

THE IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY BEHIND DEMANDS FOR TARGETED KILLING OR DRONE OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY

When Barbara Lee and 7 other progressives sent a letter to the President asking for more information on both the legal authorization for targeted killings and the “architecture” of the program generally, a number of people on the left took it as a response to Rand Paul’s filibuster. The implication was that the liberal left had matched the Tea Party right in its interest in targeted killing oversight and transparency, and that no one in between those “extremes” had expressed such an interest.

As I laid out the other day, that portrayal is nonsense. It ignores the number of solidly centrist or mainstream, more authoritarian, Republicans who have called for targeted killing oversight or transparency. Democrats run the risk of underestimating the degree to which Republicans may make this a political, rather than just an oversight, issue (as I pointed out when Bob Goodlatte first expressed an interest a month before Barbara Lee did).

As I see it, the people who have called for more oversight or transparency on drones or targeted killings fall into 6 overlapping groups. They fall roughly like this, though trying to imagine anyone’s motivations is imperfect and I’m obviously making rough judgments. (Note, I’ve added people who don’t appear on my list of those who have formally asked for OLC memos, but have spoken out or sponsored legislation.)

But the groupings provide some idea of where drone and targeting killing politics might head. A good many of people raising concerns are

perfectly happy to use drones to kill people; they just want it to either be more efficacious or legally justifiable, or they want to make political hay.

Statutory Oversight: Chuck Grassley, Pat Leahy, Dianne Feinstein, Saxby Chambliss, Jerry Nadler, Ron Wyden, John Conyers, Bobby Scott, Mark Udall, Dick Durbin, Bob Goodlatte, James Sensenbrenner, Trent Franks, Ted Poe, Trey Gowdy, Tom Graves

Civil Liberties: Ron Wyden, Pat Leahy, Jerry Nadler, John Conyers, Bobby Scott, Ted Poe, Rand Paul, Mark Udall, Jeff Merkley, Mike Lee, Al Franken, Ted Cruz, Justin Amash, Zoe Lofgren, Ed Markey

Good Government: Chuck Grassley, John McCain, Susan Collins, Tom Udall, Mark Begich

Congressional Prerogative: Chuck Grassley, Pat Leahy, John Cornyn, Jerry Nadler, John Conyers, Bobby Scott, Bob Goodlatte, James Sensenbrenner, Trent Franks, Ted Poe, Trey Gowdy

Progressive Principle: Pat Leahy, Dick Durbin, John Conyers, Jerry Nadler, Bobby Scott, Barbara Lee, Keith Ellison, Raul Grijalva, Donna Edwards, Mike Honda, Rush Holt, James McGovern

Oppositional Opportunism: Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, Mitch McConnell, John Barrasso, Ted Cruz, Saxby Chambliss, Mark Kirk, John Cornyn, Jerry Moran, John Thune, Jeff Flake, Ron Johnson, Tim Scott, Bob Goodlatte, James Sensenbrenner, Trent Franks, Trey Gowdy, Justin Amash, Jeff Duncan, Scott Garrett, Jim Jordan, Billy Long, James Sensenbrenner