

CIA OFFICERS DIDN'T CARRY OUT WATERBOARDING

A lot of people are pointing to John Brennan's assurances that CIA won't ever torture again as if it means anything (usually ignoring Brennan's motivation from institutional preservation, not efficacy or morality or legality).

CIA Director John Brennan told NBC News in an exclusive interview that his agency will not engage in harsh "enhanced interrogation" practices, including waterboarding, which critics call torture – even if ordered to by a future president.

"I will not agree to carry out some of these tactics and techniques I've heard bandied about because this institution needs to endure," Brennan said.

[snip]

When asked specifically about waterboarding Brennan could not have been clearer.

"Absolutely, I would not agree to having any CIA officer carrying out waterboarding again," he said.

There are a lot of reasons this doesn't mean anything, starting with the fact that President Trump could easily fire Brennan and replace him with someone pro torture.

But it's funny, too, because Brennan's assurances about waterboarding would hold true even for the period when CIA was waterboarding detainees. *Because CIA officers didn't do the waterboarding.*

As a reminder, at least four detainees were known to be waterboarded under the Gloves Come

Off Memorandum of Notification. The first, Ibn Sheikh al-Libi, was waterboarded by Egyptian intelligence, though with Americans present.

The others were waterboarded as part of torture led by Mitchell and Jessen, who were not CIA officers, but instead contractors. CIA officers were definitely involved in that torture (as they were present for our outsourced Egyptian torture). But the torture was technically done by contractors.

Don't get me wrong: CIA officers did engage in a whole lot of torture directly.

But Brennan's squirmy language should only emphasize the fact that *even when CIA was in the business of waterboarding*, CIA officers didn't do the waterboarding. So Brennan's guarantees that CIA officers won't do so in the future are pretty meaningless guarantees.