

DIANNE FEINSTEIN PROTECTS JOHN BRENNAN FROM BEING CALLED A LIAR

Surprisingly, the most contentious comments from today's Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on were not directed at James "Too Cute by Half" Clapper, but instead John Brennan. Both Martin Heinrich (who used the Early Bird rule to ensure he got to speak early in the hearing) and Mark Udall hit on John Brennan's comments about the SSCI torture report given what the CIA concluded in an internal review carried out under Leon Panetta. First, Martin Heinrich accused CIA of intimidating legitimate oversight.

[Heinrich] accused Brennan of making statements about the Intelligence panel's interrogation report that are "meant to intimidate, deflect and thwart legitimate oversight."

"There's a chasm between the committee and Director Brennan on some of these issues, but it doesn't appear to be in the director's nature to accept those overtures, frankly," Heinrich said.

"I respectfully and vehemently disagree with your characterization of the CIA's cooperation with this committee," Brennan responded.

Heinrich asked Brennan to explain why the Panetta review had been disbanded, wherein Dianne Feinstein interrupted and said that was no an appropriate question for the hearing, at which point Heinrich rebutted DiFi.

"Actually, it doesn't fully answer the question," Heinrich responded.

Later, Udall suggested that Brennan's

stonewalling on this internal report suggested he might have been less than forthcoming in his earlier answers about the torture report (remember, Brennan has been dodging Udall's questions on the torture report for a year).

Udall then asked if the internal review contradicted Brennan's statement, which the CIA director said was not appropriate to respond to in a public setting.

"Are you saying that the CIA officers who were asked to produce this internal review got it wrong? Just like you said the committee got it wrong?" Udall asked.

"Senator, as you well know, I didn't say that the committee got it wrong," Udall shot back. "I said there were things in that report I disagreed with, there were things that I agreed with and I look forward with working committee on the next steps in report."

That's when DiFi interrupted again, suggesting this wasn't an appropriate discussion for this hearing.

Curiously, in spite of DiFi's insistence that all mention of the Panetta report – or what led it to being quashed – take place in closed session, the CIA claims it might release their report (if they can also release their rebuttal of the Senate report). But they're still fighting the release of the 6,000 page SSCI torture report.

They're likely using the same dodge DOJ just used in a FOIA from Jason Leopold (who is also suing for some or all the same reports ACLU is). They said they can't release the torture report because DiFi owns it (remember, Congress is immune from FOIA).

A report completed more than a year ago by a Senate panel that investigated the

CIA's torture program can only be released by the committee, which maintains complete "control" over the highly classified document, the Justice Department said in a court filing late Friday.

The Justice Department made that claim in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit I filed against the agency last September, in which I asked for a copy of the 300-page executive summary of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's (SSCI) much sought after \$40 million torture report. The Justice Department asked a federal court judge Friday to dismiss my case, arguing it does not have the authority to disseminate the report because it is a "congressional record" as opposed to an "agency record," which would make it subject to provisions of FOIA.

So DiFi doesn't want Brennan to have to admit in public session that even the CIA found the CIA torture program didn't work. And DiFi seems to be the single solitary hold-up for releasing her own Committee's torture report.

Why is DiFi protecting John Brennan and his agency rather than overseeing them?