

By Brett Wilkins

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[Washington](#) - More than two dozen American University students staged a walk-out protest during an address by former vice president Dick Cheney at the Washington, DC school on Thursday. Some of the students called Cheney a "war criminal" as they left the speech, which was hosted by The Kennedy Political Union, MSNBC [reports](#)

Cheney denied the "war criminal" charge, saying that "the accusations are not true," [according to](#) *The Eagle*

, American University's student newspaper.

"Some people called it torture, it wasn't torture," Cheney told American University student television station ATV, referring to the so-called "enhanced interrogation techniques" approved for use against terrorism suspects by the [highest-ranking Bush administration officials](#)

While insisting that the interrupted drowning technique known as [waterboarding](#)

isn't torture, in 2011 Cheney [acknowledged](#)

that it would be unacceptable for Iranian interrogators to waterboard an American citizen.

Still, Cheney was unapologetic following the American University protest.

"If I would have to do it all over again, I would," Cheney insisted during the ATV interview. "The results speak for themselves."

Multiple bipartisan studies, including a Senate report [released on Monday](#)

, have concluded that torture did not provide any key evidence in the hunt for 9/11 perpetrator Osama bin Laden. Many expert observers have argued that not only was torture ineffective, it fomented great anger and hostility toward the United States, ultimately [creating more terrorists](#)

Immediately following the September 11, 2001 al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the United States, Cheney and his legal counsel, David Addington, conspired to greatly expand executive power. After the opening of the highly controversial US military prison camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, Addington declared that President George W. Bush "has determined that they (GITMO detainees) are all enemy combatants" and there was "nothing to talk about" in regards to US obligations under domestic and international law to treat the prisoners humanely. The administration argued that the detainees were not prisoners of war but rather

["enemy combatants"](#)

and were not, therefore, entitled to Geneva Convention protections.

Justice Department lawyer and Cheney ally John Yoo argued that the president had unlimited wartime powers and issued a now-infamous memo in which he

[asserted](#)

that detainee abuse only crossed the threshold into torture in the event that the pain inflicted upon the victim was equal to "organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death."

Armed with such broad-ranging powers granted by compliant administration officials, US military and intelligence operatives tortured countless terrorism suspects, prisoners of war and other detainees. The majority of these men, women and children were innocent, according to Gen. Antonio Taguba, who prepared a

[report](#)

on the Abu Ghraib torture scandal, and Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff for Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Col. Wilkerson

[claims](#)

Bush, Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld knew that the majority of the then-742 Guantánamo detainees were innocent but held them anyway for political reasons.

Cheney is also

[accused](#)

of ordering the continued waterboarding of terrorism suspect Abu Zubaydah, even after the al-Qaeda operative was "compliant" and had no more information to offer. According to Abu Zubaydah's interrogators, this crime was committed in a bid to force the terrorist to reveal a non-existent Iraq-Al-Qaeda connection.

Among the many illegal torture techniques and other abuses suffered by War on Terror detainees at the hands of their American captors are:

[homicide](#)

,
[rape](#)

of men and

[women](#)

, imprisonment of innocent family members as

[bargaining chips](#)

, brutal

[beatings](#)

,
[denial](#)

of medical treatment, interrupted drowning

[\(waterboarding\)](#)

,
[solitary confinement](#)

,
[sensory deprivation](#)

,
[sleep deprivation](#)

,
[food and water deprivation](#)

,
[force-feeding](#)

, exposure to
[\(sometimes deadly\)](#)
temperature extremes,
[exposure to insects](#)

, prolonged exposure to
[deafeningly loud music](#)

,
[sexual humiliation](#)

,
[menacing and attacking with dogs](#)

, shackling in painful
["stress positions,"](#)
being repeatedly and forcefully
[slammed into walls](#)

,
[death and rape threats](#)

against detainees and their relatives, and
["Palestinian crucifixion."](#)

Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and other administration officials knew that the approved torture techniques, most of which are listed above (although some of the abuses, chiefly the homicides and rapes, were not approved), violated US and international law, including the

[War Crimes Act](#)

, the

[Federal Anti-Torture Statute](#)

, the

[Torture Victims Protection Act](#)

, the

[Geneva Conventions](#)

and the

[United Nations Convention Against Torture](#)

, which states that "no exceptional circumstance whatsoever... may be invoked as a justification for torture."

A recent landmark bipartisan study found

["indisputable"](#)

evidence that the US engaged in torture during the course of the War on Terror and urged President Barack Obama to declassify a

[6,000-page Senate report](#)

on CIA torture. But despite 2008

[campaign promises](#)

to hold Bush-era torturers accountable, Obama has made a concerted effort to

[protect them](#)

from prosecution, while prosecuting

[intelligence](#)

and

[military](#)

officials who blow the whistle on torture.

While Cheney may remain a popular figure among US conservatives, he is very cautious about leaving the United States for fear that he could be arrested and tried for war crimes. In 2012, he

[canceled](#)

a trip to Canada, claiming America's neighbor to the north was "too dangerous." The previous year, Bush

[canceled](#)

a planned trip to Switzerland over concerns he would be subject to arrest and prosecution for torture.