

DID CIA'S HANDSOMELY PAID CONTRACTORS DOCTOR ITS LOG BOOKS, AGAIN?

I wanted to return to one other detail of John Brennan's (designed to be made public, I believe) January 27 letter to Dianne Feinstein explaining the urgent need to continue the "investigative, protective, or intelligence activity" targeted at CIA's overseers.

In the letter, Brennan describes the original basis for CIA's claimed suspicion into SSCI this way:

CIA maintains a log of all materials provided to the Committee through established protocols, and these documents do not appear in that log, nor were they found in an audit of CIA's side of the system for all materials provided to SSCI through established protocols. Because we were concerned that there may be a breach or vulnerability in the system for housing highly classified documents, CIA conducted a limited review to determine whether these files were located on the SSCI side of the CIA network and review audit data to determine whether anyone had access the files. [my emphasis]

The original basis CIA used to justify investigating their overseers was a log purportedly recording which documents they had been given.

Recall that CIA worked with contractors – SAIC, as I understand it – to review and re-review each document before they turned it over to SSCI.

CIA insisted that the Committee review

documents at a government building in Virginia. Once the CIA produced relevant documents related to the CIA detention and interrogation program, the CIA then insisted that CIA personnel—and private contractors employed by the CIA—review each document multiple times to ensure unrelated documents were not provided to a small number of fully cleared Committee staff.

This process accounts for much of the \$44 million cost of the report.

The log must have come out of this process: contractors, being paid handsomely by the CIA to slow the investigation, recording each document that they claimed to hand over to investigators.

So at the base of Brennan's claim is a log, made by self-interested contractors employed by CIA, about torture.

The CIA's contractors don't have a very reliable history recording issues relating to torture.

Recall that – contrary to much of the public reporting on the matter – the destruction of the torture tapes did not just destroy ugly images of torture inflicted on Abu Zubaydah.

In addition, by destroying the torture tapes, CIA destroyed evidence that:

- The CIA's contractors used torture on Abu Zubaydah that exceeded the guidelines provided by DOJ
- The CIA's contractors' descriptions of those torture techniques – in written cables and logs – did not match what they had actually done to Abu Zubaydah

- By the time CIA shut down the Thai black site and decided to stop taping their torture, someone (the CIA's contractors?) had already destroyed or sabotaged a number of the torture tapes, including ones depicting waterboarding

That is, one of the likely reasons why CIA destroyed the torture tapes is that their handsomely paid self-interested contractors produced a substantively inaccurate log about torture.

And at the base of the CIA's witch hunt into SSCI staffers is a log about torture presumably made by handsomely paid self-interested contractors.