

NSA'S DISSENTERS

I tweeted a bunch of details from this James Risen interview with Edward Snowden. That comparing the NSA to China's People's Liberation Army is not perceived as funny by NSA brass. How Snowden's professed commitment to whistleblowing came from reading the 2009 Draft NSA IG Report ought to disqualify Michael Hayden – whose criminal actions the report details – from commenting on Snowden from here on out. And that ignoring the security vulnerabilities in a CIA personnel database seems kind of stupid.

But I found this paragraph most interesting.

Mr. Snowden added that inside the spy agency “there's a lot of dissent – palpable with some, even.” But he said that people were kept in line through “fear and a false image of patriotism,” which he described as “obedience to authority.”

Two times since the Snowden leaks started, NSA has done touchy feely things to reassure employees. First, Keith Alexander's call that “there is no substitute for victory,” even while suggesting NSA employees should leave the debate about their work to others. And then the group hug to them and their families.

I believe those are the comments of a General who is genuinely worried that learning what the NSA has been doing – aside from targeting terrorists – might lead to more dissent among NSA employees.

If Snowden's comment is true, that all makes sense.

As I have said, many NSA employees might have an image of the NSA as a foreign codebreaker organization that would never target Americans. If they do, they may well be in for a rude awakening.