

WHY WON'T JEH JOHNSON ANSWER HANK JOHNSON'S QUESTION ABOUT FORCED NUDITY?

The House Armed Services Committee is having a hearing on Law of War Detention. Much of it has focused on Jeh Johnson affirming that military commissions line up with American values. (In other words, it is fairly depressing.)

But an interesting exchange happened when Hank Johnson had his turn. He set up his question by talking about a recent trip to Gitmo. He described the good treatment he saw the detainees being subject to. Jeh Johnson said that we're following the Geneva Conventions.

Then he said (working from memory), so why is Bradley Manning being subject to worse treatment.

Frankly, Hank Johnson got a few details incorrect (for example, he said that Manning had to wear shackles in his cell). But he went through Manning's treatment reasonably well.

In response, Jeh Johnson reverted immediately to the importance of pretrial detention. He used the same old lie about Manning being able to talk to others in his cell block. Here's a rough liveblog:

not in solitary confinement. Public misinformation. It is public that he is currently in classification status called Maximum security. Someone in Max occupies same type of cell that a medium security pretrial detainee. Same time of cell. You could have Max security and medium confinee in the same row of cells and they could converse with one another.

(That would be true if anyone was in a cell

close enough to him to be able to talk to, but there isn't.)

But perhaps most tellingly, Jeh Johnson didn't address Hank Johnson's question about the forced nudity Manning is being subject to.

Ultimately, Buck McKeon cut off Hank Johnson, saying that Jeh Johnson could answer him "off the record." (?) I hope he meant for the record; we shall see.)

But for now, at least, it appears that Jeh Johnson really doesn't want to talk about why Manning is being subject to a policy implemented—and then rejected—at Gitmo.