

THANKS TO DIANNE FEINSTEIN AND MARK UDALL FOR SEEING TORTURE REPORT THROUGH

The Senate Intelligence Committee just voted 11-3 to release the torture report, with 3 ardent GOP critics voting to release the report.

McClatchy (as it has had throughout recent debates over this) has good coverage, including two new details:

- CIA illegally detained 26 of 119 detainees (this may refer to CIA's practice of ghosting detainees, and removing some illegally from Iraq, as well as the mistaken detention of people like Khalid el-Masri).
- "The news media were manipulated with leaks that tended to blunt criticism of the agency." (We knew that, but glad to see SSCI agrees).

A lot of people on the Senate Intelligence Committee deserve credit for making this happen. It started, after all, under Jay Rockefeller's tenure.

But Dianne Feinstein and Mark Udall deserve particular attention. Feinstein persisted in this through a lot of opposition from Republicans on the committee. And she oversaw a great deal of work to get it done.

Her statement read, in part,

The report also points to major problems with CIA's management of this program and its interactions with the White House, other parts of the executive branch and Congress. This is also deeply troubling and shows why oversight of intelligence agencies in a democratic nation is so important.

The release of this summary and conclusions in the near future shows that this nation admits its errors, as painful as they may be, and seeks to learn from them. It is now abundantly clear that, in an effort to prevent further terrorist attacks after 9/11 and bring those responsible to justice, the CIA made serious mistakes that haunt us to this day. We are acknowledging those mistakes, and we have a continuing responsibility to make sure nothing like this ever occurs again.

While I'm not satisfied simply with admitting error – democracy can't work when rule of law doesn't – she's right that the intel agencies need adequate oversight.

Mark Udall, in the last year, has also made the report a particular focus, particularly with his relentless pressure on the White House, even in a tough reelection year. He repeated that pressure in his statement on the release.

"Following today's historic vote, the president faces what I believe should be a straightforward question. He can defer declassification decisions to the CIA – which has demonstrated an inability to face the truth about this program – or pass this authority to the Director of National Intelligence or hold on to the redaction pen himself," Udall added. "The president needs to understand that the CIA's clear conflict of interest

here requires that the White House step in and manage this process.”

Let’s hope Feinstein, Udall, and others persist in their efforts to fight back on what is sure to be CIA criticism of the report.

Update: As I noted earlier, Richard Burr was a yes vote, along with Saxby Chambliss and one other Republican in addition to Collins. Tom Coburn voted “present.”