



Torture As Public Policy: Restoring U.S. Credibility on the World Stage

James P. Pfiffner

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After September 11, 2001 the Bush Administration decided that the most important intelligence about terrorism would come from the interrogation of captives suspected of terrorism. As a result, many detainees were subject to harsh interrogation techniques that at times amounted to torture. Here, James P. Pfiffner authoritatively examines the policy directives, operational decisions, and leadership actions of the Bush Administration that reversed centuries of US policy on the treatment of enemy prisoners. He shows how the serious reservations of career military lawyers about these policies were overcome by the political appointees of the Bush Administration. Pfiffner then analyses the philosophical and legal underpinnings of the policies and practices that have led to the denunciation of the United States' policies by its allies and adversaries throughout the world. Looking ahead, Pfiffner anticipates Obama administration policy changes to restore U.S. credibility and accountability. In all, Torture as Public Policy is a model of detailed policy analysis that demonstrates how greatly public policy matters beyond the back corridors of bureaucracy.

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