

ASPIRING SENATE INTELLIGENCE CHAIR RICHARD BURR GOES AFTER MARK UDALL

Yesterday, I predicted the CIA and its Republican apologists would try to use the torture crisis to knock off a few Democrats in an attempt to retake the Senate. If that happened, Richard Burr, who would become Senate Intelligence Chair, would surely kill the Torture Report as one of his first acts.

And all this assumes Democrats retain control of the Senate. That's an uphill battle in any case. But CIA has many ways to influence events. Even assuming CIA would never encourage false flags attacks or leak compromising information about Democrats, the Agency can ratchet up the fear mongering and call Democrats weak on security. That always works and it ought to be worth a Senate seat or three.

If Democrats lose the Senate, you can be sure that newly ascendant Senate Intelligence Chair Richard Burr would be all too happy to bury the Torture Report, just for starters. Earlier today, after all, he **scolded** Feinstein for airing this fight.

"I personally don't believe that anything that goes on in the intelligence committee should ever be discussed publicly,"

Burr's a guy who has joked about waterboarding in the past. Burying the Torture Report would be just the start of things, I fear.

It sure didn't take long to be proven right.

Republicans say that not only has the committee's chairwoman, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), provided selective information to the public about improper CIA conduct, but they are also now pointing the finger at Sen. Mark Udall (D-Colo.).

The Colorado Democrat, Republicans say, shouldn't have disclosed internal Senate proceedings over the CIA investigation – something that some Republicans privately say should warrant an ethics committee review.

[snip]

"I think Mark did make some public releases that were committee-sensitive information, but that's for the committee internally to handle," said Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.), a member of the committee. "That's being reviewed right now."

Udall said "No way" when asked Wednesday if he was involved in the leaking of sensitive information, saying he's "done absolutely nothing wrong here."

"If some of my colleagues on the Intelligence Committee really want to press the case that in referring to an executive branch abuse in my March 4 letter – what I called an 'unprecedented action' that the CIA had taken in relation to the internal CIA review – I have somehow violated Committee rules, I am more than happy to have that debate," Udall said.

Udall added: "In fact, the only thing I've done is exercise vigorous oversight over senior intelligence officials who are all too often unwilling to cooperate with Congress."

[snip]

Several Intelligence Committee Republicans also asserted that ethics charges should be filed against Udall for his public statements about the CIA's interrogation program and about the agency's reaction to the panel's investigation into that program, including the March 4 letter.

But others on the panel, said the matter should be handled internally by the Intelligence Committee – not by the Ethics Committee.

Burr added: "If you look historically, the committee has cleaned up any mistakes that members have made. Members can do whatever they want to. My concern is that the release of information could potentially causes the losses of life to Americans. That to me, is a threshold that should be addressed."

As I noted on Twitter, Burr is the distant relation of noted assassin Aaron Burr (which he joked about once when Treasury Secretary Jack Lew testified). He sure seems to take to the assassination role well. He's now suggesting Mark Udall might potentially cause the loss of American life because he revealed that in 2009 the CIA agreed with what Senate Democrats (and John McCain) would ultimately conclude, that the CIA's torture program was ineffective and they lied about it.

Right. Knowing the truth about CIA's torture will kill us all.

In any case, this is all proceeding, very quickly, as I predicted. The Republicans will try to make this an election issue, helped in the background by CIA's torturers, with the understanding that they will not only kill the Torture Report if Republicans take the Senate, but give CIA free rein.

But honest, the Intelligence Community has
adequate oversight.