

WHEN BOB GOODLATTE JOINS THE CHORUS DEMANDING THE MEMOS...

To date, the push to release the targeted killing memos has come from a few civil libertarians in both parties – Ron Wyden and his usual allies in the Senate, Jerry Nadler and a few allies on the House Judiciary Committee, Mike Lee – and Chuck Grassley, who is good on issues of oversight. There was John Cornyn’s attempt to get the memo last year, and Susan Collins – carrying over a decent oversight stance from her work at the Homeland Security Committee – joined Wyden’s effort earlier this week.

Thus, with just a few exceptions, the push has been led by a fairly small group of people who continually push such issues.

Until now. Bob Goodlatte, James Sensenbrenner, and Trent Franks have just joined their Democratic counterparts demanding memos pertaining to all drone strikes, asking for signature strikes by name (this is effectively a restatement of this request from the Democrats in December).

The House Judiciary Committee’s jurisdiction in this area is clear: we are the congressional committee with responsibility over civil liberties, the Constitution, and criminal law enforcement, as well as oversight of the Justice Department. Irrespective of the role of the Intelligence Committees, our role and responsibility with regard to this matter is also well established through our longstanding participation in oversight of other national security programs, including those involving our surveillance agencies that have arisen in the wake of the 9.11 [sic] terrorist

attacks. We believe that our authority and responsibility to review the legal justifications for the administration's drone program is beyond dispute.

[snip]

We are disappointed that three prior requests to review these memoranda by members of the Committee have gone unanswered.

It will be interesting to see what their motive is for getting involved: whether it's the sense that their prerogative has been slighted (as it has) or whether they figure there must be something in the memos if Obama is going to such ridiculous lengths to hide them.

Whatever it is, though, this development suggests the calls are becoming increasingly bipartisan and mainstream.

In any case, this represents at least the 15th request for these memos.