

HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE STONEWALLING

During the book salon chat on The Wrong Stuff yesterday, we discussed the House Intelligence Committee report on how Duke Cunningham managed to scam so much money for his friends. Lo and behold, the LAT has a long article on it today (hat tip Kentucky Jelly). The report, though, is pretty disappointing. If Congressional Intelligence Committees are good at one thing, after all, it is scoping investigations to hide the dirt.

The report's principal author said in an interview that the terms under which he was hired to conduct the investigation prevented him from examining lawmakers' roles.

"There was an agreement as to what they wanted to look at, and that was not anything that could be looked at under the sun," said Michael Stern, a former attorney in the House counsel's office who was hired by the committee to lead the internal probe. "The language did not include the culpability or potential involvement of other members."

Stern said that the full, 59-page report he prepared a year ago was classified, but that he also provided the committee a 23-page version that had been scrubbed of classified material. The Times obtained the declassified version.

Nevertheless, Pete Hoekstra throws a fit every time we get close to declassifying the complete report.

Congressional sources said Reyes and other Democrats had initially voted to let other members of Congress see the

document, but reversed course after a fierce protest by the panel's ranking GOP member, Peter Hoekstra of Michigan.

Who uses lizard logic to claim the report shows nothing of interest:

Jamal Ware, a spokesman for Hoekstra, stressed that the investigation found no wrongdoing by staffers or other members, and said the findings were never intended to be released.

After all, if the report was scoped to exclude any inquiry into members' roles, then it's not surprising that the report found no wrongdoing by staffers or other members, right?

Of all lawmakers, though, it seems clear the report stayed furthest away from Peter Goss' role.