

WILL THE HOUSE HOLD ROVE IN CONTEMPT BEFORE MARCH 4?

Just before I disappeared for a week, John Conyers sent Karl Rove a sternly-worded letter insisting Rove show up for his deposition today.

I also cannot agree to your request for a delay to accommodate Mr. Rove's schedule. As you know, the deposition was originally scheduled for February 2. On January 29 I in good faith acceded to your request for a delay since you were scheduled to be out of town at the time and requested more time to prepare. I also notified your office of the new February 23 date at that time. Thus, absent an actual commitment by Mr. Rove to comply with the subpoena, I am not in a position to agree to yet a further delay. In essence, given Mr. Rove's public statements that he does not intend to comply with the subpoena, I am puzzled as to why Mr. Rove needs a mutually convenient date to appear.

Well, the blogger formerly known as Kagro X reports that Rove indeed blew off the House Judiciary Committee (for what must be the third or fourth time) today (h/t Petrocelli).

I find that interesting for several reasons. First, remember that Conyers sent that sternly-worded letter at a point when HJC was already negotiating with the Obama White House about what to do with the Miers/Bolten suit.

Next, consider some of the other language Conyers used in his sternly-worded letter.

Finally, conducting a voluntary deposition under these circumstances [limiting testimony to the Siegelman witch hunt and excluding the US Attorney

firings and other politicization issues] could simply serve to further delay matters beyond the nearly two years I have been waiting, **since the Committee could not then be in a position to utilize contempt or other enforcement mechanisms** in response to any improper refusal to answer questions. [my emphasis]

Conyers was clearly thinking about contempt when he wrote that letter—at a time when he was in negotiations on the Miers/Bolten suit.

Finally, as I reported earlier, Obama got the second week of his requested two week delay for his brief on the Miers/Bolten suit. HJC agreed to go along with that delay.

Now, I have no reason (besides noting the coincident dates) to believe that there's a connection between the additional week extension on the Appeals Court brief and any response to Rove's latest contempt for an HJC subpoena.

But I do note that if Rove were immediately held in contempt by HJC and if the House were to act with any dispatch to vote on contempt, Rove might well be in contempt by the time Obama briefs the Appeals Court a week from Wednesday. Mind you, things like that don't usually happen so quickly in the House. But it **would** make the discussion about the Appeal more interesting.