

SLAM DUNK'S DEPUTY: JOHN BRENNAN'S "AN HONEST GUY"

This Mark Hosenball story is getting a lot of attention. It repeats earlier assertions—from Dianne Feinstein among others—about whether or not John Brennan opposed torture or not, with anonymous sources (one, a senior Administration official, who might not have means to know firsthand) arguing both sides.

Some former officials familiar with deliberations about the program said they don't recall Brennan voicing objections to the use of harsh interrogation techniques.

But other former officials say Brennan was among agency officials who were uncomfortable with the use of physically coercive tactics, despite the legal opinions that supported their use. He expressed concern, according to these officials, that if details of the program became public, it would be CIA officers who would face criticism, rather than the politicians and lawyers who approved them.

[snip]

"Mr. Brennan had significant concerns and personal objections to many elements of the EIT (enhanced interrogation techniques) program while it was under way," a senior administration official said in response to Reuters' inquiries. "He voiced those objections privately with colleagues at the agency."

But I'm most amused by one of the only on-the-record quotes in the piece, from George Tenet's Deputy, John McLaughlin.

"If John says he expressed reservations about some techniques, I believe him because he's an honest guy," said John McLaughlin, who was deputy CIA director at the time.

John Brennan's an honest guy. Sure.

The guy who said there were no civilian drone casualties.

The guy who implied all drone strikes are targeted at known people, pretending none are targeted at patterns of people whose identity remains unknown.

The guy who said Osama bin Laden shot at the team that ultimately killed him.

That guy.

I've got my concerns about John Brennan's knowledge of—even his logistical involvement in—torture. But a far bigger concern, in my book, is that—like John McLaughlin's boss, George "Slam Dunk" Tenet—he has lied to the American people, all the while hiding behind a claim of secrecy.

And so not only is it absurd to believe John Brennan opposed torture because he says so. It's that—just 10 years after being lied into an illegal war—we're even considering confirming a guy who has engaged in the same kind of lying that George Tenet used to help get us into that war.