

TORTURE IS NOT A CHRISTMAS TREE AND JOHN BRENNAN IS NOT A JESUIT POPE

I would have thought by this point journalists would cease comparing John Brennan with Jesuits, unless it's a coded reference to the corrupt spookish reputation the sect had in past centuries.

Such a Jesuitical response will do absolutely nothing to satisfy critics of the program or its supporters—some of whom still go work at Langley every day.

And I find it downright disgusting for a *journalist* to use an extended Christmas present metaphor to discuss basic transparency in a democracy, as if democracy were just a gleeful romp on Santa's lap.

There may have been bourbon punch and festive lights at the CIA's holiday party Friday night, but a frosty gloom hung in the air. As everyone in the agency's Langley, Va., headquarters knew, the long-awaited "torture report" from the Senate Intelligence Committee's Democrats was set to drop early the next week, perhaps as soon as Monday morning. It seemed a rather awkward time for a party.

[snip]

For pro-release activists, the dissemination of the report would be a holiday present, years in the making.

[snip]

As of Friday, just how the final publication would play out remained a

mystery, like so many Christmas presents under the tree.

[snip]

So as CIA brass passed the punch and mini-pecan pies Friday evening, they wondered: would next week would bring sugarplum fairies, or lumps of coal?

Since when are journalists not among those who want official reports to be released?

Like it or not we will learn what primary sources from the CIA document they did over a 5 year period.

Which means no credible journalist should parrot this claim ...

Chief among the agency's complaints will be that Senate investigators failed to interview anyone who worked on the program, leaving them to base their findings solely on classified documents that, officials argue, couldn't be fully understood without some elaboration and context.

... without noting the implication of it: that the primary thing the CIA does, which is generate cables and reports, is so flawed that literally millions of cables are inaccurate or so misleadingly written they don't present a fair record of what we paid the CIA to do.

Seriously: if you have multiple sources you consider credible repeating this claim, your job should immediately be to chase down how it is that so much of the CIA's work is fraudulent, which would be a truly epic scandal. But no one is doing that, somehow, which suggests even those who are pitching the story know that their own emails and other documents show that they conspired to (among other things) lie to Congress.

That is what the record – even that which is

already public – clearly shows. If the CIA did not, along the way, cover its ass sufficiently to make it clear that David Addington was cheering the torture at every step, welp, I hope they develop better self-preservation skills in the future (though it's quite clear the CIA only documented those aspects of congressional briefings that helped their case, and suppressed or altered those that did not, so it's not likely they weren't involved in any CYA).

Finally, the main jist of the complaint Harris documents here is that Brennan made a deal with the White House: to protect that office (by protecting the aforementioned David Addington) in exchange for protecting the CIA officers who got promoted for being good torturers. Brennan succeeded in delivering some version of that deal, though it's unclear just how far he went. If that's the case, the CIA officers have already gotten what they signed up for: continued career advancement for remaining silent about who instigated the torture, even as critics of torture were ousted from the agency and even, in John Kiriakou's case, prosecuted. That was the deal, and they fared better than the critics did.

If they sold their soul too cheaply, perhaps they won't sell it so cheaply in the future. That's the entire point of this report, no?