

THE OFFICIAL JOHN BRENNAN STORY

The NYT has chosen to have someone who presented an outdated picture of drone targeting that covered up changes implemented under John Brennan report on John Brennan's nomination to be CIA Director. The story is predictably imbalanced.

Take this claim, for example:

It is uncertain whether the torture issue will now cause any problems for Mr. Brennan. But he is a far more well-known figure than in 2009, having made many public appearances in the wake of terrorist plots and to explain the legal and policy arguments behind drone strikes.

It's fair, as far as it goes. I do doubt that Obama will care that his CIA Director has protected the CIA's torturers. I do think Brennan has seduced enough beltway journalists so as to withstand criticism for his views.

But Scott Shane suggests Brennan's many public statements on drones were 1) accurate and 2) consisted of actual explanations for drone strikes.

This, coming from a guy who has noted Brennan getting caught lying about there being no civilian casualties from drones in the past.

And from a guy who knows well that Brennan's drone targeting speech fails to explain signature strikes (which Brennan approved in Yemen).

Sadly, Shane didn't note those past lies.

Then there's this claim.

He has spoken out repeatedly about the need for strong oversight and review of

counterterrorism actions.

It would be useful for Shane to note that Brennan's plans to establish rules for drones faltered after Mitt Romney lost the election. It would also be useful to note that his idea of "strong oversight" consists of him—John Brennan—centralizing all decision making under himself, then operating within the oversight free National Security Council. All at the same time the Administration refuses to exercise real transparency (and doesn't even share the "kill list" with the Gang of Four).

That is, it would be nice if Shane had distinguished the myth he has helped to create from the reality.

But it seems the real role of Shane's article is to point this out.

During Mr. Brennan's tenure as Mr. Obama's top adviser on counterterrorism, Al Qaeda's leadership has been devastated and Mr. Bin Laden been killed.

That, I suppose, is the plan to get Brennan confirmed: paper over the serial lies and instead repeat Osama bin Laden over and over again.

Well done, Scott Shane!