

MARK UDALL: LEAKERS ON SENATE INTELLIGENCE TORTURE REPORT GOT FACTS WRONG

Last week, I noted that leaks to the WSJ about CIA's response to the Senate Intelligence Torture report seemed designed to box John Brennan in, making it very difficult for him to authorize declassification of the report.

Sure enough, the very day after Brennan won confirmation, WSJ reports that CIA is not done with their review yet, but they disagree with the report's findings.

The report examines the details of conditions under which each detainee was held and interrogated, the quality of the information provided and the accuracy of how the CIA described the program to other officials and lawmakers. It included 20 recommendations, officials said.

The report assesses the utility of information from interrogations in 20 cases and concludes that it wasn't useful; the CIA disputes that conclusion in all but one or two of those assessments, officials said.

The CIA is objecting to the majority of the report, a senior intelligence official said.

"The overall objection was the report basically says we never in any instances got good

information from this program,” another U.S. official said. “To anyone who has worked at the CIA on this issue, that’s not true.”

Even CIA officers who opposed the interrogation program acknowledge that the agency obtained useful information, the U.S. official said.

Even if Brennan wanted to declassify this report – and given his stated desire to protect CIA from criticism, he probably doesn’t want to – he’d have a hard time doing so, because it would instantly turn the torture dead-enders against him, which is not the safest way to start a job managing a bunch of talented spooks. [my emphasis]

In today’s Global Threat Assessment hearing, Mark Udall addressed the WSJ report. He revealed that the leakers behind that report had gotten basic facts about the report wrong – such as that there were 20 recommendations.

He then asked John Brennan three questions:

- CIA officials are leaking what may or may not be official response to the report. Do you believe this is leak of CIA views?
- Do you anticipate looking into leak?
- There’s no new deadline for CIA comments in response to report. When can we get it?

Brennan did say the CIA was assessing the story to determine whether “there had been a disclosure.” I’m not sure whether he answered whether the leaks represented the views of the

CIA.

Brennan also hedged a bit about a new deadline to respond to Congress. He would like to say comments will come back within a months time, he said (the original deadline was February 15, basically a month past already). He then promised his "firm resolve" to look at what CIA has put together and get back to the Senate Intelligence Committee.