

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE ASKED FOR THE TARGETED KILLING MEMOS ~~14~~ ~~15~~ ~~18~~ TIMES 19 TIMES

With all the discussion of targeting killing memos, I thought it time to update my list of all the times members of Congress have asked for the memos. Note that the number still doesn't reflect all requests, as a number of these requests refer to previous undated requests. It also doesn't include, for example, efforts that were bypassed legislatively, as when John Cornyn tried to include an amendment as part of FISA.

In other words, Congress has asked, and continues to ask, for these memos.

February 2011: Ron Wyden asks the Director of National Intelligence for the legal analysis behind the targeted killing program; the letter references "similar requests to other officials." (1)

April 2011: Ron Wyden calls Eric Holder to ask for legal analysis on targeted killing. (2)

May 2011: DOJ responds to Wyden's request, yet doesn't answer key questions.

May 18-20, 2011: DOJ (including Office of Legislative Affairs) discusses "draft legal analysis regarding the application of domestic and international law to the use of lethal force in a foreign country against U.S. citizens" (this may be the DOJ response to Ron Wyden).

October 5, 2011: Chuck Grassley sends Eric Holder a letter requesting the OLC memo by October 27, 2011. (3)

November 8, 2011: Pat Leahy complains about past Administration refusal to share targeted killing OLC memo. Administration drafts white paper, but

does not share with Congress yet. (4)

February 8, 2012: Ron Wyden follows up on his earlier requests for information on the targeted killing memo with Eric Holder. (5)

March 7, 2012: Tom Graves (R-GA) asks Robert Mueller whether Eric Holder's criteria for the targeted killing of Americans applies in the US; Mueller replies he'd have to ask DOJ. Per his office today, DOJ has not yet provided Graves with an answer. (6)

March 8, 2012: Pat Leahy renews his request for the OLC memo at DOJ appropriations hearing. (7)

June 7, 2012: After Jerry Nadler requests the memo, Eric Holder commits to providing the House Judiciary a briefing—but not the OLC memo—within a month. (8)

June 12, 2012: Pat Leahy renews his request for the OLC memo at DOJ oversight hearing. (9)

June 22, 2012: DOJ provides Intelligence and Judiciary Committees with white paper dated November 8, 2011.

June 27, 2012: In Questions for the Record following a June 7 hearing, Jerry Nadler notes that DOJ has sought dismissal of court challenges to targeted killing by claiming “the appropriate check on executive branch conduct here is the Congress and that information is being shared with Congress to make that check a meaningful one,” but “we have yet to get any response” to “several requests” for the OLC memo authorizing targeted killing. He also renews his request for the briefing Holder had promised. (10)

July 19, 2012: Both Pat Leahy and Chuck Grassley complain about past unanswered requests for OLC memo. (Grassley prepared an amendment as well, but withdrew it in favor of Cornyn's.) Leahy (but not Grassley) votes to table John Cornyn amendment to require Administration to release the memo.

July 24, 2012: SSCI passes Intelligence

Authorization that requires DOJ to make all post-9/11 OLC memos available to the Senate Intelligence Committee, albeit with two big loopholes.

December 4, 2012: Jerry Nadler, John Conyers, and Bobby Scott ask for finalized white paper, all opinions on broader drone program (or at least a briefing), including signature strikes, an update on the drone rule book, and public release of the white paper.

January 14, 2013: Wyden writes John Brennan letter in anticipation of his confirmation hearing, renewing his request for targeted killing memos. (11)

Update

January 25, 2012: Rand Paul asks John Brennan if he'll release past and future OLC memos on targeting Americans. (12)

February 4, 2013: 11 Senators ask for any and all memos authorizing the killing of American citizens, hinting at filibuster of national security nominees. (13)

February 7, 2013: Pat Leahy and Chuck Grassley ask that SJC be able to get the memos that SSCI had just gotten. (14)

February 7, 2013: In John Brennan's confirmation hearing, Dianne Feinstein and Ron Wyden reveal there are still outstanding memos pertaining to killing Americans, and renew their demand for those memos. (15)

Update:

February 8, 2013: Bob Goodlatte, Trent Franks, and James Sensenbrenner join their Democratic colleagues to renew the December 4, 2012 request. (16)

Update:

February 13, 2013: In statement on targeted killings oversight, DiFi describes writing 3 previous letters to the Administration asking for targeted killing memos. (17, 18, 19)