

SHOULD ALFREDA BIKOWSKY'S LAWYER REALLY BE IN CHARGE OF DECLASSIFYING THE TORTURE REPORT?

It took McClatchy 21 paragraphs to illustrate why it was such a big conflict of interest for Director of National Intelligence General Counsel to lead negotiations over how much of the torture report would be declassified, as he currently is doing.

According to reports in The Washington Post, Litt previously represented a CIA analyst, Alfreda Frances Bikowsky, who played a central role in the bungled rendition of Khaled el-Masri. El-Masri, who was revealed to be innocent, claimed to have been tortured by the agency.

As the rest of the article explains, Litt reviewed his role brokering the declassification process with ODNI's Ethics officer – who is his subordinate – and she approved his participation.

But it still probably conflicts with Litt's promises, made during his confirmation process, to recuse himself from matters affecting his former clients. And given the centrality of CIA's absurd demand to hide even the pseudonyms making clear that the same woman who got El-Masri tortured also went out of her way to watch Khalid Sheikh Mohammed be tortured (among a fairly substantial list of other things – here's a reminder of details on how she got promoted after the El-Masri debacle), it is a problem that Litt is brokering this process.

Don't worry, National Security Council spokesperson Caitlin Hayden insists (fresh off insisting it's a good thing that the White House

cybersecurity czar doesn't have a technical background), Bob Litt – the same guy hiding known dates in Internet dragnet documents, almost certainly to avoid legal repercussions – is one of the administration's strongest proponents of what it calls "transparency."™

"Bob Litt is one of the administration's strongest proponents of transparency in intelligence, consistent with our national security, and he and we are fully committed to ensuring there is no conflict of interest as the administration continues to work to see the results of the committee's review made public," Hayden said in a statement.

Calling Bob Litt a proponent of "transparency"™ is itself cause for concern.