

Burr takes CIA report fight to Senate referee

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Sen. Richard Burr was livid when a long-awaited summary of CIA interrogation practices was finally declassified in December, dubbing it a “fiction” and an [effort](#) to revive Democratic attacks on George W. Bush.

Now the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, Burr has infuriated committee Democrats by asking the Obama administration to return copies of the unredacted, 6,900-page report on waterboarding and overseas prisons that formed the basis for the now-declassified summary released by the committee under former Chairwoman Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) in December.

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But the North Carolina Republican is going even further, asking the Senate’s official referee to weigh in on whether the committee acted appropriately in sending along the full report to the White House during the declassification process.

Burr contends that the report was delivered to the administration without any buy-in from committee Republicans, who were led last year by retired Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.). Burr said the full report — which was never declassified by the committee — could be leaked as long as the Obama administration has its hands on it.

“It’s a committee-sensitive report and it should have never found its way outside the halls of the committee without the minority and the majority not being informed. Any time you lose control of a document, [leaks are] your No.1 concern,” Burr said in an interview on Wednesday. “We’ll let the parliamentarian make a determination as to whether they followed the rules.”

Typically, the parliamentarian weighs in on the Senate floor regarding whether legislation violates Senate rules — and perhaps later this year if Republicans try to repeal Obamacare with 51 votes. But Burr said he’s tasked the parliamentarian to determine whether it was appropriate for the full, classified Intelligence Committee report to ever

leave the Senate without the GOP being notified.

“We turn to the parliamentarian for all Senate rules, committee rules as well. It’s safe to say that we’ve asked them to look at all aspects of it and tell us exactly what happened and did they have the authority to do it,” Burr said. “There’s one thing I’m convinced of: The chairman of the committee can determine what committee-sensitive documents are. And that’s what led me to make the initial request.”

Committee Democrats are furiously fighting Burr’s efforts to get the administration to relinquish its copies of the report. Feinstein said it would limit the ability of the government to “learn lessons” of the Bush-era interrogation techniques, while Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) called Burr’s quest “unprecedented and misguided.”

“I’ve always believed the committee’s full report on the CIA detention and interrogation program should be publicly released. But barring that, appropriately cleared U.S. government officials should have access to the full 6,900-page classified report to better understand what went wrong during that dark period,” Heinrich said on Wednesday afternoon.

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