AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

May 28, 2009

Dear Editor:

Your editorial, “Responsible Interrogation” (May 21), leaves readers with the misimpression that the American Psychological Association permits psychologists to be involved in national security-related interrogations without regard to the detention setting. In the fall of 2008, the membership of the Association adopted a referendum that limited the roles of psychologists in national security-related detention settings where international law or the U.S. Constitution is violated. Specifically, this new policy states: “Be it resolved that psychologists may not work in settings where persons are held outside of, or in violation of, either International Law (e.g., the UN Convention Against Torture and the Geneva Conventions) or the US Constitution (where appropriate), unless they are working directly for the persons being detained or for an independent third party working to protect human rights" or are providing treatment to military personnel. This resolution builds upon the Association’s long-standing prohibition against any psychologist involvement in torture or any form of inhuman, cruel or degrading treatment or punishment of detainees.

Omission of this significant fact left your readers and the public with the impression that psychologists may continue to be present for or provide consultation to interrogations in any national security setting regardless of its legal status, which is not the case.

Sincerely,

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