
National News

Both Parties Demand Documents on Drones

March 2—Members of the House Judiciary Committee from both parties are demanding the release of the still-secret memos from the Obama Administration that lay out the presumed legal basis for targeted drone killings overseas of American citizens. The Feb. 27 hearing of the committee on the topic of those drone killings, as well as comments made to reporters on the sidelines, showed the frustration of both Republicans and Democrats with regard to those memos, and the general lack of cooperation from the White House.

Committee chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) noted at the outset that the Department of Justice refused to provide the memos requested by the committee, and that Attorney General Eric Holder refused to testify at the hearing.

Ranking member John Conyers (D-Mich.) began his opening statement by declaring that there are serious Constitutional considerations at issue, and the committee has jurisdiction. After noting the correspondence between the committee and the Department of Justice, Conyers said that the committee has reached a bipartisan consensus: It requires those documents in order to fulfill its oversight responsibilities.

Conyers went on to say that, not only is he not convinced of the legal rationale for killing American citizens overseas, which involves both the Fourth Amendment against unreasonable search and seizure, and the Fifth Amendment right to due process, but that he's not even convinced that the killing of non-U.S. citizens is legal. He said that it's not clear that Congress intended for there to be such targeted killings under the 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force.

"All we are seeking is information to which we are duly entitled," Conyers said. "I don't think that the Attorney General of the United States can decline to come before this committee on a subject that is so clearly in our jurisdiction."

Chairman Goodlatte responded that

he shares Conyers' concerns, and he promised to work on both sides of the aisle "to see what we can do to bring about better cooperation, because we are seeking information that this committee is entitled to."

A number of members of the committee hinted to reporters, afterwards, how they might "bring about better cooperation" from the Obama Administration. According to the *Huffington Post*, discussion is underway within the committee on a possible subpoena of the Justice Department.

Eleven memos are known to exist, of which the DoJ has provided a few to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, but none to the Judiciary Committees. "There is a lot of dissatisfaction on the committee with the idea that American citizens can be put on a kill list without any apparent process," Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.) told the *Post*.

Obama Proclaims: 'I Am Not a Dictator'

March 1—Richard Nixon: "I am not a crook." (1973)

Barack Obama: "I am not a dictator." (2013)

In response to a question from CNN's White House correspondent Jessica Yellin at a news conference at the White House on March 1, about why he hadn't locked Congressional leaders in a room to reach a deficit-reduction deal, Obama said:

"Jessica, I am not a dictator, I'm the President.

"So, ultimately, if Mitch McConnell or John Boehner say, 'I have to catch a plane,' I can't have Secret Service block the doorway."

Sharpest U.S. Income Drop Since 1959

March 2—Data released by the Commerce Department and from a study commissioned by Bloomberg news, show re-

cord drops in incomes and savings, including the largest drop in disposable income since 1959. "The slump in incomes in January was the biggest since January 1993," reported Bloomberg March 1. And although there was an "expected" drop due to the end of the "payroll tax holiday," the reality is that the drop was twice as big as "expected." In January, the savings rate dropped from 6.4% to 2.4%.

The most dramatic drop was in inflation-adjusted "disposable income"—the money left over after taxes—which had the sharpest fall in over 50 years. Disposable income "dropped 4% after adjusting for inflation, the biggest plunge since monthly records began in 1959," Bloomberg reported.

Jones Urges Release of Secret 28 Pages on 9/11

Feb. 26—Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.) today posted a letter to his website calling for the release of the redacted 28 pages of the report of the Congressional Joint Inquiry on 9/11. Dated Feb. 14, the letter is addressed to the Republican and Democratic leaders of the House Permanent Committee on Intelligence.

"I want to thank you for conducting the very important hearings last week on the killing of U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and the three other State Department officials during the Benghazi attack on September 11, 2012," he wrote.

"In light of those hearings, I urge you ... to recommend a declassification of the 28 pages of the Congressional Joint Inquiry report describing what role the Saudi Arabian government had in the terrorist attack on 9/11. As you know, former Senator Bob Graham has conducted extensive research into this issue and has been nationally recognized and interviewed for his belief that these 28 pages should be declassified.

"The families of the victims of 9/11 have a right to this information, as do the American people...."