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June Roundtable: Introduction

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June Roundtable: Introduction

Abstract

An annotation of:

"The Red Cross Torture Report: What It Means." by Mark Danner. The New York Review of Books. April 30, 2009.

Keywords

Human rights, Torture, War on terror, National security

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“The Red Cross Torture Report: What It Means.” by Mark Danner. *The New York Review of Books*. April 30, 2009.

An Annotation

Torture is one of the most controversial issues facing the US today. Amid two wars and concerns of unresolved government accountability, the release of the “Torture Memos” has forced Americans, and the international community, to re-examine the role of torture in national security and the war on terror.

“Torture, is a critical issue in the present of our politics. Torture is at the heart of the deadly politics of national security.”

The issue of torture demands that Americans assess the costs of torture, and specifically raises important questions over presidential authority and executive privilege in regards to national security. In other words, what are the costs we are willing to endure in the name of safety and protection—presuming these nefarious methods do indeed improve security at all?

“Torture’s powerful symbolic role, like many ugly, shameful facts, is left unacknowledged and undiscussed. But that doesn’t make it any less real. On the contrary.”

Although politically laden, the issue of torture has revealed violations and abuses of international human rights laws and norms, particularly the Geneva Conventions and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, both of which explicitly regulate the treatment of prisoners. Furthermore, the “Torture Memos,” along with images from detention facilities at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, necessitate the reconciliation and re-establishment of our standing within the international community. No longer can America be complacent in committing grave human rights violations and abuses, the time for accountability and responsibility has presented itself in re-affirming essential human rights values and standards that begin by seeking justice at home.

These issues and others are considered in this month’s Roundtable.