

HAYDEN THROWING MUDD AT BLOGGERS

Jeff Stein chronicles former CIA columnist Stephen Lee's woes with the CIA's pre-publication process.

Stephen Lee, a former CIA operations manager who blogs for The Washington Examiner, suspects the spy agency's censors are trying to sabotage his new career.

Lee recently launched the critical "Examiner Spy" column for the Examiner newspaper chain, which has a D.C. daily edition. He also pens a biting cartoon for his own Web site, NationalSecurityDrone.com, under the name Frank Naif."

I believe I am being subjected to a campaign of low-level harrassment," Lee said Wednesday.

Most interesting, though, Stein describes the problems Lee had getting a piece blaming Michael Hayden—rather than the bloggers that Hayden himself blamed—for the withdrawal of Phil Mudd's nomination to the top DHS intelligence post.

The first was a critical piece on former CIA Director Michael V. Hayden, acidly headlined, "**CIA ex-chief Hayden blames bloggers for damage caused by his policies.**"

Lee says he submitted the piece for clearance on Friday, June 19. The weekend passed. Finally, at mid-morning on Tuesday, June 23, he learned the PRB had "lost" it.

He resubmitted the piece, and around 4 p.m. Tuesday, he got an answer: It was cleared.

Here's some of what the CIA tried to "lose."

Ex CIA chief Michael Hayden's opinion piece in the Washington Post on Friday, 19 June 2009, decried how "today's atmosphere" of mistrust in Washington caused former senior CIA analyst Phil Mudd to withdraw his nomination as Undersecretary of Homeland Security for Intelligence.

Predictably, Hayden did not take responsibility for his own role in "today's atmosphere"—in particular Hayden's own policies of excessive secrecy and shirking command responsibility for specific programs and policy on his watch.

Hayden nonetheless excoriated "the blogosphere" and chicken-hearted congressional aides for hyping up Mudd's association with discredited torture and detention practices.

[snip]

I count myself as one of those intelligence officers who has reason for pause about future service inside US intelligence. But it's not cheeto-eating bloggers or opportunistic congressional staffers that I fear.

[snip]

Mudd was a CIA analyst, and probably was aware of the torture and detention programs. But he was almost certainly not instrumentally involved in managing or participating in actual torture or extra-judicial detentions.

Unfortunately, journalists, bloggers, congressional staffers, and ordinary Americans (all belittled as "internal threats" by Hayden in his *Post* essay) are not able to precisely discern Mudd's involvement, if any, with that secret black box of terrorist detention and

torture. Even though Americans are entitled to have a say in what CIA is doing in the Republic's name, Hayden and other CIA directors' disdain for transparency kept Mudd's record out of view.

Gosh, are you telling me the former top spook is hiding behind attacks on us ~~cheeto-eating~~ Yirgacheffe-sipping bloggers?