

WHAT MICHAEL FLYNN'S DIA IMPUTES TO FACTS WE KNOW

Before I point to reasons why we should exercise some caution before we believe a DIA report claiming that Edward Snowden's entire leak was orchestrated by the Russians, let me lay out the following.

First, until such time as we see evidence that the reported documents somehow inordinately benefit Russia (and/or see evidence that our cooperation with Russia isn't increasing during the period of Snowden's asylum there), I'm not much interested in the question. I'm still so busy – both between Snowden document reports and documents declassified in response to FOIAs in a false show of transparency – reading about programs Americans should have known, that I don't have time or interest in this manufactured sideshow.

Second, I don't know what Snowden's relationship with Russia is (and suspect 99% of the people commenting don't either). The claims Mike Rogers, in particular, made on Sunday are full of Clown Show logic problems, some of which Snowden debunked in a limited rebuttal in an interview with Jane Mayer. Some accusers and defenders are conflating what happened while Snowden was working at NSA and what happened after Snowden got stuck in Moscow. All that said, while we have no evidence of cooperation now, I fully expect Vladimir Putin tried all he could to get as much out of Snowden as he could.

I don't know.

What I do know is that DIA under General Michael Flynn's leadership seems to be developing a pattern of leaking sensational intelligence conclusions based on apparently bad logic at politically opportune moments.

The accusations against Snowden are from a DIA report that DIA's Director, Michael Flynn, organized.

The Defense Department report was conducted by the Defense Intelligence Agency in coordination with other intelligence agencies across the government, according to two sources familiar with its findings. A spokesperson for the DIA said Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, the agency's director, organized a task force "to assess the potential impact to the Department of Defense from the compromise of this information." But the spokesman did not say what, if any, conclusions the task force had reached about actual damage caused by documents Snowden took, regardless of whether they've been disclosed or not.

Admittedly, the conclusions of it got leaked with apparent White House permission. But it got leaked in the worst manner of Obama Administration asymmetric leaking, which have a history of being rather partial and politically self-serving.

Moreover, the entire orchestrated leak feels a lot like the "leak" last year – during heightened tensions between North and South Korea – of DIA's conclusion that North Korea had the capability of launching a nuclear weapon on a ballistic missile. Republican Congressman Doug Lamborn, protected by Speech and Debate, revealed a detail that "accidentally" wasn't redacted in a larger declassified finding. The "leak" fed a lot of fearmongering even as the Obama Administration was trying to temper responses.

A week after the initial leak, James Clapper and Flynn happened to testify before the Senate Armed Services Committee (the entire clip is worthwhile, but the particularly important parts start after 4:00). And in response to some Ted

Cruz questions about North Korea, both Clapper and Flynn made it clear that the reason DIA had come to different conclusions than the rest of the Intelligence Community was because of the assumptions it had made. This inflammatory finding arose because of "a difference in how we judge assumptions," Flynn explained. Clapper (who had spent a week trying to batten down the alarmism) said the debate arose from the "facts we know versus what we impute to those facts."

That is, DIA had imputed conclusions to facts other agencies hadn't.

According to its Director, DIA has a difference in how it judges assumptions from other intelligence agencies. And in this case, those who have read the DIA report appear to be repeating allegations remarkably divorced from any evidence, relying on wacky theories rather than real evidence.

Michael Flynn seems to be making a habit of this kind of analysis.