



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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PUBLIC REMAINS DIVIDED OVER USE OF TORTURE

Amid intense debate over the use of torture against suspected terrorists, public opinion about this issue remains fairly stable. Currently, nearly half say the use of torture under such circumstances is often (15%) or sometimes (34%) justified; about the same proportion believes that the torture of suspected terrorists is rarely (22%) or never (25%) justified.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted April 14-21 among 742 adults interviewed in English and Spanish on landlines and cell phones, finds little change in opinions about the use of torture against suspected terrorists.

There are continuing partisan differences over the use of torture under these circumstances. Comparable percentages of Republicans (15%) and Democrats (12%) believe that the torture of suspected terrorists to gain important information is *often* justified, but twice as many Republicans as Democrats say torture is *sometimes* justified (49% vs. 24%). Similarly, while nearly identical percentages of Republicans and Democrats say torture under these circumstances is *rarely* justified, 38% of Democrats believe the torture of suspected terrorists is *never* justified, compared with 14% of Republicans.

Little Change in Opinions about Torture of Suspected Terrorists

<i>Torture to gain important information from suspected terrorists is justified...</i>	Nov 2007	Feb 2008	Feb 2009	Apr 2009
	%	%	%	%
Often	18	17	16	15
Sometimes	30	31	28	34
Rarely	21	20	20	22
Never	27	30	31	25
Don't know	4	2	5	4
	100	100	100	100
<i>Often/Sometimes</i>	48	48	44	49
<i>Rarely/Never</i>	48	50	51	47

Most Independents Say Torture is At Least Sometimes Justified

<i>Torture to gain important information from suspected terrorists is justified...</i>	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
April			
Often	15	12	19
Sometimes	49	24	35
Rarely	21	22	23
Never	14	38	19
Don't know	1	4	4
	100	100	100
N=	188	254	260
February			
Often	22	9	16
Sometimes	43	20	28
Rarely	17	23	21
Never	15	43	30
Don't know	3	5	5
	100	100	100
N=	167	221	230

A majority of independents (54%) believe that the use of torture against suspected terrorists is often (19%) or sometimes (35%) justified. That is up somewhat from February, when 44% of independents said torture was at least sometimes justified.

As in the past, there are only modest demographic differences in attitudes about the use of torture against suspected terrorists. Roughly half of men (51%) and women (47%) believe that the use of torture is at least sometimes justified. Similarly, age and educational differences in these opinions are relatively small; however, a greater percentage of those 65 and older (33%) than those younger than 65 (23%) say torture should never be used.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,507 adults, 18 years of age or older, from April 14-21, 2009 (1132 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 375 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 129 who had no landline telephone). The question in this release was asked of Form 1 respondents only; results are based on 742 interviews. Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2008 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2007 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the sample.

The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Form 1	742	4.0 percentage points
Form 1 Republicans	188	8.0 percentage points
Form 1 Democrats	254	7.0 percentage points
Form 1 Independents	260	7.0 percentage points

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
2009 MID-APRIL VALUES SURVEY B
FINAL TOPLINE
April 14-21, 2009
N=1,507

QUESTIONS 1, B2-B6, B8-B9, B12-B18, AND B22 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

NO QUESTIONS B7, B10-B11, B21, B23-B24

QUESTIONS B19-B20, B26-B30 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK SURVEY B FORM 1 ONLY [N=742]:

Q.B25F1 Do you think the use of torture against suspected terrorists in order to gain important information can often be justified, sometimes be justified, rarely be justified, or never be justified?

		Feb <u>2009</u>	Late Feb <u>2008</u>	Nov <u>2007</u>	Jan <u>2007</u>	Early Oct <u>2006</u>	Late Oct <u>2005</u>	Late March <u>2005</u>	July <u>2004</u>
15	Often justified	16	17	18	12	18	15	15	15
34	Sometimes justified	28	31	30	31	28	31	30	28
22	Rarely justified	20	20	21	25	19	17	24	21
25	Never justified	31	30	27	29	32	32	27	32
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100