ALL THE TORTURE'S THAT FIT TO CALL TORTURE NOW INCLUDES US TORTURE

On Monday in Salon, I said (in part),

> [T]he recent history of America's torture also damns the conventions of journalism that strive so hard for some kind of fake balance that still prefers a term that obscures the truth over one that accurately describes it.
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> Don't get me wrong: We owe our knowledge of torture to some of the best journalists in the business, people like Jane Mayer and Dana Priest and Adam Goldman.
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> But as soon as coverage moved beyond that superb investigative work to coverage of the politics of torture — to the journalists who should hold those who implemented torture accountable — we remain mired in obscurantist language.
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> Which brings us to the torture report result the press might take most seriously.
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> According to McClatchy, in addition to misleading Congress, DOJ and the White House, the torture report concludes that the CIA also fed misleading information to the press: "[T]he news media were manipulated with leaks that tended to blunt criticism of the agency."
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> Part of this manipulation (one the White House participated in) involved convincing the press to call torture something else, something it's not. Enhanced interrogation. Harsh treatment.

> Anything but torture.
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> For 10 years, journalists have willingly perpetuated this linguistic absurdity, even as more evidence came out proving the CIA used torture and not some fluffed up interrogation process, even as more and more neutral arbiters judged our torture torture.
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> The Senate Intelligence Committee has spent five years trying to understand and come to grips with the torture done in our name. Isn't it time for journalists to do the same?

While I don't flatter myself that my column was needed at this point – or even would have been influential –the NYT did just announce that it would henceforth call torture, including US torture, torture.

> Over the past few months, reporters and editors of The Times have debated a subject that has come up regularly ever since the world learned of the C.I.A.'s brutal questioning of terrorism suspects: whether to call the practices torture.
>
> [snip]
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> Given [changes that have taken place in recent years, including with the legal status of torture], reporters urged that The Times recalibrate its language. I agreed. So from now on, The Times will use the word "torture" to describe incidents in which we know for sure that interrogators inflicted pain on a prisoner in an effort to get information.

I may have more to say about the substance of the statement down the road. But for now two things are important: The most prestigious newspaper in the country has formally given up

Bush’s euphemism. And this change came from the reporters.

May other outlets follow the Gray Lady’s lead.