

POWERLINE BLOG LEADS SJC'S REPUBLICANS TROLLING THROUGH PARKS, PUBLIC- ASSISTANCE AGENCIES, AND LIQUOR STORES



William Ockham points to a new report on Rove and Bolten's refusal to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee to testify about the firing of nine US Attorneys. The report itself mostly repeats old arguments, integrated with the results of the DOJ Inspector General's report on the firing.

Which means that the purpose of the report is more interesting—to me at least—than the content. The report basically advances the Senate case against Bolten and Rove, after the House's attempts to get Bolten and Miers and, arguably, Rove to testify were thwarted by the Appeals Court's stay on the House lawsuit. Since the House expires at the end of their term, their suit against the White House also expires. But the Senate doesn't. In other words, I believe this report lays the ground work for continuing the battle in January. Rove may not be out of the woods yet, for having to testify about his wrong-doing on the US Attorney purge.

That said, I'm just as interested in the Republican response to Leahy's move, though.

Senators Arlen "Scottish Haggis" Specter and Chuck Grassley have decided that—though they originally voted to hold Bolten and Rove in contempt—they don't want to be a part of this report moving forward.

Although we supported the Committee's efforts in the U.S. Attorney removal

investigation, including the contempt resolutions voted upon last year, we cannot join the Majority in this Report. We both voted in favor of the contempt resolutions regarding Messrs. Bolten and Rove after staff and Member consultation produced resolution text that: (1) had bipartisan support; (2) identified every fact and element necessary to charge contempt of Congress under 2 U.S.C. § 194; (3) was consistent with Committee precedent; (4) contained no surplusage that could arguably jeopardize or undermine the enforceability of the Committee's action; and (5) was fair to the due process rights of the prospective contempt defendants. However, so much time has passed that the matter is now somewhere between moot and meaningless. Had there been any intention to pursue Senate action, these procedural steps would have been taken soon after the resolutions of contempt were approved. The filing of this report—fourteen months after Attorney General Gonzales resigned, eleven months after the contempt resolutions were approved and a mere two months before a new administration takes office—will likely prove superfluous.

Did they see enough in the DOJ Inspector General's report to get worried about where this is leading? Do they recognize that—with a likely 59 Democratic Senators next term, one of the two of them may well be the deciding vote to either filibuster or vote in favor of contempt? Regardless, they seem more concerned with disowning their interest in finding out the background to the US Attorney firings than they do about setting precedent for oversight.

Barack Obama, you'd do well to make note of that.

And, just for shits and giggles, there's the response of the wingnut crowd on the SJC:

Senators Kyl, Sessions, Brownback, and Coburn. They use their dissent to Leahy's report as an opportunity to cite Democrats denying a need to subpoena Bill Clinton about a blowjob. Woohoo! And even more amusingly, they take several pages—sourced almost exclusively to Powerline Blog—to claim that vote fraud is real and dangerous and very very evil. Including such wisdom as:

ACORN tends to target areas where it believes that it can register Democratic voters, such as parks, public-assistance agencies, and liquor stores

Just in case you were wondering, that's what the Republican caucus in the Senate has come to, parroting Powerline to retroactively justify the US Attorney purge, while ignoring Republican governors Charlie Crist and Tim Pawlenty's statements denying vote fraud is a problem. No wonder the Republican party is in trouble—they give Powerline more credibility than two of their most prominent governors!