

# IS DOD TRYING TO BYPASS THE GITMO PRESS CORPS (AKA CAROL ROSENBERG)?

Yesterday, we had an interesting discussion about whether efforts by Gitmo Chief Prosecutor Mark Martins to expand viewing of Gitmo military commissions was about cover-up or transparency. I suggested that it might be something in-between—an effort to bypass members of the existing Gitmo press corps, who know a lot more about Gitmo and detainee histories than those of us following along at home and therefore can provide context the government finds inconvenient. But at the same time, bypassing the Gitmo press corps will limit the government's ability to gag reporters as they did when Rosenberg and others reported on Joshua Claus. And expanding access did have other real benefits, like letting victims follow the trials without onerous travel to Gitmo.

That is, I suggested it was largely a different strategy for controlling information.

So I was rather interested to see this passage in Carol Rosenberg's report on a shiny new—but substantively incomplete—website Gitmo had set up.

The new website appeared on Wednesday morning without an announcement from the Secretary of Defense's Public Affairs office, which has handled military commissions releases for the past six years. Instead, a former Bush era Defense Department deputy responsible for detention issues broke the news on a Heritage Foundation blog. Cully Stimson, himself a Navy reserve judge, said the new site heralded a new ear of transparency in the at-times secretive court proceedings.

It was the second revelation from the Obama

Defense Department to be revealed in conservative circles. Sunday, The Weekly Standard magazine included a profile of the new Obama era War Crimes Prosecutor, Army Brig. Gen Mark Martins, pledging to beam closed-circuit broadcasts of remote Guantánamo proceedings to both victims and media viewing centers on U.S. soil.

Not only won't the Public Affairs office tell Rosenberg any useful news about the upcoming Abd al Rahim al-Nashiri trial (nor had they posted documents his lawyers recently filed; though she did just tweet that al-Nashiri's trial is on), but what news they were released was going through decidedly conservative channels: the Weekly Standard and the Heritage Foundation.

And surprise surprise, those conservative channels deem this shiny new technology that doesn't give us a full picture "transparency."

Is DOD suggesting that to conservatives, a website looks like information whether or not there's anything in that information?

Whether or not this is the plan, to bypass the people who actually know something about this place and these people by wowing people who will be impressed by empty bells and whistles, it is telling that Gitmo is going to conservative sites. If your idea of "transparency" is only to show the kind of information that conservatives will like, then it's pretty clear you're hiding something.