

## **Reciprocity and Public Opinion on Torture**

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## **Abstract**

Despite recent attention from the news media, little scholarly work has examined American public opinion regarding the use of torture for the interrogation of terrorist suspects. This paper documents recent trends in opinions regarding the use of torture and detention without trial. Examining relevant demographic differences in support of torture, we find that (controlling for other factors) Republicans, conservatives, males, and those with low levels of education are most likely to support the use of torture. These same groups are more likely to oppose the right to trial for suspected terrorists. A randomized question order experiment is utilized to understand the role played by the norm of reciprocity or evenhandedness in constructing opinions regarding the treatment of detainees. No reciprocity is exhibited regarding torture and indefinite detainment practices used by the United States. However, reciprocity does elicit more tolerance of torture and detainment without trial by foreign nations. That is, the use of torture by the United States makes respondents more accepting of torture by other nations.

The permissibility and use of torture in the United States' fight against terrorism has received considerable attention in recent years. Allegations of misconduct by American soldiers against prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay detention center in Cuba have increased discussion and debate about acceptable interrogation techniques against foreign captives. Several recent popular press books have documented the tactics used by the U.S. government regarding information gathering from suspected terrorists (Conroy 2001; Danner 2005; Greenberg 2005; Greenberg and Dratel 2005; Harbury 2005; Hersh 2005; Levinson 2004; McCoy 2006). Scholarly publications have focused on various aspects surrounding the torture debate as well, ranging from discussions over the morality of its use to disputes over its effectiveness in gathering credible information (Alhoff 2003; Davis 2005; Dershowitz 2003; Luban 2005; Machan 1990; Sussman 2005; Waldron 2005). However, thus far little attention has been paid to American public opinion on the issue of torture.

Public opinion regarding a historic taboo and weighty moral question is intrinsically interesting, but the continued "War on Terrorism" provides the question direct policy implications. Do the benefits of the information gained from torture outweigh the damage done to the image of the United States in predominantly Muslim countries? Are the false leads generated from coerced intelligence sufficiently costly to counterbalance any accurate information gained? The decision of whether or not to torture suspected terrorists shapes the entire effort by the United States government to combat Islamic terrorism. If decision makers are responsive to their constituencies, public views of torture and detainment may shape future policies implemented. If nothing else, candidate attitudes regarding torture may serve as a heuristic for voters during the 2008 Presidential and Congressional elections.

This paper measures four aspects of public opinion on torture and indefinite detainment. Attitudes regarding the definition of torture, its occurrence, and permissibility are measured using polls conducted by the news media. We find considerable variance in what constitutes torture, rough agreement that the U.S. government is practicing torture, and a large divide in the acceptability of torture as an intelligence gathering tactic. The stability of the divide on the question of the morality of torture is striking given the ebbs and flows in the news regarding the war in Iraq, terrorist threats, and examples of torture. In general, we find that men, conservatives, Republicans, and people with low levels of education are the groups most supportive of torture and detainment without trial.

The role of reciprocity in forming an opinion on detainment and torture is measured using a question order survey experiment. Subjects are asked about the acceptability of behavior by the U.S. government and the behavior of foreign governments, but the order in which the questions are asked is randomly varied. The role of reciprocity in public policy evaluation has a long history in political psychology (e.g., Gouldner 1960; Schuman and Ludwig 1983), but is especially relevant to the torture debate for four reasons. First, the norm of reciprocity is at the root of many ethical and moral mandates (e.g., “The Golden Rule”). Second, an argument offered against torturing prisoners is that the United States would not want its soldiers tortured by adversaries. Third, enemy combatants are more likely to surrender and not fight when they believe they will not be mistreated by captors. Finally, Senator John McCain has argued that soldiers take strength in the fact that the United States military does not torture and this national identity helps soldiers withstand inhumane prison conditions:

Many of my comrades were subjected to very cruel, very inhumane and degrading treatment, a few of them unto death. But every one of us--every single one of us--knew and took great strength from the belief that we were different from our enemies, that we were better than them, that we, if the roles were reversed, would

not disgrace ourselves by committing or approving such mistreatment of them. That faith was indispensable not only to our survival, but to our attempts to return home with honor. (McCain 2005)

The survey experiment finds that respondents do exhibit reciprocity, but in an unexpected way. Namely, respondents who are first asked whether the U.S. should pressure foreign nations not to torture are no more or less likely to support the use of torture by the U.S. government. In contrast, respondents who are asked about the use of torture by the U.S. first are *less* likely to believe that the U.S. should pressure other nations not to engage in torture. That is, the norm of reciprocity compels respondents to become more accepting of torture abroad. A similar survey experiment on a completely different set of subjects finds an identical relationship for the right to trial for suspect terrorists. Thus, we conclude that the norm of reciprocity has little role in opposition to torture, but limits moral outrage regarding torture and signals to other countries that torture is acceptable.

### **Background on the Torture Debate**

The use of aggressive interrogation tactics that many people consider torture in U.S. detention facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Cuba is well-documented and not seriously debated. While not every instance has the graphic photographic evidence the initial reports from Abu Ghraib contained, internal investigations conducted by the military corroborate many of the claims made by human rights advocates and former detainees. Tactics that have been employed include sleep deprivation, exposure to extreme temperatures, use of forced positions, water boarding, beatings, sexual humiliation, loud noises, and hoodings (Hersh 2005a; Lewis 2004). These tactics were used to punish insubordinate prisoners and to break the will of prisoners,

readying them for further interrogation about terrorist activities and possible future attacks.<sup>1</sup> In the eyes of critics, tactics such as these are all the more tragic because the vast majority of the suspected terrorists are detained without hearings, trials, or even formal charges. The military itself estimates 55% of the detainees in Cuba have committed no hostile acts against the United States and only 8% of detainees are members of Al Qaeda (Denbeaux and Denbeaux 2006; Hegland 2006).

Two academic debates focus upon the use of torture. The first debate centers on what actually constitutes torture, which is important because two sides may agree that “torture is wrong” but disagree about whether the acts that the U.S. engages in actually constitute torture. One definition offered by Michael Davis (2005) defines torture as the intentional infliction of extreme physical suffering on some non-consenting, defenseless, other person for the purpose of breaking their will. Many who support more rigorous interrogation techniques argue that the current techniques being used do not amount to torture. Some examples of the current techniques being used by military interrogators include slapping, forcing a prisoner to stand for hours on end, placing prisoners in a cold cell kept at fifty degrees and frequently pouring cold water on them, and waterboarding (Ross and Esposito 2005). There is no definitive and commonly agreed upon criteria for what constitutes torture, so the political debate has taken on an “I know it when I see it” dynamic.

The second academic debate centers on whether the use of torture is morally permissible and an effective means to gaining information from prisoners. In one camp are those who argue that torture is always morally wrong – perhaps a greater evil than murder (Davis 2005; Sussman 2005). Opponents also argue torture defies fundamental American values and undermine the

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<sup>1</sup> Luban (2005, 1429-40) outlines five traditional aims of torture: emphasizing a recent military victory over those being tortured, terrorizing people into submission, punishing prisoners, extracting confessions, and intelligence gathering.

philosophic foundation of liberal institutions, such as the right to freedom from cruel and unusual punishment (Luban 2005; Waldron 2005). In addition, opponents have argued that the use of torture is ineffective in obtaining credible information from a suspect, as a suspect being tortured may confess to anything just to stop the pain (Rejali n.d.). On the other side of the debate, some argue that torture is permissible in instances of extreme emergencies (Alhoff 2003; Dershowitz 2003). Proponents of this view often point to the example of a “ticking time bomb.” Put simply, under this or a similar scenario the use of torture on a single person is justified in order to save the lives of thousands. Much like the definition of torture, there is no elite consensus on the morality of torture. The next section examines what the American public considers torture and the morality of its use.

### **American Public Opinion on Torture**

While very few members of the American public have direct experience with the treatment of enemy combatants in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Cuba, reports in the print and television news media allow people to form opinions on the topic. One of the first questions one might ask is what people consider torture. Do Americans find some techniques more permissible than others in the interrogation of terrorist suspects? Considerable variation in support for specific torture techniques is evident in an ABC News/Washington Post poll conducted in May of 2004 (see Figure 1). Americans generally agree that a few techniques are unacceptable. For example, sexual humiliation (16%), electric shocks (17%), and threatening family members of suspects (19%) receive very little support. In contrast, the populace is split fairly evenly regarding the use of temperature extremes (40%), threatening to shoot suspects (41%), loud noises (54%) and hooding (57%). Sleep deprivation is the only interrogation technique often deemed tortuous that

received a super-majority of support (66%). In short, there are a few points where a consensus has formed regarding acceptable interrogation strategies, but many points of contention and disagreement remain.

[Figure 1: Support for Various Techniques in the Interrogation of Suspected Terrorists]

Given the disagreement as to what constitutes torture, one might expect similar levels of disagreement on whether or not the United States government has engaged in torture. Three separate surveys implemented during 2004 and 2005 ask questions measuring whether or not the respondent thinks the United States government tortures (see Table 1). In all three surveys, the majority of respondents believe that torture is practiced in US detention facilities. While three data points does not constitute a robust time-series, it is striking to note that when the question was first asked in May 2004 immediately after the Hersh article in the *New Yorker*, only 51% thought torture occurred. A year-and-a-half later after subsequent reports of abuse and confirmation of the original reporting, 83% of respondents think the US engages in torture at least “sometimes.” The public may differ on precisely which tactics constitute acceptable, but there is a rough consensus that techniques employed at times do cross the line into torture.

[Table 1: Percentage of Americans who think the U.S. government engages in torture]

While the awareness that the suspected terrorists are subjected to torture has increased over time, public acceptance of torture has remained remarkably stable over time. Gathering data from eleven separate surveys on the permissibility of torture over the period 2001 to the end

of 2006, the number of people opposing torture has not increased as allegations arise (see Table 2). The number of people opposing the use of torture or reporting that it is “rarely justified” constitute a slim majority (54% on average) in most of the surveys. This stability is more evident when differences in the wording and survey houses are considered. If one were to exclude the two Fox News surveys asking whether respondents support using “any means necessary, including physical torture, to obtain information from prisoners that *would protect the United States from future terrorist attacks*” (emphasis added), then all but one survey would show a solid majority of the public is deeply suspicious of or opposed to torture but that this proportion has not increased over time.

[Table 2: American Public Opinion on the Use of Torture, 2001-2006]

Who are these people who support the use of torture? The following question was included in a module of the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES):<sup>2</sup>

Some people say that torture is immoral and the United States should abide by the United Nations Convention Against Torture and never torture prisoners. Other people want to leave open the option of torturing suspected terrorists in order to extract information and prevent future attacks. How about you - do you think the United States is ever justified in torturing prisoners?

The response categories are: (1) “Yes, in most cases;” (2) “Yes, in many cases;” (3) “Yes, but only in rare cases;” (4) “Maybe;” and (5) “No, torture is never justified.” Table 3 reports regression analysis controlling for standard demographic variables. For presentational purposes, a probit model is presented where all the “Yes” categories equal 1, subjects responding “Maybe” are excluded, and “No” equals 0. The substantive results are robust to including those responding “Maybe” in either the “Yes” or “No” categories. Similarly, taking advantage of all

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<sup>2</sup> Technical information on the CCES (including sampling information) is provided in the following section.

five possible answers in an ordered probit does not change the results. Every permutation leads to the conclusion that Republicans, conservatives, men, and those with lower levels of education are more likely to support the use of torture (see Table 3, Column 1). Holding all other variables at their mean values, men are 11 percentage points more likely than women to find torture justifiable (47% vs. 36%), Republicans are 29 percentage points more likely than Democrats (53% vs. 34%), respondents who consider themselves “conservative” are 36 percentage points more likely than those who consider themselves “liberal” (59% vs. 23%), and respondents whose highest educational attainment is a high school degree are 12 percentage points more likely than those with a college degree (49% vs. 37%).<sup>3</sup>

[Table 3: Who supports torture? Who supports the right to trial?]

The picture is very similar if we shift the focus away from torture to denying suspected terrorists access to a trial. A completely different set of respondents was asked in the CCES:

Some people say that suspected terrorists held at camps like Guantanamo Bay should be charged with specific crimes and granted a hearing in front of a special tribunal. Other people argue that it is hard to convict terrorists whose plots have been foiled and that hearings would cause known terrorists to be released and pose a danger. What do you think - should all prisoners in US custody be granted a hearing?

The response categories are: (1) “Yes,” (2) “Not sure,” and (3) “No.” Conducting analysis that mirrors the analysis of torture above, we find the groups supporting torture are the same groups that oppose granting trials to detained suspected terrorists. Namely, Republicans, conservatives, men, and those with lower levels of education oppose the right to trial for suspected terrorists.

The consistency of these two findings on two entirely different samples indicates that the results

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<sup>3</sup> Predicted values calculated using CLARIFY (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003).

are robust and can be generalized. The next section uses a question order survey experiment to determine the extent to which opinions on torture are shaped by the norm of reciprocity.

### **Question Order Effects and the Norm of Reciprocity**

Question order experiments to detect reciprocity have been conducted on a range of topics such as allowing U.S. citizens to join a foreign army (Rugg and Cantril 1944), the balance of power between striking workers and management in a labor dispute (Link 1946), and whether labor unions and corporations should be able to use funds to support particular political candidates (Gallop 1947). In perhaps the most famous study in this research tradition, Hyman and Sheatsley (1950) found that respondents were much more likely to support the right for reporters from a communist nation such as the Soviet Union to report back the news from the U.S. as they saw it when first asked about whether American reporters should be able to report the news from communist countries as they saw it (see also Schuman and Presser 1981).

In each of the question order experiments, respondents appeal to a norm of evenhandedness or reciprocity in their responses. According to Goulder (1960), reciprocity is one of the universal "principal components" of moral codes. But when do we expect respondents to exhibit this norm of reciprocity? Schuman and Ludwig (1983, 112) argue that "Context effects will occur whenever two questions deal with differently evaluated competing parties that can be viewed in terms of even-handedness. This norm provides that if an advantage (or disadvantage) is given to one party in the dispute, it should be given to the other as well." If this norm of reciprocity holds, the desire of most Americans that U.S. soldiers not be tortured in foreign countries should result in less support for torture by the U.S. government.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to distinguish reciprocity from a respondent's desire to be consistent in his/her responses. Schuman and Ludwig (1983) test this by asking survey respondents whether doctors were interested in serving the common

To probe reciprocity and public opinion toward torture, a unique question order experiment from a 1,000 person sub-sample of the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) is utilized. The CCES is a nationally representative sample on-line survey conducted in two-waves before and after the 2006 Congressional elections. The sample was drawn by matching members of an existing on-line panel to randomly selected respondents of the American Community Survey conducted by the Census Department. In theory, the ex ante self-selection into the on-line panel and subsequent matching is less biased than the self-selection that occurs when respondents refuse to answer polls (Rivers 2006). Given that the ordering of the questions are randomly determined (thereby holding confounding factors constant), internal validity is not a concern for the present inquiry. The results may only apply to people willing to answer surveys on-line, but the external validity of the CCES is not obviously worse than typical survey instruments. At the very least, the results from the survey experiment should generalize to a broad cross-section of the American public.

Our survey experiment asked respondents two questions where the question order was randomly determined. One question asks whether the U.S. should torture suspected terrorists (question wording and response categories are detailed in the previous section). The other related question asks whether the U.S. should pressure other nations not to use torture:

U.S. soldiers are working in countries where torture is legal and routinely used on prisoners as punishment, to extract confessions, and to gather information. When U.S. soldiers are accused of crimes on foreign soil, they run the risk of being tortured. Do you think the United States government should pressure these governments to abide by the United Nations Convention Against Torture and never torture prisoners?

There are three response categories: (1) “Yes, torture is wrong and we should protect our soldiers;” (2) “Maybe, it depends upon the country and situation;” and (3) “No, each country can

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good or just making money. The same question was asked about lawyers. The question ordering had no effect on responses, with lawyers viewed as more mercenary than doctors regardless of the question’s position.

have its own customs and laws.” Together, the two questions examine respondents’ opinions on the permissibility of the U.S. using torture and the permissibility of foreign nations using torture. While the foreign nation torture question references the U.S., its central aim is to cue thoughts about foreign torture. Moreover, referencing U.S. soldiers ought to increase reciprocity if respondents seek to protect U.S. soldiers abroad by denouncing torture at home. If norms of reciprocity shape views of torture, those who are queried about the use of torture by foreign countries first should be less likely to support the use of torture by the U.S.

Table 4 displays a tabulation of responses to the U.S. torture item based on question order. We find no question order effect for attitudes on U.S. torture practices ( $X^2 = 2.522$ ,  $p = 0.641$ ) and the same holds true if we collapse the categories into a single “Yes” category. This finding is surprising given our expectation of reciprocity. Those who are asked first about U.S. torture practices serve as a baseline for those asked about foreign torture first, but exhibit no greater propensity to support torture. This null finding suggests that reciprocity is not an overriding concern in shaping views of torture practices by the United States.

The picture changes, however, when the focus shifts to foreign countries that practice torture. The lower portion of Table 4 reports the percentage of respondents who answered “Yes” to the item about the U.S. pressuring other nations not to torture. Respondents who are first asked about the use of torture by the U.S. are 7 percentage points *less* likely to believe that the U.S. should pressure other nations not to torture and this result is statistically significant ( $X^2 = 5.784$ ,  $p = 0.055$ ). This result is strengthened by the inclusion of control variables. The magnitude of the reciprocity effect is comparable to the difference between men and women on whether torture is acceptable. Most of the classic studies of reciprocity in public opinion find results of comparable magnitude. For instance, Rugg and Cantril (1944) detect a 9% difference

in support for joining foreign armies, Link (1946) finds a 5% swing in support for strikes and lockouts, and in 1947 Gallup estimates a 9% average reciprocity effect on support for corporate and union participation in electoral politics (Schuman and Ludwig 1983).<sup>5</sup> The bottom-line is that being primed with a question about the use of torture by the U.S. first makes respondents more accepting of the use of torture by other nations. That is, reciprocity causes supporters of torture by the U.S. to be more accepting of torture abroad.

[Table 4: Reciprocity Experiment – Use of Torture]

When faced with a surprising and counter-intuitive result, one immediately wonders whether the results are sample specific. To counter this charge, a similar survey experiment concerning detainment without trial was conducted on an entirely different set of 1,000 respondents.<sup>6</sup> Once again, subjects are asked about granting trials to suspected terrorists and whether the U.S. should pressure foreign governments to grant trials to U.S. soldiers held abroad in a random order. Perhaps the norm of reciprocity shapes views concerning the right to a trial.

The results for the trial experiment presented in Table 5 are analogous to the earlier results for torture. Asking respondents about the possibility of U.S. soldiers being detained without trial abroad has no effect on opinions about the U.S. granting trials to suspected terrorists ( $X^2 = 0.383$ ,  $p = 0.826$ ). However, respondents do exhibit the unexpected form of reciprocity when asked about whether the U.S. should pressure other countries to reform their legal systems

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<sup>5</sup> The roughly 30 point effect detected by Hyman and Sheatsley (1950) is an outlier by any definition.

<sup>6</sup> Question wording: “US soldiers are working in countries where suspected criminals are routinely arrested and held without a hearing or even formal charges. If US soldiers are accused of a crime on foreign soil, they run the risk of being held in prisoner indefinitely with no trial. Do you think the United States government should pressure foreign countries to reform their legal systems to grant basic rights?” Response categories: (1) “Yes, basic rights should be upheld and we should protect our soldiers;” (2) “Maybe, it depends upon the country and situation;” and (3) “No, each country can have its own customs and laws.”

to grant the right to trial. Specifically, respondents who are first asked whether the U.S. should grant suspected terrorists the right to trial are 6 percentage points *less* likely to report that the U.S. should pressure other countries to reform their legal systems to protect the rights of captured U.S. soldiers ( $X^2 = 7.189$ ,  $p = 0.027$ ). That is, reciprocity causes opponents of trials for suspected terrorists to be more sanguine about the absence of trials in other countries.

[Table 5: Reciprocity Experiment – Right to Trial]

In sum, using two different samples of respondents, we find a similar and unexpected pattern of reciprocity. Simply put, respondents seem to exhibit the following line of thinking: “If we allow the U.S. to torture or not grant suspected terrorists the right to trial, then we should allow other countries to do so as well.”

While we provide preliminary evidence on what interrogation tactics citizens find acceptable, future work could better answer what exactly citizens define as “torture” and whether they support the use of tactics they actually consider as torture. It is very likely that responses to these two questions vary considerably based on question wording. Therefore, future surveys should test different question wordings for torture and detention without trial to explore what effect wording has on responses. Our analysis also does not explore how the public forms its views on torture. Determining the extent to which elites cue constituencies and frame the debate is a topic that should also be examined in future studies.

## **Conclusion**

Concerns about terrorism are unlikely to dissipate in the near term. Accordingly, the debate over the detention of suspects and the use of torture when interrogating those suspects will also continue. Indeed, recent presidential primary debates have provided an early indication that detention without trial and the use of more “aggressive” interrogation techniques are salient political issues on which candidates feel obliged to state a position. Revelations about the treatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay have caused the majority of the public to agree that the U.S. engages in torture, but there is little consensus on how to interpret this fact. The American people cannot agree on what constitutes torture and are nearly evenly split on the acceptability of torture and detention without trial. While reciprocity guides many moral intuitions, reciprocity does not appear to be a force that can change views of torture as practiced by the United States.

Some critics of the Bush Administration have argued that the War in Iraq, and the practice of torture in particular, have damaged our standing in the world. The critics go onto to contend that substantiated claims of torture cause increased resentment of the United States in Muslim countries and create new recruits for terrorist organizations. The survey experiments in this paper strongly suggest the practice of torture also numbs the public to torture policies in other countries. The demand for the U.S. government to criticize foreign countries regarding human rights abuses such as torture may diminish. Thus, the ability of the United States to pressure repressive regimes is diminished. Not only would calls for reform in countries abusing human rights have a hint of hypocrisy, the domestic will for such stand offs may not be present.

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## Tables and Figures

**Table 1: Percentage of Americans who think the U.S. government engages in torture**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Poll</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Yes, Tortures</b>	<b>No, Does not Torture</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Question</b>
5/27/04	ABC News/ Washington Post	1,005	51%	43%	6%	Just your best guess, do you think the US government as a matter of policy is or is not using torture as part of the US campaign against terrorism?
4/20/05	Harris Poll	1,010	66	32	2	Do you believe that any prisoners captured in Iraq and Afghanistan have been tortured by Americans?
12/15/05	Harris Interactive	1,718	83	17	0	In your opinion, how often do the intelligence services of the United States participate in torture when interrogating suspected terrorists?*

Source: Polling the Nations.

\* Responses of "Often" (17%) and "Sometimes" (66%) were coded as affirmation that torture is practiced.

**Table 2: American Public Opinion on the Use of Torture, 2001-2006 (4 categories)**

Date	Poll	Q	N	Support / Justified	Sometimes	Rarely	Oppose / Not Justified
11/14/01	Investor's Business Daily / Christian Science Monitor / TIPP	1	920	32%	--	--	66
3/14/02	Fox News	2	900	41	--	--	47
3/13/03	Fox News	3	900	44	--	--	42
5/27/04	ABC News/Washington Post	4	1,005	35	--	--	63
8/18/04	Pew Research Center	5	1,006	15	28	21	32
5/10/05	Pew Research Center	5	1,090	15	30	24	27
12/6/05	Associated Press / Ipsos-Public Affairs	6	1,001	11	27	23	36
12/21/05	Harris Interactive	7	1,718	12	40	--	48
9/20/06	CBS News / New York Times	8	1,131	35	--	56	--
10/5/06	Pew Research Center	5	1,804	18	28	19	32
10/19/06	PIPA / Globescan	9	1,002	36	--	--	58

Source: Polling the Nations.

Question wording (column Q):

- 1) I am going to read a list of actions that the US could employ in the war on terrorism. As I read each one, please tell me if you could envision a scenario in which you would support the action or not. How about government-sanctioned torture of suspects held in the US or abroad? Could you envision a scenario in which you would support this action or not?
- 2) Do you support or oppose allowing the government to use any means necessary, including physical torture, to obtain information from prisoners that would protect the United States from future terrorist attacks?
- 3) Do you favor or oppose allowing the government to use any means necessary, including physical torture, to obtain information from prisoners that might protect the United States from terrorist attacks?
- 4) Some people say it's acceptable to torture people suspected of terrorism, in cases where other methods have failed and the authorities believe the suspect has information that could prevent terrorist attacks and save lives. Other people say the use of torture is never acceptable because it's cruel, it may violate international law, it may not work, and it could be used unnecessarily or by mistake on innocent people. What's your view -- do you think it's acceptable to torture people suspected of terrorism in some cases, or do you think the use of torture is never acceptable?
- 5) Do you think the use of torture against suspected terrorists in order to gain important information can often be justified, sometimes be justified, rarely be justified, or never be justified?
- 6) How do you feel about the use of torture against suspected terrorists to obtain information about terrorism activities? Can that often be justified, sometimes be justified, rarely be justified or never be justified?
- 7) How often is torture justified when interrogating suspected terrorists?
- 8) Do you think it is sometimes justified to use torture to get information from a suspected terrorist, or is torture never justified?
- 9) Most countries have agreed to rules that prohibit torturing prisoners. Which position is closer to yours: Terrorists pose such an extreme threat that governments should now be allowed to use some degree of torture if it may gain information that saves innocent lives, or clear rules against torture should be maintained because any use of torture is immoral and will weaken international human rights standards against torture?

**Table 3: Who supports torture? Who supports the right to trial?**

	(1)	(2)
	<b>Torture is Justified (0=No, 1=Yes)</b>	<b>U.S. Should Grant Right to Trial (0=No, 1=Yes)</b>
<i>Party ID (1-7, Strong Republican=7)</i>	0.133***	-0.216***
	[0.033]	[0.039]
<i>Ideology (1-5, Very Conservative=5)</i>	0.490***	-0.542***
	[0.076]	[0.088]
<i>Church Attendance (1-4)</i>	0.045	0.012
	[0.044]	[0.052]
<i>Education (1-5)</i>	-0.126**	0.244***
	[0.060]	[0.072]
<i>Income (1-14)</i>	0.024	-0.012
	[0.017]	[0.019]
<i>Age (18-88)</i>	-0.008**	-0.005
	[0.004]	[0.004]
<i>Female (0-1)</i>	-0.249**	0.214*
	[0.109]	[0.124]
<i>Constant</i>	-1.672***	2.503***
	[0.340]	[0.400]
<i>N</i>	699	613

Probit coefficients, standard errors in brackets.

\* denotes  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Table 4: Reciprocity Experiment – Use of Torture**

**Is the U.S. ever justified in torturing enemy prisoners?**

	<i>Question Position</i>	
	<i>Asked before foreign torture</i>	<i>Asked after foreign torture</i>
Yes, in most cases	7% [35]	6% [27]
Yes, in many cases	11% [57]	10% [47]
Yes, but only in rare cases	25% [124]	23% [112]
Maybe	10% [49]	11% [55]
No, torture is never justified	47% [238]	50% [241]

$X^2 = 2.522$  (p = 0.641)

N for each cell displayed in brackets

**Should the U.S. pressure other nations not to torture prisoners?**

	<i>Question Position</i>	
	<i>Asked before U.S. torture</i>	<i>Asked after U.S. torture</i>
<i>Yes</i>	73% [349]	66% [330]
<i>Maybe</i>	22% [108]	27% [134]
<i>No</i>	5% [23]	7% [36]

$X^2 = 5.784$  (p = 0.055)

N for each cell displayed in brackets

**Table 5: Reciprocity Experiment – Right to Trial**

**Should the U.S. grant all suspected terrorists a hearing?**

	<i>Question Position</i>	
	<i>Asked before foreign trial</i>	<i>Asked after foreign trial</i>
<i>Yes</i>	46% [223]	48% [243]
<i>Maybe</i>	24% [114]	22% [113]
<i>No</i>	30% [147]	30% [151]

$X^2 = 0.383$  ( $p = 0.826$ )

N for each cell displayed in brackets

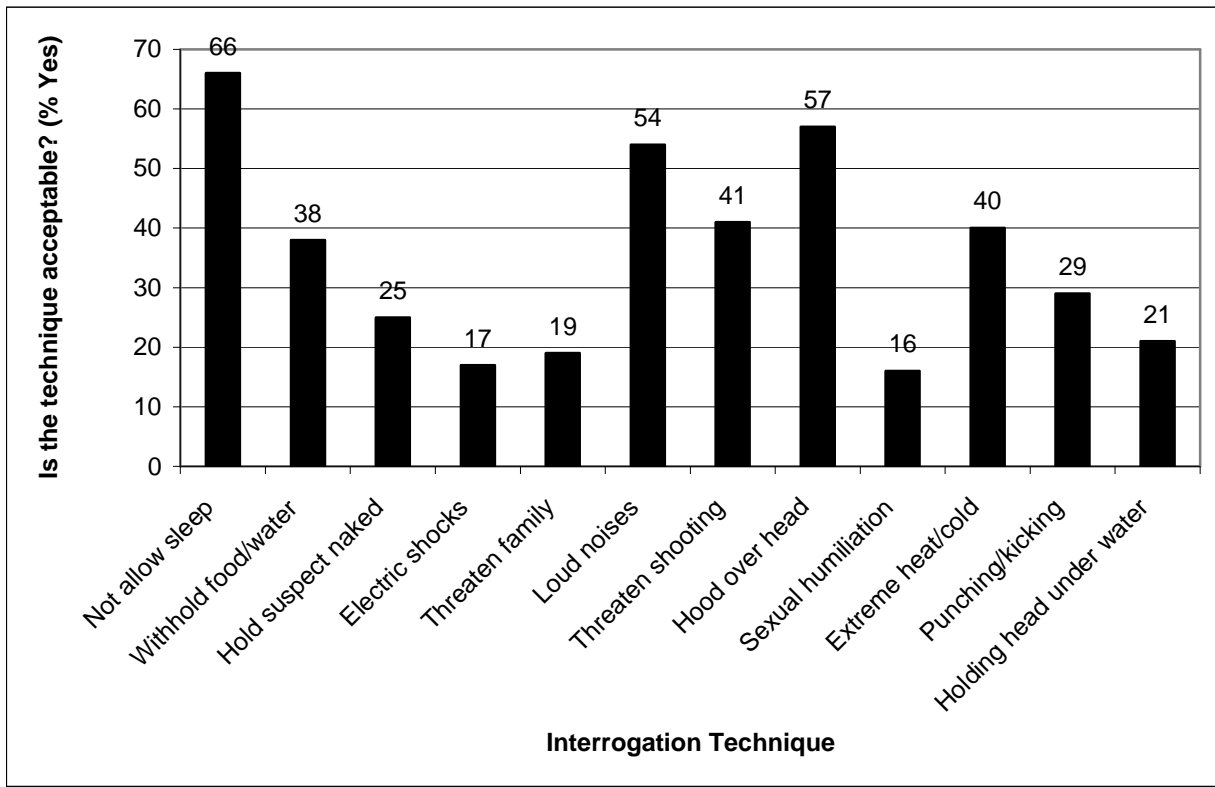
**Should the U.S. pressure other nations to grant the right to trial to prisoners?**

	<i>Question Position</i>	
	<i>Asked before U.S. trial</i>	<i>Asked after U.S. trial</i>
<i>Yes</i>	63% [321]	57% [274]
<i>Maybe</i>	23% [115]	30% [145]
<i>No</i>	14% [72]	13% [62]

$X^2 = 7.189$  ( $p = 0.027$ )

N for each cell displayed in brackets

**Figure 1: Support for Various Techniques in the Interrogation of Suspected Terrorists**



Source: ABC News/Washington Post Poll; May, 2004

## Reviewer's Appendix

**Table A-1: Who supports torture? (robustness checks)**

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	<b>1-5 Support Scale (5 = "Yes, in most cases")</b>	<b>Maybes with "Yes" (0-1)</b>	<b>Maybes with "No" (0-1)</b>
<i>Party ID (1-7, Strong Republican=7)</i>	0.115***	0.157***	0.088***
	[0.027]	[0.031]	[0.031]
<i>Ideology (1-5, Very Conservative=5)</i>	0.440***	0.383***	0.494***
	[0.060]	[0.069]	[0.072]
<i>Church Attendance (1-4)</i>	0.067*	0.050	0.052
	[0.035]	[0.041]	[0.041]
<i>Education (1-5)</i>	-0.133***	-0.139**	-0.092
	[0.048]	[0.056]	[0.057]
<i>Income (1-14)</i>	0.011	-0.001	0.037**
	[0.014]	[0.016]	[0.016]
<i>Age (18-88)</i>	-0.006**	-0.008**	-0.008**
	[0.003]	[0.003]	[0.003]
<i>Female (0-1)</i>	-0.264***	-0.201**	-0.279***
	[0.087]	[0.100]	[0.102]
<i>Constant</i>	--	-1.037***	-1.827***
		[0.308]	[0.324]
<i>N</i>	776	776	776

Ordered probit coefficients in Column 1, probit coefficients in Columns 2 and 3, standard errors in brackets.

\* denotes  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Table A-2: Who supports right to trial? (robustness checks)**

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	<b>1-3 Support Scale (3 = "Yes")</b>	<b>Maybes with "Yes" (0-1)</b>	<b>Maybes with "No" (0-1)</b>
<i>Party ID (1-7, Strong Republican=7)</i>	-0.170***	-0.175***	-0.169***
	[0.028]	[0.034]	[0.031]
<i>Ideology (1-5, Very Conservative=5)</i>	-0.434***	-0.428***	-0.449***
	[0.061]	[0.076]	[0.069]
<i>Church Attendance (1-4)</i>	-0.007	0.039	-0.043
	[0.037]	[0.045]	[0.042]
<i>Education (1-5)</i>	0.222***	0.165***	0.261***
	[0.052]	[0.063]	[0.058]
<i>Income (1-14)</i>	-0.008	-0.018	-0.001
	[0.014]	[0.017]	[0.016]
<i>Age (18-88)</i>	-0.003	-0.007*	-0.001
	[0.003]	[0.004]	[0.003]
<i>Female (0-1)</i>	0.105	0.409***	-0.138
	[0.091]	[0.109]	[0.102]
<i>Constant</i>	--	2.474***	1.511***
		[0.359]	[0.318]
<i>N</i>	779	779	779

Ordered probit coefficients in Column 1, probit coefficients in Columns 2 and 3, standard errors in brackets.

\* denotes  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ .