

LEON PANETTA AND THE PAKISTANI DOCTOR: YET MORE DOUBLE STANDARDS ON CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

As the Bill Gertz article I reexamined the other day made clear, Leon Panetta became personally involved in the CIA's efforts to investigate detainee lawyers who were trying to track down their clients' torturers.

CIA Director Leon E. Panetta and his chief of staff, Jeremy Bash, a former chief counsel for the House intelligence committee, at first were unaware of both the scope and seriousness of the case.

However, both officials began addressing the matter after inquiries were made from members of Congress. Since then, Mr. Panetta and Mr. Bash are getting regular updates on the dispute, said the officials.

As a result of that investigation, former CIA officer John Kiriakou was charged last week.

Consider the damage Kiriakou is alleged to have done:

- Some lawyers with Top Secret clearance submitted a sealed filing naming a covert officer involved in the torture of 9/11 defendants. The lawyers pointedly did not photograph this officer in an effort to shield his

identity. And his name was never made public.

- Using information gained from Kiriakou and **around 23 other sources** (including former CIA Executive Director Buzzy Krongard), Scott Shane wrote an article detailing Deuce Martinez' role in the interrogation of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and others. And while Martinez' association with the torture program was classified, his identity was not. Furthermore, by the time of the article, Martinez was working for Bruce Jessen and James Mitchell's contracting firm, making it a pretty safe bet that he was involved in interrogation, even interrogations involving torture.
- Subsequent to this article based on information from Kiriakou and 23 other people, the 9/11 detainees saw pictures of Martinez; assuming Shane's article is accurate, they had already interacted with Martinez personally.
- In that article, Shane included details about the "magic box" technology used to locate Abu Zubaydah.

Information on that “magic box” technology and similar ones has been publicly available for decades, meaning the only secret here is that CIA uses it (!) and called it something as stupid as “magic box.”

That’s it. That’s the reported outcome of John Kiriakou’s leaks. And for that he faces prison time of up to 20 years.

Meanwhile, tomorrow the above clip will be shown on 60 Minutes, showing Panetta confirming that the Pakistani doctor who conducted fake vaccinations in Abbottabad, Pakistan in order to get a glimpse into Osama bin Laden’s compound was, in fact, working for the CIA.

Panetta also acknowledged that Shikal Afridi, the Pakistani doctor conducting health tests in the village in an effort to collect DNA and verify bin Laden’s presence, was in fact working for the U.S. Afridi was arrested and charged with treason by the government of Pakistan. “I’m very concerned about what the Pakistanis did with this individual...who in fact helped provide intelligence that was very helpful with regards to this operation,” says Panetta. “He was not in any way treasonous towards Pakistan...Pakistan and the United States have a common cause here against terrorism...and for them to take this kind of action against somebody who was helping to go after terrorism, I just think is a real mistake on their part,” he tells Pelley.

Not only does this presumably put more pressure on Pakistan to convict Afridi of treason (he remains in custody), but it exacerbates the problem of having used a vaccination campaign as

cover in the first place, confirming on the record that similar campaigns in poor countries might be no more than a CIA front.

I presume someone in the White House gave Panetta permission to go blab this on 60 Minutes; I assume he's in no more legal jeopardy than Dick Cheney was when he insta-declassified Valerie Plame's identity.

But shit like this discredits every single claim national security experts make about the need for secrecy. I mean, how are CIA officers ever going to recruit any more assets when the assets know that the CIA director may, at some time in the future that's politically convenient, go on 60 Minutes and confirm the relationship?