

HATE TO TELL SSCI I TOLD THEM SO, JOHN BRENNAN LYING AND SPYING EDITION

The morning of John Brennan's confirmation hearing, I posted what I deemed the 5 most important questions to ask him. Three were: Will you stop lying, how much of Dick Cheney's illegal wiretap program did you run, and will you permit CIA to spy on Americans.

1) Do you plan to continue lying to Americans?

You have made a number of demonstrable lies to the American people, particularly regarding the drone program and the Osama bin Laden raid. Most egregiously in 2011, you claimed "there hasn't been a single collateral death" in almost a year from drone strikes; when challenged, you revised that by saying, "the U.S. government has not found credible evidence of collateral deaths," even in spite of a particularly egregious case of civilian deaths just months earlier. On what basis did you make these assertions? What definition of civilian were you using in each assertion? ([More background](#))

In addition, in a [speech](#) purportedly offering transparency on the drone program, you falsely suggested we know the identities of all people targeted by drones. Why did you choose to misrepresent the kind of intelligence we use in some strikes?

[snip]

4) What role did you have in Bush's illegal wiretap program?The joint Inspector General report on the illegal

wiretap program reported that entities you directed – the Terrorist Threat Integration Center in 2003 and 2004, and the National Counterterrorism Center in 2004 and 2005 – conducted the threat assessments for the program.

What role did you have, as the head of these entities, in the illegal wiretapping of Americans? To what extent did you know the program violated FISA? What role did you have in counseling Obama to give telecoms and other contractors immunity under the program? What influence did you have in DOJ decisions regarding suits about the illegal program, in particular the al-Haramain case that was thrown out even after the charity had proved it had been illegally wiretapped? Did you play any role in decisions to investigate and prosecute whistleblowers about this and other programs, notably Thomas Drake?

(More background)

5) Did you help CIA bypass prohibitions on spying domestically with the NYPD intelligence (and other) programs?

In your additional prehearing questions, you admit to knowing about CIA's role in setting up an intelligence program that profiled Muslims in New York City. What was your role in setting up the program? As someone with key oversight over personnel matters at the time, did you arrange Larry Sanchez' temporary duty at the NYPD or CIA training for NYPD detectives?

Have you been involved in any similar effort to use CIA resources to conduct domestic spying on communities of faith? You said the CIA provides (among other things) expertise to local groups spying on Americans. How is this not a violation of the prohibition on CIA spying on Americans? (More background)

As it turns out, all three questions are directly pertinent for the latest dust-up between SSCI and the CIA Director.

Tensions between the CIA and its congressional overseers erupted anew this week when CIA Director John Brennan refused to tell lawmakers who authorized intrusions into computers used by the Senate Intelligence Committee to compile a damning report on the spy agency's interrogation program.

The confrontation, which took place during a closed-door meeting on Tuesday, came as the sides continue to spar over the report's public release, providing further proof of the unprecedented deterioration in relations between the CIA and Capitol Hill.

After the meeting, several senators were so incensed at Brennan that they confirmed the row and all but accused the nation's top spy of defying Congress.

"I'm concerned there's disrespect towards the Congress," Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., who also serves as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, told McClatchy. "I think it's arrogant, I think it's unacceptable."

And you know what, Senator Levin? Brennan doesn't actually care what you think. This Committee confirmed him last year, at a point where it was already clear he would lie and spy if he thought it would help the CIA. That was the moment to win respect from Brennan.

But at this point – especially because it seems Brennan has confidence his boss won't fire him – he knows he can get away with this.