

Kommentar zu CIA-Folter: Amerikas Schande

Ein Kommentar von Markus Feldenkirchen, Washington, Dienstag, 09.12.2014 – 19:19 Uhr

Assignment: *You are on an exchange programme, staying with your host family on their cattle ranch. At school, your social studies class is planning a project on human rights, and you have been asked to [present](#) a German perspective of the US and its recent human rights record, based on this [opinion piece](#). – You like your hosts, they like you and you will therefore tread very carefully. Draft an informal speech of about 250 words in complete sentences.*

[Madam / Sir, fellow students,]

Thank you for letting me tell you about an opinion piece in “Der Spiegel”, one German online magazine.

You know that Germans have been looking up to this country since US forces liberated them from Nazi dictatorship. After all, the US has been the leader of the free world and a beacon of hope to the oppressed worldwide.

This is why, news of torture by government agencies in the aftermath of 09/11 have come as a shock. This piece was published in December 2014 in the wake of a report to the US Senate on the human rights record of the CIA etc.

It argues that the CIA’s torture and the surveillance by the NSA, for example, are unworthy of the US. The trauma of 09/11 may explain but cannot justify these practices. A country like the US should therefore not do as its enemies do but practise what it preaches.

According to this opinion piece, the Senate report is both a danger as well as an opportunity. On the one hand, rogue states might claim that the US is no better than they are. But on the other hand, the very fact that it has been published, illustrates the fundamental difference between those regimes and a free country.

In fact, the text concludes, this may be the nation’s chance to remember and live up to its own ideals.

[Thank you for your attention]

(229 words)