

REPUBLICANS NOW COMPLAINING OBAMA RELIES ON PDBS

Republicans are now accusing Obama of throwing the CIA under the bus because the White House released evidence that Obama and Susan Rice hewed to CIA talking points about Benghazi. For example, John McCain just said this on CNN:

First they threw Hillary Clinton under the bus, now I guess they're going to throw the CIA under the bus.

But here's the funny thing. Perhaps the most extensive example of Republicans moving the bar is this WSJ article, that confirms the CIA was emphasizing that Obama's public statements tracked CIA intelligence is this WSJ article, which first describes what was in Obama's Presidential Daily Briefs, then, in the passive voice, suggests Obama shouldn't be using his PDBs as the basis for his public statements.

President Barack Obama was told in his daily intelligence briefing for more than a week after the consulate siege in Benghazi that the assault grew out of a spontaneous protest, despite conflicting reports from witnesses and other sources that began to cast doubt on the accuracy of that assessment almost from the start.

New details about the contents of the President's Daily Brief, which haven't been reported previously, show that the Central Intelligence Agency didn't adjust the classified assessment until Sept. 22, fueling tensions between the administration and the agency.

[snip]

At the same time, questions have been raised about why the White House relied

so heavily on the daily intelligence report and wasn't more proactive about seeking corrections once conflicting accounts about the protests began to emerge in news accounts and elsewhere.

Administration officials' response is that the White House relied on the intelligence community to provide its best assessment.

[snip]

The CIA was consistent from Sept. 13 to Sept. 21 that the attack evolved from a protest. The current intelligence assessment still notes there is conflicting evidence about whether there was a protest earlier on the day of the attack.

Nowhere does the article mention the attack Republicans were focused on on September 10, the claim that since Obama didn't get his PDB delivered aurally, he was a bad Commander-in-Chief.

It turns out that more than half the time, the commander in chief does not attend his daily intelligence meeting.

The Government Accountability Institute, a new conservative investigative research organization, examined President Obama's schedule from the day he took office until mid-June 2012, to see how often he attended his Presidential Daily Brief (PDB) – the meeting at which he is briefed on the most critical intelligence threats to the country. During his first 1,225 days in office, Obama attended his PDB just 536 times – or 43.8 percent of the time. During 2011 and the first half of 2012, his attendance became even less frequent – falling to just over 38 percent. By contrast, Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush almost never missed his daily

intelligence meeting.

[snip]

When Obama forgoes this daily intelligence meeting, he is consciously placing other priorities ahead of national security. As The Post story that the Obama White House sent me put it, "Process tells you something about an administration. How a president structures his regular morning meeting on intelligence and national security is one way to measure his personal approach to foreign policy."

Golly. Dick Cheney's mouthpiece says PDBs are centrally important. And Obama, in this case, followed the PDBs.

But now Republicans say that, too, is wrong.