

Sent: Wed, 04 May 2011 09:25:32 -0400
From: Gary G Sick <ggs2@columbia.edu>
To: Gary G Sick <ggs2@columbia.edu>
Subject: Re: killing of bin Laden (Corn)

Date: Wed, 4 May 2011 09:21:28 -0400 (EDT)

From: [REDACTED] - - - - - P6/b(6)

Talking to counter-terrorism experts the past few days, I understand that the orders were to shoot OBL, unless he immediately froze and threw up his hands. The contingency plan was to capture him. To some this may seem harsh (or wrong), but, as it's been explained to me, there was a possibility that OBL had the compound wired to be destroyed in the case of a raid or security breach. Consequently, if he moved in any direction, when the assaulter entered the room, he could have lunged for the kill switch that would have set off explosions in the compound. So any movement on his part--other than throwing his hands into the air or dropping to the floor--was deemed risky. No doubt, there were reasons why US policymakers would prefer a dead OBL to a captured OBL (the possible intelligence value of a dead OBL aside). But from the perspective of the assaulters, there was a reason to shoot at the very first sign OBL was not going to surrender. I say this not to justify any action but to inform the debate under way.

David Corn