

## President Obama Won't Rule Out Torture

By [Doug Giebel](#)

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During his April 29, 2009, press conference, President Obama was asked if he would ever authorize or resort to torture. His answer more than implied an acceptance of torture, and true to form it was ignored in conference recaps by the main stream media.

The question was asked by Mark Knoller of CBS News. Here is the exchange (**emphasis added**):

OBAMA: Mark Knoller?

KNOLLER: Thank you, sir. Let me follow up, if I may, on [the previous] question. Did you read the documents recently referred to by former Vice President Cheney and others saying that the use of so-called "enhanced interrogation techniques" not only protected the nation but saved lives? **And if part of the United States were under imminent threat, could you envision yourself ever authorizing the use of those enhanced interrogation techniques?**

OBAMA: I have read the documents. Now they have not been officially declassified and released. And so I don't want to go to the details of them. But here's what I can tell you, that the public reports and the public justifications for these techniques, which is that we got information from these individuals that were subjected to these techniques, doesn't answer the core question.

Which is, could we have gotten that same information without resorting to these techniques? And it doesn't answer the broader question, are we safer as a consequence of having used these techniques?

So when I made the decision to release these memos and when I made the decision to bar these practices, this was based on consultation with my entire national security team, and based on my understanding that ultimately I will be judged as commander-in-chief on how safe I'm keeping the American people.

That's the responsibility I wake up with and it's the responsibility I go to sleep with. **And so I will do whatever is required to keep the American people safe.** But I am absolutely convinced that the best way I can do that is to make sure that we are not taking short cuts that undermine who we are.

**And there have been no circumstances during the course of this first 100 days in which I have seen information that would make me second guess the decision that I have made. OK?**

So there, in a passing comment, is the answer to the broadest question of all: Would President Obama ever condone "enhanced interrogation techniques" (the favored euphemism for "torture")? He "will do whatever is required," especially if he sees

“information that would” change his mind about the use of torture.

Is it any wonder President Obama is gun-shy about investigating, interrogating and prosecuting those from the Bush administration who violated laws prohibiting torture?

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