



CLIP TRANSCRIPT

Alberto Mora- American Leadership on Human Rights is Gone

The country made a whole host of wrong decisions during the Bush Administration. I was a member of that decision...of that administration, rather. I wish I could have done more. Now, on the other hand, I take a great deal of satisfaction in the fact that on the interrogation – from the first moment I heard about this, I literally every single day, I was acting on this. There was not a d...I take pride in the fact that there was not a day that went by until the...the, uh, Guantanamo authorizations were reversed that I didn't do something to advance...advance that, um.

And given what I was doing and the nature of my responsibilities, um, I had neither the information nor indications from other sources that there was a more systemic kind of problem that...uh, that was afoot. In retrospect, was I naive? Did I see only a small part of the picture, and understand only a small part of the problem? Absolutely. Absolutely. Um, President Bush has just issued his memoirs...uh, partial memoirs. He takes pride in authorizing water boarding, a technique that has been regarded as classic torture for centuries. It's...it's...It remains to me a source of astonishment that...that this should be so. And, um, it's astonishments and sadness because it's altered the debate.

There will be other terrorist attacks; we all understand that. Um, and even now half the American people believe that the application of torture, um, is perfectly okay if it could keep us safer. And so we've altered and broken the national consensus on the application of cruelty to individuals. We've altered the understanding and the definition of American values. Um, and if we continue on this path we're going to change our current constitution and—which is what identifies us as a country—in ways that in another era would have been regarded as un-American, as profoundly contrary to our deepest nature and, um, core identity.

And I've indicated to you some of the international consequences. The application of torture had negative consequences operationally in the War on Terror. It made us less safe, not more safe. It may be that we got some actionable intelligence from some of the detainees, but our...the impact, the negative...the destructive consequences it had on our ability to maintain and expand the alliance of nature...of nations that fought together behind a unified set of goals in the War on Terror was...was shattered. Um, the international consensus on human rights is shattered. American leadership on human rights is gone. We may try to regain some of it. President Obama has made some headways, but the nation's identification with cruelty—to give you one example—and less than due process to the Guantanamo detainees and other detainees has affected international confidence in the United States and the values we subscribe to, and that's impaired our ability to



lead internationally on these...these areas. If we can't lead on human rights, then we become another country. It's...we lose the exceptionalism that so many in the country rightfully take pride in.