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Former Department of Defense General Counsel Recommended Torture, Harsh Interrogation Techniques

San Francisco - The National Lawyers Guild San Francisco Bay Area Chapter (NLGSF) is filing [a complaint](#) with the California State Bar today against former Department of Defense General Counsel William Haynes. The complaint against Haynes, who now works for the Chevron Corporation in San Ramon, states that he “breached his duty as a lawyer and advocated for harsh tactics amounting to torture in violation of U.S. and international law ... advocacy that directly lead to detainee abuses at the Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib facilities.”

A copy of the complaint is available upon request or can be accessed at: <http://www.nlgsf.org/committees/againsttorture.php> . The complaint will be mailed to the State Bar Los Angeles office and hand-delivered to the State Bar Office in San Francisco, where there will be a 12:30 press conference.

Press Conference
State Bar Office
180 Howard Street
Monday, March 16, 12:30 PM

“We believe Mr. Haynes must be held accountable, just as any other lawyer would be,” said Carlos Villarreal, Executive Director of the NLGSF. “But we are filing this complaint today not out of motivation to harm Mr. Haynes, but to ensure that torture is again relegated to the status it had before the Bush Administration’s tenure, and that the harmful, sometimes deadly, and completely ineffective policy of torture is truly deterred.”

While working for the Department of Defense, Haynes ignored the serious concerns coming from all branches of the military and recommended in a memo to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, approval of certain harsh interrogation techniques, including removal of clothing, stress positions, and the use of dogs against detainees. The Senate Armed Services Committee has described the memo as “grossly deficient.”

“Powerful leaders can and do engage in illegal acts and inhumane treatment of others. These leaders often rely on lawyers and the legal system to give the appearance of legitimacy to an illegal agenda. Sadly, there always seems to be lawyers willing to do the bidding of powerful rulers,” said Sharon Adams, attorney member of the NLGSF. “The State Bar must uphold ethics and the rule of law, and repudiate Mr. Haynes’ actions.”

Haynes worked with other lawyers in the Bush administration who have yet to face consequences for their advocacy of torture and other wrongdoing, including former Justice Department lawyer and current UC Berkeley School of Law Professor John Yoo. “We are in a position where even members of the new administration are suggesting criminal charges against Bush officials for torture and other crimes are off the table since many of these officials relied on legal advice,” said Jim Lafferty, Executive Director of the National Lawyers Guild Office in Los Angeles. “If the lawyers are not held accountable for their misdeeds, then essentially high crimes with serious consequences have been committed but nobody is to blame.”

As a Registered in House Counsel for the Chevron Corporation, Haynes was not required to take the California Bar Exam but is also not able to appear in court or practice law beyond giving advice to Chevron. He is, however, required to “abide by all of the laws and rules that govern members of the State Bar of California,” according to California Rules of Court.