

OBAMA WILL NOT VETO DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

I said this about the detainee provisions in the conference Defense Authorization bill.

It seems to me the language does enough to avoid a veto from the cowardly Obama, but still does terrible damage to both the clarity of national security roles and overall investigative expertise.

And I was absolutely correct: Obama's aides have announced he will not veto the bill.

Update: Here's the specific language of the capitulation.

We have been clear that "any bill that challenges or constrains the President's critical authorities to collect intelligence, incapacitate dangerous terrorists, and protect the Nation would prompt the President's senior advisers to recommend a veto." After intensive engagement by senior administration officials and the President himself, the Administration has succeeded in prompting the authors of the detainee provisions to make several important changes, including the removal of problematic provisions. While we remain concerned about the uncertainty that this law will create for our counterterrorism professionals, the most recent changes give the President additional discretion in determining how the law will be implemented, consistent with our values and the rule of law, which are at the heart of our country's strength. This legislation authorizes critical funding for military personnel overseas, and its passage sends an important signal that Congress supports

our efforts as we end the war in Iraq and transition to Afghan lead while ensuring that our military can meet the challenges of the 21st century.

As a result of these changes, we have concluded that the language does not challenge or constrain the President's ability to collect intelligence, incapacitate dangerous terrorists, and protect the American people, and the President's senior advisors will not recommend a veto. However, if in the process of implementing this law we determine that it will negatively impact our counterterrorism professionals and undercut our commitment to the rule of law, we expect that the authors of these provisions will work quickly and tirelessly to correct these problems.

Update: Here's the roll call. the Dems split right down the middle, 93-93, which leads me to suspect Pelosi told Boehner the Republicans had to come up with the bulk of the yes votes, which might be why the House leadership had to stall on the vote for a period.