

WHITE HOUSE CAPITULATES TO BENGHAZI TRUTHERS RATHER THAN COMING CLEAN ON TARGETED KILLING

The other day, I explained that the Administration would be forced either to cede to Republican demands for Benghazi talking points and other truther demands or release a full accounting why and in which countries it has conducted targeted killing.

It decided to capitulate to the Benghazi truthers rather than tell the Intelligence Committee what kind of targeted killing it has been doing.

Rather than agreeing to some Democratic senators' demands for full access to the classified legal memos on the targeted killing program, Obama administration officials are negotiating with Republicans to provide more information on the lethal attack last year on the American diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, according to three Congressional staff members.

The strategy is intended to produce a bipartisan majority vote for Mr. Brennan in the Senate Intelligence Committee without giving its members seven additional legal opinions on targeted killing sought by senators and while protecting what the White House views as the confidentiality of the Justice Department's legal advice to the president.

[snip]

The administration is currently in discussions with Republican members of the Intelligence Committee about providing the trail of e-mails that were the basis of "talking points" from the intelligence agencies regarding the Sept. 11 attack in Benghazi, which killed the American ambassador to Libya, J. Christopher Stevens, and three other Americans. Such a concession would probably win at least some Republican votes for Mr. Brennan.

I get that the Benghazi truther demands are, at this point, pointless. I get that the President would rather cede to a bunch of nutcases from the Republican party than Senators from his own party.

But what does it say that this information on targeted killing—which the Administration should provide to the intelligence Committees under the National Security Act, by law, in any case—is more precious than a bunch of partisan hackery the Republicans have been pursuing since September.

There must be some reason the Administration would rather kowtow to sensationalized requests from Republicans rather than commit to the transparency it'd take to get 2 Democrats and a Republican to vote for Brennan.

But no reason for doing so would be respectable.