

HOW DOES JOHN BRENNAN STILL HAVE CLEARANCE?

Remember when I gave John Brennan credit for rather uncharacteristically keeping secrets about the UndieBomber case?

While the ABC story cites US officials, among others, it also cites an “international intelligence official” as well as “officials” and “authorities” named generically (as well as John Brennan on the record, rather uncharacteristically trying to protect “the equities that are involved with it”).

It turns out betting that John Brennan can't keep a secret is about as reliable as always betting on the shit square (as bmaz so artfully describes expecting the worst). In an effort to brief former counterterrorism officials on the plot (AKA, feed the news cycle), Brennan revealed we had “inside control” over the plot.

At about 5:45 p.m. EDT on Monday, May 7, just before the evening newscasts, John Brennan, President Barack Obama's top White House adviser on counterterrorism, held a small, private teleconference to brief former counterterrorism advisers who have become frequent commentators on TV news shows.

According to five people familiar with the call, Brennan stressed that the plot was never a threat to the U.S. public or air safety because Washington had “inside control” over it.

And from there, the fact that this was another example of Saudi AQAP infiltration was revealed.

This admission, by the way, appears to be White

House damage control, because they provide Mark Hosenball yet another story on their discussions with the AP.

According to National Security Council spokesman Tommy Vietor, due to its sensitivity, the AP initially agreed to a White House request to delay publication of the story for several days.

But according to three government officials, a final deal on timing of publication fell apart over the AP's insistence that no U.S. official would respond to the story for one clear hour after its release.

When the administration rejected that demand as "untenable," two officials said, the AP said it was going public with the story. At that point, Brennan was immediately called out of a meeting to take charge of damage control.

What they're trying to refute—an attempt undermined by the fact their story keeps changing—is the AP claim that the Administration planned to formally announce "they" had "foiled" a "plot" the following morning.

The AP learned about the thwarted plot last week but agreed to White House and CIA requests not to publish it immediately because the sensitive intelligence operation was still under way. Once officials said those concerns were allayed, the AP decided to disclose the plot Monday despite requests from the Obama administration to wait for an official announcement Tuesday.

They're laying it on pretty thick now, too, blaming the AP for everything.

The White House places the blame squarely on AP, calling the claim that

Brennan contributed to a leak
“ridiculous.”

“It is well known that we use a range of intelligence capabilities to penetrate and monitor terrorist groups,” according to an official statement from the White House national security staff.

“None of these sources or methods was disclosed by this statement. The egregious leak here was to the Associated Press. The White House fought to prevent this information from being reported and ultimately worked to delay its publication for operational security reasons. No one is more upset than us about this disclosure, and we support efforts to prevent leaks like this which harm our national security,” the statement said.

Now, why would you blame **the AP**—rather than whatever source leaked to them—unless the most damning detail the AP reported is that the Administration planned on revealing this “plot” themselves (presumably without asking the Saudis or Brits or Congress first)?

In other words, while on its face this is an attempt by John Brennan to pretend he didn’t expose the most sensitive part of the plot—the Saudi infiltration of AQAP—it is also a pissing contest that started when the Administration tried to be the first to reveal the plot, and then blame the AP when the exposure of it pissed off our allies.