

# WHITEHOUSE: WE HAVE TO LOOK BACK

This speech from Senator Whitehouse is a nice follow-on to this conversation. This is just a highlight—the whole thing is worth reading.

President Obama looks to that future. Given the depth and severity of those predicaments, we need all his energy to look forward to lead us to that brighter day; forward to what Winston Churchill in Britain's dark days called those "broad and sunlit uplands."

But, as we steer toward this broad and sunlit future, what about the past? As the President looks forward and charts a new course, must someone not also look back, to take an accounting of where we are, what was done, and what must now be repaired.

[snip]

In short, when you have pervasive infiltration into all the halls of government – judicial, legislative, and executive – of the most ignoble forms of influence; when you see systematic dismantling of historic processes and traditions of government that are the safeguards of our democracy; and when you have a bodyguard of lies, jargon, and propaganda emitted to fool and beguile the American people...

Well, something very serious in the history of our republic has gone wrong, something that dims the light of progress for all humanity.

[snip]

If we blind ourselves to this history, if we pull an invisibility cloak over it, we will deny ourselves its lessons. Those lessons came at too painful a cost

to ignore. Those lessons merit discovery, disclosure and discussion. Indeed, disclosure and discussion is the difference between a valuable lesson for the bright upward forces of our democracy, and a blueprint for darker forces to return and do it all over again.

A little bright, healthy sunshine and fresh air, so that an educated population knows what was done and how, can show where the tunnels were bored, when the truth was subordinated; what institutions were subverted; how our democracy was compromised; so this grim history is not condemned to repeat itself; so a knowing public in the clarity of day can say, "Never, never, never, again;" so we can keep that light – that light that is at once America's greatest gift and greatest strength – brightly shining. To do this, I submit, we must look back.

I'll have a second YouTube from my conversation with Whitehouse up—though probably not until tomorrow—in which he addresses how we should look back with respect to torture.