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The U.S. and Torture

Letter to the Editor

New York Times

December 6, 2005

To the Editor:

What can the United States say concerning allegations by a United Nations official of the use of torture in China (news article, Dec. 3)?

Probably not much, in view of our secret prisons around the globe, our practice of "rendering" prisoners to other countries (presumably for torture) and our treatment of prisoners in Afghanistan, Iraq and Guantanamo. Vice President Dick Cheney, moreover, is trying to exclude the C.I.A. from a proposed ban on cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners.

There was a time when the United States, using our prestige and moral authority, could join other nations in trying to help victims of cruel and inhumane treatment everywhere in the world. Not anymore.

Gene Oishi

Baltimore, Dec. 3, 2005