

The University of New Hampshire Law Review

Volume 9
Number 2 *University of New Hampshire Law Review*

Article 4

March 2011

Foreword

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U.S. Department of State

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Repository Citation

Michael H. Posner, *Foreword*, 9 U.N.H. L. REV. 181 (2011), available at http://scholars.unh.edu/unh_lr/vol9/iss2/4

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FOREWORD

MICHAEL H. POSNER*

I first met John Hutson in 2005 when I was the Executive Director of Human Rights First. Human Rights First was working to challenge the use of cruelty by U.S. officials in security detentions, practices that had been used at Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, and elsewhere after the attacks on September 11, 2001. We knew that the human rights community acting alone could not influence this debate, so we went looking for national security experts to help us challenge these practices.

Luckily, we found John Hutson. From the first time we met, I was struck by John's candor, sense of humor, and willingness to roll up his sleeves and get to work in the trenches. Some retired military leaders might have been a bit wary of working with a human rights organization, but John enthusiastically agreed. He helped us build a powerful coalition of retired generals and admirals who believed that torture is wrong and undermines our national security. Together, we met with Senators and members of Congress to discuss our views and concerns about U.S. detention policies. In particular, John was deeply troubled by how these policies might compromise our troops' safety in the theater of war. He testified very effectively before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, challenging the so-called "enhanced interrogation practices" and calling into question the efficacy of such practices. He did so knowing that his outspoken criticisms would put him at odds with some in the military. Yet, he was willing to take this on because he was committed to his beliefs. Being unpopular takes character and moral courage. As Robert Kennedy once said: "Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in

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battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality for those who seek to change a world which yields most painfully to change.”

In any society, the strength and stability of a democracy is measured in part by its government’s willingness to tolerate dissent. Human rights defenders around the world fight for citizens to be able to challenge their governments, express their opinion, and vote for change without retribution or punishment. Yet, these ideals are only realized if individuals are willing to speak up, challenge the status quo, and demand that the rule of law prevail even when it is not popular. A democracy not only needs a tolerant government but courageous citizens as well.

That is what America has in John D. Hutson, and his outspoken advocacy is a great tribute to the strength of our democracy. He is unflinching in his values and is willing to stand up for what he believes in even when his views are unpopular and at odds with those in power.

John’s commitment to justice and the rule of law is rooted in his service to this country as a naval officer. During his 28-year career in the U.S. Navy, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (with three gold stars), Meritorious Service Medal (with two gold stars), Navy Commendation Medal, and Navy Achievement Medal. As the Judge Advocate General for the U.S. Navy, John saw firsthand the necessity of upholding the rule of law to protect our soldiers in harm’s way.

Although John has retired as Dean of the University of New Hampshire School of Law, I know he will not retire from participating in our democracy or shy away from standing up for justice and human rights. I want to add my thanks to you, John, for your tireless efforts in advancing human rights and the rule of law.