

THOSE CIA EMPLOYEES DON'T LOOK PISSED THAT OBAMA RELEASED THE TORTURE MEMOS

The Village has been out in force declaring that Obama's decision to release the torture memos will hurt the morale of CIA's employees.

But CIA's employees sure greeted Obama warmly when he spoke at Langley yesterday. See also the beginning of the applause at the end of the Panetta introduction.

Now I realize these things are carefully stagecrafted. I realize the members of the clandestine service—the men and women being asked to push the limits in the name of national security—are probably not sitting in front of the camera at an Obama photo op.

But I've been re-reading the books that first exposed our torture program in the last few days, and it's clear that opposition came not just from the FBI. It came, in some cases, from those at CIA who thought the torture ineffective, too much, dehumanizing to the interrogators. As Scott Horton describes,

CIA interrogators were not wild about the use of these techniques.

[snip]

But the rebellion included whistleblowers who went to the CIA's inspector general, John L. Helgerson. He launched a probe which documented what was going on and concluded, correctly, that a number of the techniques then in use were potentially prosecutable as federal crimes. Bybee's memo and those of his successor Steven G. Bradbury are designed to silence and override the dissenters, most notably the CIA

inspector general, and thus put down the rebellion against torture at the CIA.

Now, I will grant you that some in the CIA are still defending the efficacy of the torture. Others are no doubt worried they will be prosecuted.

But some will be grateful that Obama is forcing the CIA out of the torture business.