

# DAVID BRODER GIVES CHENEY A BIG BLOW-JOB

David Broder has officially gone there—stated that he is happy with the impeachment of a President for a consensual blow job, but unhappy with the prospect that Dick Cheney will be held accountable for the torture he ordered up.

First, let me stipulate that I agree on the importance of accountability for illegal acts and for serious breaches of trust by government officials – even at the highest levels. I had no problem with the impeachment proceedings against Richard Nixon, and I called for Bill Clinton to resign when he lied to his Cabinet colleagues and to the country during the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

He bases his opposition on the horror he would experience seeing Cheney standing in the dock.

Looming beyond the publicized cases of these relatively low-level operatives is the fundamental accountability question: What about those who approved of their actions? If accountability is the standard, then it should apply to the policymakers and not just to the underlings. Ultimately, do we want to see Cheney, who backed these actions and still does, standing in the dock?

Hey Broder. When you ask rhetorical questions, you should make sure people would give you the answer you rhetorically want. Hell, even the NYT is champing to see Cheney standing in the dock.

But not Broder. He argues that it must be a bad idea to investigate torture because the guy in charge of defending the CIA as an institution has said it would be a bad idea and lots of people at the CIA have told David Ignatius Leon Panetta is nice.

Leon Panetta, the conscientious director of the Central Intelligence Agency who, earlier in his government career, resigned to protest the policies of the Nixon administration in which he was serving, has disagreed with Holder's decision. He says it will have a harmful effect on the morale and operations of his agency, which has already taken strong steps to correct the policies he inherited.

Panetta's judgment is supported by the reporting of The Post's David Ignatius and others with excellent sources inside the CIA.

Ah! American journalism! Lots of people at CIA say Panetta has good judgment not to want an investigation and because they're at the CIA I find them especially trust-worthy.

Like Dick Cheney, Broder mis-states Obama's public comments on this issue.

I think it is that kind of prospect that led President Obama to state that he was opposed to invoking the criminal justice system, even as he gave Holder the authority to decide the question for himself. Obama's argument has been that he has made the decision to change policy and bring the practices clearly within constitutional bounds – and that should be sufficient.

And like Marc Ambinder, Broder assumes that the only reason liberals could want torture investigations is because of an opposition to the Bush Administration, and not an opposition to torture itself. Though he suggests he, David Broder, would contemplate a torture investigation for pure, non-partisan reasons.

I understand why so many liberals who opposed the Bush administration are eager to see its operatives and

officials forced publicly to explain their actions. The case that Robinson and many others make for seeking testimony is a strong one.

I am not persuaded by former vice president Dick Cheney's argument that this is simply political revenge by the now-dominant Democrats against their Republican predecessors. For all the previously stated reasons, there is ample justification for seeking answers apart from any partisan motive.

But the neatest part of Broder's blow job to Cheney is where he congratulates himself on his "courageous" call for Ford to pardon Nixon.

When President Ford pardoned Nixon in 1974, I wrote one of the few columns endorsing his decision, which was made on the basis that it was more important for America to focus on the task of changing the way it would be governed and addressing the current problems. It took a full generation for the decision to be recognized by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation and others as the act of courage that it had been.

I hope we can avoid another such lapse. The wheels are turning, but they can still be halted before irreparable damage is done.

Here we are, faced with an old Nixon staffer, governing in precisely the same abusive fashion that Nixon did—down to the domestic spying. Rational beings would conclude that maybe it wasn't such a good idea to pardon Nixon, since it may have led certain Nixon staffers to believe that they, too, would never be held accountable for breaking the law. But not Broder. He'd like to do it again, presumably because he'd like John Hannah or Andy Card or Dan Bartlett to come back thirty years from now

and, once again, shit on the Constitution.

Because people like Broder were never too fond of that Constitution in the first place, I guess.