

# PJ CROWLEY ON MANNING'S "RIDICULOUS, COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, AND STUPID" TREATMENT

As I noted earlier today, State Department Spokesperson PJ Crowley described Bradley Manning's abuse as counterproductive and stupid at an event at MIT yesterday.

Ethan Zuckerman has a transcript of Crowley's remarks.

Charlie deTar: There's an elephant in the room during this discussion: Wikileaks. The US government is torturing a whistleblower in prison right now. How do we resolve a conversation about the future of new media in diplomacy with the government's actions regarding Wikileaks?

PJC: "I spent 26 years in the air force. What is happening to Manning is ridiculous, counterproductive and stupid, and I don't know why the DoD is doing it. Nevertheless, Manning is in the right place." There are leaks everywhere in Washington – it's a town that can't keep a secret. But the scale is different. It was a colossal failure by the DoD to allow this mass of documents to be transported outside the network. Historically, someone has picked up a file of papers and passed it around – the information exposed is on one country or one subject. But this is a scale we've never seen before. If Julian Assange is right and we're in an era where there are no secrets, do we expect that people will release Google's

search engine algorithms? The formula for Coca Cola? Some things are best kept secret. If we're negotiating between the Israelis and the Palestinians, there will be compromises that are hard for each side to sell to their people – there's a need for secrets.

Hey PJ? Your invocation of peace in Israel is admirable (though note Crowley appears to be confusing his damning leaks, since the exposure of the unreasonable concessions the Palestinian Authority gave Israel came from al-Jazeera, not WikiLeaks). But don't you think we also have a right to know that our long-term intelligence partner in Egypt was offering up ways to cancel democratic elections in the same part of the world?

Since that report, Josh Rogin has gotten confirmation from Crowley that the reports are accurate.

Reached by *The Cable*, Crowley confirmed that he did in fact make the remarks.

"What I said was my personal opinion. It does not reflect an official USG policy position. I defer to the Department of Defense regarding the treatment of Bradley Manning," Crowley told *The Cable*.

Finally, Jake Tapper asked Obama about Crowley's comment. And the Commander in Chief's response to being asked about abuse? Apparently DOD says abuse is cool now.

Obama: "I have actually asked the Pentagon whether or not procedures on Manning meet basic standards, they assure me that they are."

Of course they meet basic standards! The "God" standard that has been part of our torture regime for 9 years now.

Update: Fixed my reference to the Palestine Papers.