

I HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO, JOHN BRENNAN COVERING UP TORTURE REPORT EDITION

Man, have the Democrats on the Senate Intelligence Committee – particularly Dianne Feinstein and Jay Rockefeller – been pawned. One of their key issues during John Brennan's confirmation was the declassification of the 6,000 page torture report.

Based on both Saxby Chambliss' representation of comments Brennan made in their private meeting and on the delayed CIA response about the report, I predicted Brennan would be stating publicly what he stated privately (not having read most of the report yet) to Saxby.

During John Brennan's confirmation process, he answered questions about the Senate Intelligence Committee report on torture with two faces. To Saxby Chambliss in private, he said he thought the report was a prosecutorial document, set up to come to pre-ordained conclusions. Publicly, to Democrats, he said he was shocked–shocked!–by what he had read in the Executive Summary of the report.

It was quite clear that Brennan was playing the lawmakers who would get to vote on his confirmation, but they didn't delay his confirmation to resolve the report declassification.

When Brennan's confirmation got delayed by demands to exercise oversight, the CIA delayed its response – originally due February 15 – on the contents of the report. Indefinitely.

All of this, of course, sets up Brennan to refuse to declassify the report

because he believes (and, importantly, believed from the start, according to Saxby Chambliss) that the people who have now rushed his confirmation through were acting in an unfairly prosecutorial mode when they spent 5 years documenting what CIA did in its torture program.

Here's what Brennan said to Jan Schakowsky yesterday when she asked about the report.

SCHAKOWSKY: Let me ask you also, Mr. Brennan, as you know, the Senate Intelligence Committee report on former CIA detention and interrogation practices is under review with the – within the administration and the agency. Comments were originally due back to the committee on February 15, though the reply has now been delayed indefinitely.

On March 7 in the New York Times, former CIA Senior Analyst, Emile Nakhleh said that if any person can take this on, it would be you, Director Brennan. It's you and that, quote, "the institution would benefit from the eventual – eventual declassification and release of the study."

What is the current status of the review of the report and can you please just, if you could, discuss the importance as a leader of the – the leader of the CIA of its release?

BRENNAN: Well, clearly, it's – it's an important report that was issued by the – the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. I have as – as recently as earlier this [week] spoken with both the chairman and the vice chairman of the – the committee telling them that **I am in the process of the reviewing of the – the document and will be getting back to them shortly.** This is a 6,000 page

document that has, you know, millions of pages behind it in terms of what was reviewed.

And so **it's my obligation as the Director of CIA to make sure that my response back to them is going to be thorough and as accurate as possible** and will convey my views about what that report portrays about CIA's past practices, **what we have learned from that experience running the program as well as from that report** and also to **identify things that I might think that the – the committee may have – the committee's report might not accurately represent.** [my emphasis]

Schakowsky asked about the import of releasing the report, and Brennan instead responded by talking about using the report as a lessons learned document and also objecting to some of the things found in it.

But it sure looks like, unless someone starts pulling teeth, CIA will be "learning from this experience as well as from the report" in private, because Brennan pointedly didn't respond to Schakowsky's question about releasing the document publicly.