

VFW Says Don't Pursue Bush Officials for Interrogation Policies

Apr 29, 2009

WASHINGTON — The national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is deeply concerned that calls to punish Bush Administration officials over enemy interrogation policies will further divide the country along partisan lines. He wants President Obama to let the issue go.

"We cannot go backwards and prosecute people for providing advice in a post-9/11 environment," said Glen M. Gardner Jr., a Vietnam veteran from Round Rock, Texas.

"Our nation must never conduct or condone torture in any form, but it would be extremely disingenuous to pretend that none of us would do whatever was necessary to protect or rescue our children," he said. "That was the post-9/11 environment. An enemy viciously murdered 3,000 innocent people on American soil and our government acted to protect us from future terrorist attacks."

Gardner said calls for the president to pursue legal action against former government officials who justified the use of the extreme interrogation techniques look more like a political vendetta than calls for justice.

"President Obama needs to ignore these calls for political blood and move forward for the good of the nation," he said. "The horrific events of 9/11 united us as a nation. We must not allow partisan motives to divide us, because we remain in a two-front war against a very real enemy with a global reach and a brutal appetite for death and destruction. Let's not lose that focus."

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