Sapolsky is Professor of Public Policy and Organization, Emeritus, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and former Director of the MIT Security Studies Program. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Michigan and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. In the defense field he has served as a consultant or panel member for a number of government commissions and study groups. His most recent books are *US Defense Politics* written with Eugene Gholz and Caitlin Talmadge and *US Military Innovation Since the Cold War* edited with Benjamin Friedman and Brendan Green, both published by Routledge.