

THE PETRAEUS BARRAGE ON BENGHAZI

As I noted yesterday, Jonah Goldberg was whining that not enough journalists were covering this story, which said that CIA had twice asked for help from DOD, only to be denied, and stated that several of the security guards at the CIA annex were told to stand down rather than responding immediately to the attack on the mission.

Sadly for Jonah's wishes for October-in-November, "senior intelligence officials"—which WaPo made clear were at the CIA—held what NYT and WaPo make clear was a formal briefing that set off a frenzy of coverage on Benghazi, all refuting the claims made in the Fox story.

You gotta hand it to David Petraeus. He still completely commands the media in this country. Neither WaPo nor NYT add much beyond refuting the Fox story—though the NYT does make clear that CIA had taken control of the DOD drone that surveilled the mission after the attack started.

An unarmed military drone that the C.I.A. took control of to map possible escape routes relayed reassuring images to Tripoli and Washington.

The WSJ, which clearly supplemented the CIA briefing with reporting from Congress, State, and the FBI, added far more. Of note, CIA and State are now telling Congress different stories about what role CIA was supposed to play that night.

Congressional investigators say it appears that the CIA and State Department weren't on the same page about their respective roles on security, underlining the rift between agencies over taking responsibility and raising questions about whether the security arrangement in Benghazi was

flawed.

[snip]

At one point during the consulate siege, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton telephoned the CIA director directly to seek assistance. Real-time intelligence from the field was scarce and some officials at State and the Pentagon were largely in the dark about the CIA's role.

And—as has been suggested before, even at the Darrell Issa hearing—CIA and FBI weren't sharing information.

In ensuing weeks, tensions over the matter spread to the FBI and Capitol Hill. The FBI didn't initially get to review surveillance footage taken at the compound because officials say it was being analyzed by the CIA. The CIA, in turn, wasn't able to immediately get copies of FBI witness interviews, delaying the agency's analysis of what happened outside the consulate and at the annex.

Perhaps most damning, though, are the gripes about how Petraeus responded to the attack, staying at the movie *Argo* the night of the Issa hearing, and not attending the funeral of the two former SEAL contractors who died providing security to CIA. One of WSJ's sources compared how Panetta responded to the Khost killings with Petraeus' actions. Panetta lifted the cover of those who died and attended funerals. Petraeus stayed away—he claims in this article—to hide CIA's role in Benghazi.

Officials close to Mr. Petraeus say he stayed away in an effort to conceal the agency's role in collecting intelligence and providing security in Benghazi. Two of the four men who died that day, Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty, were

former Navy SEAL commandos who were publicly identified as State Department contract security officers, but who actually worked as Central Intelligence Agency contractors, U.S. officials say.

This is of course a totally bullshit answer. Libyans made it clear right away that they had not been told about the personnel at the annex, making it clear they were spooks. By not attending the funeral, Petraeus was keeping no secrets from the Libyans, though he may have thought he was keeping them from us (and making Hillary take the fall for this attack).

Ah well, Petraeus can still get the media to report his barrage, even if he can't offer credible explanations for his actions.