

IS THERE ANY INDICATION THIS ISN'T THE FAULT OF OVP?

Via Secrecy News, I see that DCI Michael Hayden is lecturing the press on its obligations in the GWOT.

The duty of a free press is to report the facts as they are found. By sticking to that principle, journalists accomplish a great deal in exposing al-Qaeda and its adherents for what they are.

Just as they report on the terrorists, it's the job of journalists to report on the how the war against terrorism is being fought. And when their spotlight is cast on intelligence activities, sound judgment and a thorough understanding of all the equities at play are critically important. Revelations of sources and methods and an impulse to drag anything CIA does to the darkest corner of the room can make it very difficult for us to do our vital work.

When our operations are exposed—legal, authorized operations overseen by Congress—it reduces the space and damages the tools we use to protect Americans. After the press reported how banking records on the international SWIFT network could be monitored, I read a claim that this leak—and I quote—“bears no resemblance to security breaches, like disclosure of troop locations, that would clearly compromise the immediate safety of specific individuals.”

I disagree. In a war that largely depends on our success in collecting intelligence on the enemy, publishing information on our sources and methods can be just as damaging as revelations of troop or ship

movements were in the past. Now, the compromise to safety can be both immediate and lasting, extending far beyond specific individuals.

Hayden then goes on to cite two examples where leaks to the press compromised operations.

Sometimes there is no evidence that leaks of classified information have harmed national security. As CIA Director, I'm telling you there is, and they have. Let me give you just two examples:

- *In one case, leaks provided ammunition for a government to prosecute and imprison one of our sources, whose family was also endangered. The revelations had an immediate, chilling effect on our ability to collect against a top-priority target.*
- *In another, a spate of media reports cost us several promising counterterrorism and counterproliferation assets. Sources not even involved in the exposed operation lost confidence that their relationship with us could be kept secret, and they stopped reporting.*

Now, of all the leaks to the press of late, only two that I can think of could have compromised individual sources and "operations"—and if the latter pertains to counterproliferation, I'd say the possibilities are even fewer. There's the revelation that Pakistan had captured Mohammed Naeem Noor Khan, Al Qaeda's IT guy. Pakistani officials claimed that the leaked capture had compromised a large operation—which may well have touched on both counterproliferation and counterterrorism.

Until U.S. officials leaked the arrest of Muhammad Naeem Noor Khan to reporters, Pakistan had been using him in a sting operation to track down al Qaeda operatives around the world, the sources said.

If we can believe the Pakistanis, then this is almost certainly one of the incidents Hayden refers to. But the leak came from Administration leakers trying to justify one of their orange alerts.

And then, of course, there's the outing of Valerie Wilson. Her work definitely touched on counterproliferation. Her exposure definitely required the CIA to pull back some operatives working under the Brewster Jennings cover. But it may well have led to either of the consequences Hayden cites—the arrest of assets tied to the cover, or the hesitation of others to work with us.

After all, if the US Vice President is willing to out intelligence secrets, what guarantee do others have that Cheney won't out assets as well?