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February 3, 2005

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is the only full-service professional organization that represents the interests of the nation's 2.7 million registered nurses including registered nurses who serve in the military through our FedNA constituent. The nursing profession is very concerned about the possible role of registered nurses in the reports of abuse of detainees at U.S. detention and interrogation facilities. ANA supports further investigation into any possible actions of health care professionals during these abuses and we offer our expertise and guidance related to the professional role and ethics of registered nurses to any inquiry and mediation that might be forthcoming.

The ANA *Code of Ethics for Nurses (2001)* is an ethical code that requires registered nurses to protect and advocate for all patients. Abuses of prisoners, including a failure to report known prisoner abuses by a registered nurse would be in conflict with our professional code and other guiding documents. Recent DoD investigations (the Fay Report) and other reports concluded that some Army medical personnel failed to report known instances of abuse of detainees at U.S. detention and interrogation facilities. These reports do not indicate whether or not registered nurses in the military participated in torture, attempts to cover up torture, or failed to report events of torture known to them. Army investigator MG George R. Fay has urged that further inquiry into the possible failure of medical professionals "to properly document and report the abuse" be undertaken (Recommendation 30). ANA strongly supports this recommendation.

- MORE -
[see following page]

Thank you for your consideration of this critical matter. I look forward to your reply. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 301-628-5011 or Laurie Badzek, RN, MS, JD, LLM, Director of ANA's Center for Ethics and Human Rights, at (301) 628-5054 or via email lbadzek@ana.org.

Sincerely,

Barbara Blakeney, MS, RN
President

cc: Linda J. Stierle, MSN, RN, CNAAB, BC,
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