

WHY IS JOSE RODRIGUEZ HANGING OUT JOHN BRENNAN NOW?

I'm no fan of either Jose Rodriguez or John Brennan. So I take no pleasure that the former is blaming the latter for a big intelligence scam carried out against the CIA back in the day.

As head of the multi-agency Terrorist Threat Integration Center in 2003 and 2004, Brennan disseminated to the Bush White House a stream of CIA intelligence from a bogus source, former CIA officials say. Ridiculed by some within the CIA, the bogus intelligence nevertheless led to disruption in the U.S. and abroad, including an orange terror alert and the cancellation of dozens of international flights.

[snip]

At the CIA, the information was controversial from the beginning, and many agency officials said at the time that it should not have been distributed. Jose Rodriguez, who was directing the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, said the CTC viewed the intelligence as "crazy."

"We were very skeptical," Rodriguez recalled.

[snip]

"It was briefed by John. He was the guy who was bringing it there," said Rodriguez, who added that he believes Brennan was trying to build up his own profile. "My own view is he saw this, he took this, as a way to have relevance, to take something important to the White House."

But I am interested in why Rodriguez is doing this now—particularly since, as Defense News points out, he chose not to do so in his own book.

I can think of three possible reasons this is coming out now—they're all wildarsed guesses. It's possible that Brennan's star is fading, so he's vulnerable now in a way he wasn't before.

It's possible that some story behind the underlying scam this guy—Dennis Montgomery—carried out against the government is about to unfold. As the video above and the rest of the Democracy Now report makes clear (the original Playboy article is unavailable), part of Montgomery's scam consisted of high level financial contacts. Part of it involved targeting Al Jazeera and old Europe.

AMY GOODMAN: And how did he get these contracts? And what exactly did he say? I mean, explain what you're saying, because, I mean, this is not just the crazy fantasizing of one guy. You have Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense, talking about, you know, Al Jazeera being a terrorist network.

ARAM ROSTON: That's very true. So people were — people saw Al Jazeera in this light, this negative light. The administration did already, perhaps. But what he was saying is it had no — it didn't matter what the content was. He was saying in the electronic feed from Al Jazeera, there was little secret bits of information injected in it technologically, just little technologic — little bits and so forth. Perhaps the pixels were rearranged. And he was able to decode it all. He was able to decode it all and translate it into numbers.

Those numbers, he said, were latitudes and longitudes. In other words, it was a stream of video, and he was finding these latitudes and longitudes, times,

flight numbers. And he would just churn that out. As he would call it, "This is my output." This is the Al Jazeera output. And he had figured out a way that somehow Al Jazeera was al-Qaeda's method of transmitting this data secretly. What it would have required, of course, is all these terrorists around the world to have some sort of decoding equipment that could have unscrambled it, which was, I think --

AMY GOODMAN: And these longitudes and latitudes were supposedly of attacks?

ARAM ROSTON: Yeah. Sometimes it wasn't even a latitude and longitude; sometimes it was just a latitude, just one number. And he was like, "It's somewhere around here." And he would just work and say, "It's here." And then, you know, you'd have scares like Tappahannock, Virginia was one place, a little town of Virginia, or, you know, somewhere in Seattle or Galveston, Texas, near the fuel tanks. And they would react.

AMY GOODMAN: And they would cancel planes, for example, around the holidays, like the French airlines.

It's possible, then, that the scam was deliberately fed intelligence, another form of yellowcake, and the people who planted it know that's going to become clear shortly, so they're trying to blame Brennan for magnifying it.

But there is one other variant possibility of that.

Back before the whole intelligence scam became clear, Montgomery accused then Congressman and future NV governor Jim Gibbons of accepting bribes to get eTreppid contracts (note, this investigation was revealed in the wake of the US Attorney firings, as the scope of the Duke Cunningham bribery was becoming clear).

Software designer Dennis Montgomery was also on that cruise with Gibbons. He estimates the trip cost “probably \$20,000 a person,” claiming he saw the invoice. Montgomery says his former business partner Trepp chartered a 727 to fly guests from Nevada to Florida and back and picked up the tab for penthouse rooms, private meals and expensive wines.

In an exclusive interview with NBC, Montgomery – who’s now at war with his former partner – makes an explosive charge. He says that near the end of the cruise, he saw Trepp pass money to the congressman.

Dennis Montgomery: There was a lot of alcohol and a lot of drinking. And that’s when I first saw Warren give Jim Gibbons money.

Lisa Myers: How much?

Montgomery: Close to \$100,000.

Myers: How can you know?

Montgomery: Because he gave him casino chips and cash.

Myers: Are you sure about what you saw?

Montgomery: I’m absolutely, positively sure.

Gibbons was ultimately not charged. But there were also a series of law suits in which the US declared state secrets to hide details about what eTreppid was doing for the government.

After a bitter falling out between Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Trepp in 2006 led to a series of lawsuits, the F.B.I. and the Air Force sent investigators to eTreppid to look into accusations that Mr. Montgomery had stolen digital data from the company’s systems. In interviews,

several employees claimed that Mr. Montgomery had manipulated tests in demonstrations with military officials to make it appear that his video recognition software had worked, according to government memorandums. The investigation collapsed, though, when a judge ruled that the F.B.I. had conducted an improper search of his home.

Software and Secrets

The litigation worried intelligence officials. The Bush administration declared that some classified details about the use of Mr. Montgomery's software were a "state secret" that could cause grave harm if disclosed in court. In 2008, the government spent three days "scrubbing" the home computers of Mr. Montgomery's lawyer of all references to the technology. And this past fall, federal judges in Montana and Nevada who are overseeing several of the lawsuits issued protective orders shielding certain classified material.

The secrecy was so great that at a deposition Mr. Montgomery gave in November, two government officials showed up to monitor the questioning but refused to give their full names or the agencies they worked for.

And Montgomery also got charged with writing bad checks to Las Vegas casinos.

Now, I will need to dig deeper. But it's possible some of the stuff that the government did so well hiding has seeped out (note the Obama Administration has started looking more closely at money laundering in casinos in connection with its HSBC and Sheldon Adelson investigations).

That is, this intelligence scam may still not be

what it seems. And it may be that Rodriguez is trying to pre-spin some new news on this front.

Cause when Jose Rodriguez is involved, it's usually smart to assume a cover-up.