

Obama Tells Lawmakers in Private Meeting He Won't Support Torture Probe

By Jason Leopold

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President Barack Obama has backtracked on statements he made earlier this week in which he indicated

Underscoring Obama's new stance on the issue, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs told reporters "The last few days might be evidence of why something like this might just become a political back and forth."

Additionally, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid also said on Thursday he no longer supported the idea of

"I think it would be very unwise, from my perspective, to start having commissions, boards, tribunals, and so forth."

On Tuesday, in a departure from statements he has made since his Jan. 20 inauguration, Obama said he would not

But that changed over the past two days as Republicans stepped up their criticism of Obama in numerous

Republicans have hammered Obama since he decided to release four "torture" memos last week from the

On Tuesday, the Senate Armed Services Committee released a long-awaited report that shows the seeds of

In a statement accompanying the report, committee chairman Carl Levin said he has recommended that

At a congressional hearing Thursday, Holder told lawmakers that he would not "permit the criminalization of

"If I see wrongdoing, I will pursue it to the full extent of the law," Holder said.

The Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility is due to release a report that is said to be

Other Democratic lawmakers who have stepped up their calls for an independent investigation and the a
Conyers and Leahy have both formally proposed an independent commission to probe the Bush adminis
On Thursday, civil liberties groups presented Holder with a petition signed by 250,000 people demandin
But at the White House meeting Thursday, attended by Republican and Democratic lawmakers, includin
Whether Congress decides to act in defiance of Obama's wishes remains to be seen.