

CAROLINE KRASS CONFIRMED AS CIA GENERAL COUNSEL IN LANDSLIDE VOTE

In the background of the fight between CIA and the Senate Intelligence Committee lurked the nomination of Caroline Krass.

Mark Udall had said that he would hold her nomination to get some answers on the Torture Report.

But she just got confirmed with just a few more no votes –4 – than the 2 she got from the Committee. Dianne Feinstein, Ron Wyden, Martin Heinrich, Mark Udall all voted yes.

This was predictable. As I pointed out the other day, the alternative to quickly confirming Krass was leaving Robert EATINGER – the guy who launched a witch hunt into Committee staffers – Acting Counsel at CIA. Even a mediocre candidate would be preferable to that, for Committee Democrats, and by all reports and appearances Krass is a very sharp and candid lawyer.

That said, in addition to seeking leverage over the Torture Report dispute, Committee members had expressed concern that Krass explicitly endorsed withholding privileged documents from the oversight Committee. So by rushing through Krass' nomination, the Senate waived any opportunity to obtain some commitment for greater sharing with the Senate.

And thus it happens that, in response to an intolerable situation concocted by Article II, Article I pisses away even more of its authority.

Update: Here's Udall's statement on Krass.

Udall, a member of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, released his procedural hold today on

the nomination of Caroline Krass to be the CIA's general counsel, citing the conflict of interest of the acting-general counsel, as well as a firm and clear commitment by the president to declassify the committee's landmark report on the CIA's detention and interrogation program.

"We need to correct the record on the CIA's coercive detention and interrogation program and declassify the Senate Intelligence Committee's exhaustive study of it. I released my hold on Caroline Krass's nomination today and voted for her to help change the direction of the agency," Udall said. "The president has stated an unequivocal commitment to supporting the declassification of the Senate Intelligence Committee's report. Coloradans expect me to hold him to his word."