

OBAMA ON THE OLC MEMO RELEASE

With my comments interspersed:

The Department of Justice will today release certain memos issued by the Office of Legal Counsel between 2002 and 2005 as part of an ongoing court case. These memos speak to techniques that were used in the interrogation of terrorism suspects during that period, and their release is required by the rule of law.

Michael Hayden was on claiming they could have won this in court—I think he’s really underestimating how fed up Hellerstein is with this bullshit.

My judgment on the content of these memos is a matter of record. In one of my very first acts as President, I prohibited the use of these interrogation techniques by the United States because they undermine our moral authority and do not make us safer. Enlisting our values in the protection of our people makes us stronger and more secure. A democracy as resilient as ours must reject the false choice between our security and our ideals, and that is why these methods of interrogation are already a thing of the past.

But that is not what compelled the release of these legal documents today. While I believe strongly in transparency and accountability, I also believe that in a dangerous world, the United States must sometimes carry out intelligence operations and protect information that is classified for purposes of national security. I have already fought for that principle in court and will do so again in the future. However, after consulting

with the Attorney General, the Director of National Intelligence, and others, I believe that exceptional circumstances surround these memos and require their release.

First, the interrogation techniques described in these memos have already been widely reported. Second, the previous Administration publicly acknowledged portions of the program – and some of the practices – associated with these memos. Third, I have already ended the techniques described in the memos through an Executive Order. Therefore, withholding these memos would only serve to deny facts that have been in the public domain for some time. This could contribute to an inaccurate accounting of the past, and fuel erroneous and inflammatory assumptions about actions taken by the United States.

Note the admission that not all of the practices have been acknowledged. Perhaps, just for example, blows to the head? Also, the recognition that these have been widely reported suggests the ICRC report may have made a difference in this fight.

In releasing these memos, it is our intention to assure those who carried out their duties relying in good faith upon legal advice from the Department of Justice that they will not be subject to prosecution. The men and women of our intelligence community serve courageously on the front lines of a dangerous world. Their accomplishments are unsung and their names unknown, but because of their sacrifices, every single American is safer. We must protect their identities as vigilantly as they protect our security, and we must provide them with the confidence that they can do their jobs.

No mention of those who wrote these memos. Does that mean we can prosecute Yoo and Bradbury?

Going forward, it is my strong belief that the United States has a solemn duty to vigorously maintain the classified nature of certain activities and information related to national security. This is an extraordinarily important responsibility of the presidency, and it is one that I will carry out assertively irrespective of any political concern. Consequently, the exceptional circumstances surrounding these memos should not be viewed as an erosion of the strong legal basis for maintaining the classified nature of secret activities. I will always do whatever is necessary to protect the national security of the United States.

This is a time for reflection, not retribution. I respect the strong views and emotions that these issues evoke. We have been through a dark and painful chapter in our history. But at a time of great challenges and disturbing disunity, nothing will be gained by spending our time and energy laying blame for the past. Our national greatness is embedded in America's ability to right its course in concert with our core values, and to move forward with confidence. That is why we must resist the forces that divide us, and instead come together on behalf of our common future.

Not gonna work, Obama. If we're a nation of laws, then we cannot let those who have broken the laws to go unpunished. That's not retribution. That's what "nation of laws" means.

The United States is a nation of laws. My Administration will always act in accordance with those laws, and with an

unshakeable commitment to our ideals.
That is why we have released these
memos, and that is why we have taken
steps to ensure that the actions
described within them never take place
again.