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November 25, 2008

I want to set the record straight about a dinner I attended on November 20, in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Federalist Society — a conservative and libertarian legal group of which I am a member. Attorney General Michael Mukasey was the keynote speaker.

In his speech, Attorney General Mukasey justified the Bush administration's policies in the War on Terror, which included denying meaningful hearings for prisoners in Guantanamo, and other questionable tactics, all in the name of national security. Mr. Mukasey said those who criticize the Administration for abandoning provisions of the Geneva Conventions fail to recognize that "... Al Qaeda [is] an international terrorist group, and not, the last time I checked, a signatory to the Conventions." Although the United States **is** a signatory, and these Conventions prohibit torture, the audience laughed. Attorney General Mukasey received a standing ovation. I passionately disagree with these views: the government must never set aside the Constitution; domestic and international law forbids torture; and access to the writ of habeas corpus should not be denied.

The program provided no opportunity for questions or response, and I felt compelled to speak out. I stood up, and said, "tyrant," and then left the meeting. No one else said anything. I believe we must speak our conscience in moments that demand it, even if we are but one voice.

I hope those who know my jurisprudence will agree that to truly love the Constitution is to uphold it, to speak out for it, not just in times of peace and prosperity, but also in times of chaos and crisis.

I did not "heckle" Attorney General Mukasey, and I did not disrupt the meeting, as those who watch the video of his speech on the Federalist Society's website will discover. I left before Mr. Mukasey had his frightening collapse. I learned of his collapse later, from news reports. It should go without saying that, despite our vastly different views on what constitutes upholding the rule of law, I hope he continues to recover and remain in good health.