

# THE IG REPORT DELAY MAY ACTUALLY BE A GOOD SIGN

As Spencer reported yesterday, the CIA has delayed the release of newly declassified sections of the IG Report until Wednesday, July 1.

Now, as someone who has long been harping on the importance of the IG Report, I also remain very skeptical that this next release will be the momentous event many are suggesting it will be. Given the CIA's almost comical stinginess with declassification of late, I see no reason to believe that we'll get much substantively new in next week's declassification.

That said, the delay has actually made me temper that view, for a few reasons. First, look at the timeline.

June 17: The WaPo reports that the CIA is pushing the Obama Administration to keep descriptions of the torture used against detainee redacted. The same article reported that CIA "has not yet forwarded the document to the White House or the Justice Department for final review."

June 19: The CIA gets its first delay—to June 26, citing the need for an interagency review.

June 26: The CIA gets its second delay—to July 1, again citing the need for an interagency review.

As I said last week, it was clear we weren't going to get the IG Report on the first deadline, June 19, because if the White House and DOJ hadn't yet gotten the document by June 17, there was no way their review was going to be complete by June 19. But here we are a week later, and they're still citing the interagency

review process.

They way I figure it, if the White House and DOJ had agreed with CIA's declassification decisions, they ought to have been able to review the CIA's declassifications in one week's time. But that review has now apparently taken over a week, suggesting some difference of opinion on the declassifications. And assuming (given the precedent of the OLC memos) that Obama and Holder will be more inclined to declassification than the CIA, then I think the delay may suggest the White House and DOJ pushed CIA for greater disclosure. So from my perspective, the delay is actually a mildly promising sign.

And then there's the timing. As a number of you have pointed out, releasing the report on July 1 sets up the classic pre-holiday document dump. What few journalists haven't checked out for a long holiday weekend on July 2 yet won't have much time to review the document before they do check out for a July 3 holiday. And, just as importantly, a lot of people are going to be out stocking up on firecrackers to celebrate American exceptionalism on July 2, rather than reading articles about torture. So whatever gets released next week will most likely fall through the cracks (except not here—trust me to spoil your visions of American exceptionalism if we actually get a real release).

Thing is, there's really no reason to orchestrate a holiday document dump if that dump is going to be the same page after page of complete redaction. While I don't put it beyond the CIA to use every possible secrecy technique regardless of whether or not those techniques are necessary, the holiday document dump gives me some small hope that we'll actually get something worth hiding in a holiday document dump.

I still remain skeptical this release is going to be as revealing as the declassification of the OLC memos was. But these two delays give me some hope I'll be surprised once we do finally

get the IG Report.