



Stephen H. Behnke, PhD, JD, MDiv

July 18, 2015

Dear Steve,

Over the past week, I have had the opportunity to read the Hoffman Report. I am stunned by the misinformation, mischaracterization, and biased presentation of this Report. When the James Risen book chapter raised the issue of APA involvement in prisoner abuses, I wrote Dr. Nadine Kaslow, APA President, and recommended an independent review. Other individuals issued a similar call. I very much regret that decision, as it is quite clear that the review was anything but unbiased.

I so appreciated our work together on the 2006 APA Resolution Against Torture, the 2007 Resolution, and more recently the 2013 Policy Related to Psychologists' Work in National Security Settings and Reaffirmation of the APA Position Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. As a Peace Psychologist and Professor of Psychology and International Human Rights, I anticipated our work to be challenging, as I knew many within APA were strongly supportive of psychologist work in national security settings. During my term as President of Division 48 (Peace Psychology Division), I found that even among peace psychologists there was not a single view about torture or enhanced interrogations. Regardless, I felt very strongly that APA needed a strong anti-torture policy and ideally a prohibition on psychologist involvement in national security interrogations. You were always open to differences of opinion. I remember when the 2007 committee started to craft policy that I could not support and I resigned, you respectfully appreciated my decision and remained open to my feedback.

Perhaps, the most distressing aspect of the Hoffman Report is the tenor of the Report. I'm struck with how efforts to navigate complex policy waters became characterized as "collusion" or "manipulations." I have drafted university policies as well as written book chapters, articles, etc. with others. It is a back and forth collaborative process to get it right. Our conversation and process is presented but then totally misrepresented. For example:

Within APA, I have volunteered on a number of Education Directorate projects related to diversity and international issues. Staff members always served as a resource and provided feedback. Regardless, the final product has always been attributed to the Task Force members and not staff. Hence I was angered to read: "Wanting to maximize the appearance that this was purely a Division 48 resolution, and not one managed and watered down by him, Behnke suggested a response that acknowledged contact with APA staff, but falsely implied that the contact was merely procedural." The evidence for this claim? It was your email where you wrote: "The Movers would like to move the Resolution forward as expeditiously as possible, and have asked staff to indicate what mechanisms are available to get the Resolution before Council at the earliest date." I remain clueless as to how they achieved their conclusion based on your simple email, even more confusing as it is taken out of context.

Another example, as we were working on the final draft, you forwarded it to another interested party (a common procedure) affiliated with the military and you wrote, "[T]ell me if you see anything problematic"—a pretty straightforward request. However, the Hoffman Report then characterized your actions/comments as "Within ten minutes of receiving this email from Woolf, Behnke forwarded the resolution to Banks to seek his pre-clearance, commenting that he thought it was "tolerable." Similarly, all APA proposed policy must go through a governance review process and is assigned a primary Board/Committee. Anything related to ethics is assigned to the Ethics Office. Yet, the report made it seem as if the Ethics office was meddling and co-opting the process. The Report states, "On March 19, Behnke emailed Woolf, Van Hoorn, and Okorodudu and began efforts to form a partnership with them for the purpose of influencing the language of their resolution." Actually, it was your job to contact us! I can only surmise that Hoffman and Associates know nothing about the legislative process within APA

Throughout the document there are notations such as, "Woolf also suggested that they (1) strengthen one of the "whereas" statements to include specific examples; . . . Later that evening, Behnke responded that he was reviewing the changes with Moorehead-Slaughter on the phone and that the changes looked good." Regardless, the conclusion of the report was that you were working to subvert the process and weaken the Resolution. The Report makes the claim that you tried to stall the process

and yet the Resolution was brought to the Council immediately for an expedited review. The Hoffman Report totally disregarded some events and took other events and bent them to fit a destructive narrative.

Just one last example—there are so many! According to the Report, “Woolf sent Behnke an email titled “[j]ust between us elves!” and attached the working draft from her subgroup on the proposed substitute motion. Woolf told Behnke that they wanted to make sure that the substitute motion ‘doesn’t weaken in any way the 2006 Resolution’”. The email in question was non-substantive. I can only imagine that the Report included a reference to this email to highlight some sort of collusion narrative based on one of my light-hearted subject headings. The report doesn’t really understand the back-and-forth nature of all of our work as we endeavored to draft the best possible resolution.

I’m stunned at the number of times the Report states something along the line of “Sidley was not able to find any additional email communications on this point. However, it is clear that Behnke . . . “ and then they seem to just make up their conclusion.

Moreover, I had to push for an interview with Hoffman and Associates and recommended that they also contact Judy Van Hoorn and Corann Okorodudu and the attorneys did not contact them. Here are individuals mentioned throughout the Report but they were never interviewed. The Report reached conclusions with inadequate information.

Ironically, you worked just as hard for us, with the same respectful and open style, on the 2013 Policy. The 2013 Policy was an effort to reconcile all the previous policies and put them together in a single document. It exemplifies years of policy development (for which you are described as subverting every policy in the Report so that all policies were weakened and supportive of interrogations) and yet, the final policy is characterized positively in the Report as a reflection of the “Obama Administration’s clear rejection of the interrogation program” and “APA responded to the changed climate and reduced its defense of the policies it had earlier fought so hard to defend.” Apparently, Hoffman and Associates could not see the contradiction of their own words and Report.

As an aside, I wanted to add how much I have always appreciated your openness to teaching others about ethics. I remember your presentation at the National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology—a forum primarily for High School and undergraduate teachers. You gave a wonderful and very useful workshop for those wanting to integrate more about ethics into their teaching.

Again, I am saddened and dismayed by the Hoffman Report. The Report does not reflect my experiences of working with you during that time. It was a gross injustice.

Sincerely,



Linda M. Woolf, PhD  
Professor, Psychology and International Human Rights  
Past-President: Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, & Violence (Div. 48, APA)  
Board Member: Institute for the Study of Genocide  
Fellow: American Psychological Association