

THE MOST TRANSPARENT ADMIN EVAH™ BOASTS OF DECLASSIFYING 6.2% OF TORTURE REPORT

As you likely know, when the White House delivered the torture report back to the Senate Intelligence Committee, they discovered that the Intelligence Community had redacted big chunks of the summary. McClatchy's latest report reveals the CIA blacked out the pseudonyms of torturers that SSCI had used to hide their real names.

Tom Mentzer, a spokesman for the committee's chairwoman, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., told McClatchy on Monday that the blackouts _ officially known as redactions _ were made to pseudonyms used for both covert CIA officers and foreign countries.

"No covert CIA personnel or foreign countries are named in the report," he said. "Only pseudonyms were used, precisely to protect this kind of information. Those pseudonyms were redacted (by the administration)."

All of the pseudonyms were excised from the version of the executive summary that the White House returned to the committee on Friday, a person familiar with the issue said.

I presume CIA felt they had to do this because the names of the torturers are not, in fact secret. We know that Bruce Jessen reverse engineered the torture and Alfreda Bikowsky ordered the rendition of Khalid el-Masri. Keeping the pseudonyms the SSCI used for each secret prevents us from developing a more

complete list of the things each did, including the legally actionable things.

In other words, the CIA is redacting things to hide evidence of crimes.

Behind this spat is a more general question: whether redacting 15% of an executive summary is excessive or not. Martin Heinrich says it makes the report unreadable.

“Redactions are supposed to remove names or anything that could compromise sources and methods, not to undermine the source material so that it is impossible to understand,” Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., a member of the committee, said Sunday in a statement. “Try reading a novel with 15 percent of the words blacked out. It can’t be done properly.”

James Clapper and White House spokesperson Josh Earnest say leaving 85% of the summary is very “transparent.”

Josh Earnest justified the redactions, telling reporters: “We’re talking about very sensitive information here. And it’s important that a declassification process be carried out that protects sources and methods and other information that is critical to our national security.”

He noted that more than 85 percent of the executive summary wasn’t blacked out.

But as Katherine Hawkins noted on Twitter, that’s doing the math wrong. The Executive Branch has already decided that the overwhelming majority of the report – the more detailed chapters – will not be released at all right now. The roughly 408 pages the Administration has decided we can see represents just 6.2% of the report – 408 pages out of 6,600.

SSCI wrote the summary so that it could be released, with the perhaps futile expectation that the rest of the report will be released after Bikowsky and others are no longer still working (!!) for the Agency. And yet the Most Transparent Administration Evah™ believes that even releasing that much is too much transparency and democracy for us.