

MASSIVE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION LEAKS ON COVERT CIA PROGRAM TRAINING SYRIAN REBELS

Last night, Remi Brulin pointed out on Twitter that Greg Miller's article in the Washington Post contains a lot of leaks describing a program that is supposed to be covert:

There sure R a lot of US officials talking about classified ops in this article on CIA's secret aid to Syrian rebels <http://t.co/T580sthYXh>

— Remi Brulin (@RBrulin) October 3, 2013

Miller even notes the covert nature of the program:

The descriptions of the CIA training program provide the most detailed account to date of the limited dimensions and daunting objectives of a CIA operation that President Obama secretly authorized in a covert action finding he signed this year.

And yet, despite the fact that even the authorization of this operation was supposed to be covert, Miller seems to have no trouble getting folks to talk to him about it. I've attempted to list here all the times he mentions things someone told him. I've only copied the references here when they relate to the covert training program, not to other information being conveyed to Miller:

U.S. officials said

officials said

officials said

officials said

The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters, said

The CIA effort was described

said a U.S. official familiar with operations in Syria

The descriptions of the CIA training program

U.S. officials said the classified program

a former senior U.S. intelligence official said

Officials said

the former U.S. intelligence official said

Officials said

officials said

officials said

officials said

what some officials have described

senior CIA officials have raised the concern

said a former senior U.S. intelligence official

the former official said

All of those are the anonymous quotes that Miller included. When it came time to get anyone to go on the record:

The CIA declined to comment.

Well, Mike Rogers did go on the record for

Miller, but mainly just to bash the Obama administration for not being able to keep up.

At any rate, the message that Miller is giving us is that the Obama administration appears to have chosen a course of providing some training and arms to Syrian rebels, but only enough that is calculated to achieve a stalemate in the civil war, rather than providing enough to tip the balance in favor of the rebels. The motivation ascribed to the administration for this approach is that they are said to favor a negotiated settlement that would come out of the stalemate.

It appears that the CIA is bristling under these restrictions and longs for the good old days of training and equipping death squads in Iraq and Afghanistan:

The training is led by small teams of operatives from the CIA's Special Activities Division, a paramilitary branch that relies heavily on contractors and former members of U.S. Special Operations forces. Officials said the instruction is rudimentary and typically spans four to six weeks.

/snip/

... There are also legal impediments, including a measure known as the Leahy Law that would require a determination that no recipients of U.S. military assistance had committed human rights abuses.

For the CIA, the constraints in Syria mark a significant departure from the wide latitude the agency was accustomed to over the past decade in the conflict zones of Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as in other countries patrolled by armed drones, including Pakistan and Yemen.

Mindful of the criticism and investigations that accompanied many of those operations, senior CIA officials

have raised the concern that the limits imposed in Syria will do little to shield the agency from criticism if something goes wrong.

“What happens when some of the people we trained torture a prisoner?” said a former senior U.S. intelligence official familiar with agency operations in the Middle East. Even if the CIA can produce records to defend its training program, “we’re going to face congressional hearings,” the former official said. “There is no win here.”

Yep, avoiding human rights abuses is hard work, and the CIA really loves its shortcuts.

I’m pretty sure that this entire article is merely an information operation being carried out to cover what is really going on. If we only had a functional Congress, I’d say I’m looking forward to those feared congressional hearings to get to a full understanding of what’s really going on. Instead, we will be stuck with merely following events as they unfold and trying to make sense of how actions fail to mesh with words.