

JOHN BRENNAN ADMITS TO LYING ABOUT WORKING WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSERS

Back in May, I noted that in addition to an unclassified request that John Brennan correct his lies about CIA hacking the Senate Intelligence Committee torture investigators, Ron Wyden, Martin Heinrich, and Mazie Hirono also asked Brennan to correct a lie he told in March.

Additionally, we are attaching a separate classified letter regarding inaccurate public statements that you made on another topic in March 2015. We ask that you correct the public record regarding these statements immediately.

I suggested that Brennan probably lied in response to a request about working with human rights violators at a public speech at the Council on Foreign Relations.

QUESTION: I'm going to try to stand up. Sarah Leah Whitson, Human Rights Watch. Two days ago, ABC News ran some video and images of psychopathic murderers, thugs in the Iraqi security forces, carrying out beheadings, executions of children, executions of civilians. Human Rights Watch has documented Iraqi militias carrying out ISIS-like atrocities, executions of hundreds of captives and so forth.

And some of the allies in the anti-ISIS coalition are themselves carrying out ISIS-like atrocities, like beheadings in Saudi Arabia, violent attacks on journalists in Saudi Arabia—how do you think Iraqi Sunni civilians should

distinguish between the good guys and the bad guys in this circumstance?

BRENNAN: It's tough sorting out good guys and bad guys in a lot of these areas, it is. And human rights abuses, whether they take place on the part of ISIL or of militias or individuals who are working as part of formal security services, needs to be exposed, needs to be stopped.

And in an area like Iraq and Syria, there has been some horrific, horrific human rights abuses. And this is something that I think we need to be able to address. And when we see it, we do bring it to the attention of authorities. And we will not work with entities that are engaged in such activities.

(I even noted in real time he was refusing to respond to the part of the question about the Saudis.)

Brennan has now responded (Ali Watkins first reported on the letter on Friday). As part of his response, he admits that, contrary to his claim at CFR that "we will not work with entities that are engaged" in human rights abuses, in fact the CIA does – "because of critical intelligence those services provide."

I understand your concerns about my brief, extemporaneous remarks. While we neither condone nor participate in activities that violate human rights standards, we do maintain corporative liaison relationships with a variety of intelligence and security services around the world, some of whose constituent entities have engaged in human rights abuses. We strive to identify and, where possible, avoid working with individuals whom we believe to be responsible for such abuses. In

some cases, we have decided to continue those relationships, despite unacceptable behavior, because of the critical intelligence those services provide, including information that allows us to disrupt terrorist plotting against the United States.

Mind you, his letter implies that his response pertains only to “Iraqi security forces,” and not – as was part of the original question, but not one Brennan even acknowledged in his response – our allies the head-chopping Saudis.

I would suggest, however, that the Saudis are far better described as a service that provides us critical intelligence, “including information that allows us to disrupt terrorist plotting against the US.” I’d frankly be shocked if Iraqi security forces even have that capability, not to mention that the terrorists in Iraq are pretty focused on setting up their caliphate in Iraq right now, not attacking the US.

So kudos to John Brennan for owning up to the general lie, that “we will not work with entities that are engaged in” human rights abuses, even if in owning up to it, the old Riyadh Station Chief is still protecting his buddies the Saudis.

Baby steps, I guess.