

EXHIBIT 62

A push to ban psychologists' role in torture

The Boston Globe

August 17, 2008 Sunday, FIRST EDITION

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Section: METRO; Pg. B1

Length: 596 words

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Body

Holding signs that read, "Do no harm" and "Abolish torture," about 100 people attended a rally outside the American Psychological Association's annual convention yesterday, urging the organizations to ban its members from being involved in military interrogations and torture as part of the war on terrorism.

A resolution to that effect is being weighed by the organization's 148,000 members, and debate on the topic has permeated the discussion at this year's meeting, held at the Boston Exhibition and Convention Center. Members are sending in their votes on the issue this month.

The actions of psychologists have been called into question lately as their role in the Bush administration's interrogation policies in detention centers around the globe increasingly has been made public.

"We need to make policy changes to ensure that this never happens again," said Steven Reisner, a New York psychologist who spoke at the rally and is running for president of the association.

He noted that psychologists' involvement in interrogations that include prolonged isolation, sleep deprivation, or sensory overload violates the primary responsibility of all medical personnel to do no harm.

"These are standard operating procedures," Reisner said.

But some have opposed the measure, saying resolution by the group passed last year that prohibits taking part in specific acts of torture is enough. The measure bans direct or indirect participation in 19 forms of torture including mock execution, rape, use of drugs, and exposure to extreme temperatures, and urged the US government to discontinue such practices.

"Torture and abuse are always unethical and prohibited," said Stephen Behnke, who directs the association's ethics office. "The question is how to best fight an administration policy that permits such practices."

Under the association's ethics code, psychologists may "serve in consultative roles to interrogation and information-gathering processes for national-security related purposes" as long as they don't include the 19 prohibited torture acts.

Members are divided on whether that should change.

"For some, any involvement is complicity," Behnke said. "Others maintain that you have to be present to make it clear that these acts are never permissible."

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Leonard Rubenstein, who heads Physicians for Human Rights, a Washington-based group, suggested that the psychologists' group should follow the lead of the American Medical Association, which has a policy of not getting involved with interrogations and prohibits physicians from verifying a prisoner's health so that torture can begin or continue.

"Psychologists are very directly engaged," he said. "Behavioral science teams make sure everything a detainee sees or hears enhances the interrogation process ... they are involved in the whole effort to break detainees down."

Psychologists have helped define lines of questioning for detainees, suggested techniques to get them to divulge information, and advised military personnel on when a person has had enough or when they should push harder in a confrontation. Some say such practices are tantamount to torture.

"They are really at the heart of it," Rubenstein said. "It's not enough to say that you can't participate in torture, it's the interrogations."

While the association can't dictate individual members' actions, state licensing boards often take professional groups' ethics codes into consideration when determining their own rules or considering whether to suspend or revoke a license, Reisner said.

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Graphic

Dressed as an enemy combatant, psychologist Antonia Cedrone staged a protest yesterday outside the convention.

Load-Date: August 19, 2008

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