

September 16, 2018 – BRENNAN

"Bureaucracy is a giant mechanism operated by pygmies."

- Honoré de Balzac, French novelist

The biggest bureaucracy of all is the deep state. And the deep state's biggest pygmy is John Brennan. His role leading the Trump resistance is becoming more obvious as time passes and more information comes to light. He has become so unhinged, we might expect he will soon call for an assassination. [Kimberley Strassel](#) comments. ... *That's what Mr. Brennan is—a partisan—and it is why his role in the 2016 scandal is in some ways more concerning than the FBI's. Mr. Comey stands accused of flouting the rules, breaking the chain of command, abusing investigatory powers. Yet it seems far likelier that the FBI's Trump investigation was a function of arrogance and overconfidence than some partisan plot. No such case can be made for Mr. Brennan. Before his nomination as CIA director, he served as a close Obama adviser. And the record shows he went on to use his position—as head of the most powerful spy agency in the world—to assist Hillary Clinton's campaign (and keep his job).*

Mr. Brennan has taken credit for launching the Trump investigation. At a House Intelligence Committee hearing in May 2017, he explained that he became "aware of intelligence and information about contacts between Russian officials and U.S. persons." The CIA can't investigate U.S. citizens, but he made sure that "every information and bit of intelligence" was "shared with the bureau," meaning the FBI. ...

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... The CIA director couldn't himself go public with his Clinton spin—he lacked the support of the intelligence community and had to be careful not to be seen interfering in U.S. politics. So what to do? He called Harry Reid. In a late August briefing, he told the Senate minority leader that Russia was trying to help Mr. Trump win the election, and that Trump advisers might be colluding with Russia. (Two years later, no public evidence has emerged to support such a claim.)

But the truth was irrelevant. On cue, within a few days of the briefing, Mr. Reid wrote a letter to Mr. Comey, which of course immediately became public. "The evidence of a direct connection between the Russian government and Donald Trump's presidential campaign continues to mount," wrote Mr. Reid, going on to float Team Clinton's Russians-are-helping-Trump theory. Mr. Reid publicly divulged at least one of the allegations contained in the infamous Steele dossier, insisting that the FBI use "every resource available to investigate this matter."

The Reid letter marked the first official blast of the Brennan-Clinton collusion narrative into the open. ...

George Neumayr of American Spectator is staying in close touch with Brennan. Here he spins off a Guardian piece on agents of Estonia and the UK who worked with Brennan to help Hillary and hurt Trump.

An article in the Guardian last week provides more confirmation that John Brennan was the American progenitor of political espionage aimed at defeating Donald Trump. One side did collude with foreign powers to tip the election — Hillary's.

Seeking to retain his position as CIA director under Hillary, Brennan teamed up with British spies and Estonian spies to cripple Trump's candidacy. He used their phony intelligence as a pretext for a multi-agency investigation into Trump, which led the FBI to probe a computer server connected to Trump Tower and gave cover to Susan Rice, among other Hillary supporters, to spy on Trump and his people.

John Brennan's CIA operated like a branch office of the Hillary campaign, leaking out mentions of this bogus investigation to the press in the hopes of inflicting maximum political damage on Trump. An official in the intelligence community tells TAS that Brennan's retinue of political radicals didn't even bother to hide their activism, decorating offices with "Hillary for president cups" and other campaign paraphernalia.

A supporter of the American Communist Party at the height of the Cold War, Brennan brought into the CIA a raft of subversives and gave them plum positions from which to gather and leak political espionage on Trump. He bastardized standards so that these left-wing activists could burrow in and take career positions. Under the patina of that phony professionalism, they could then present their politicized judgments as "non-partisan." ...

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All of this took place at the very moment Brennan was auditioning for Hillary. He desperately wanted to keep his job ...

More from George Neumayr on Brennan, "The revolutionary who never grew up".

... Imagine a former CIA director under a Democratic president calling for members of the executive branch to defy his lawful directives, blithely spreading grave charges against him without evidence, and calling on the "country" to "defeat" him. The media would treat that figure as a dangerous weirdo. But Brennan has done all of that and more, and it has only enhanced his appeal in the eyes of the media.

"A Spymaster Steps Out of the Shadows"—that's the New York Times's idea of a hard-hitting take on a former CIA director who is calling in effect for insurrection. In the first paragraph of this essentially friendly, punch-pulling profile, we learn that Brennan refuses to recognize Trump as a duly elected president:

A few days before, Brennan wrote an op-ed calling Trump "a snake-oil salesman." The paper's editors tried to persuade Brennan to use the word "president," but Brennan refused. "I said no, I'm not going to refer to him as 'president,'" Brennan told me. "Because he doesn't deserve that,

in my mind. Yes, he won the most electoral votes. But I think he has demonstrated, over and over again, that he is unfit to carry out the responsibilities of that office."

Naturally, the Times doesn't find it troubling that a former CIA director would throw such a juvenile snit. Yet it is one of the few revealing tidbits in the piece and it captures Brennan's low, demagogic complex: he is a political hack who never outgrew his revolutionary youth and is trying to rekindle it through a coup against Trump. ...

... Brennan tells the Times that his grandfather was a "supporter, an affiliate, say" of the Irish Republican Army, as if that's a very charming family story. But Brennan's rebellious tastes ran more toward the Muslim Brotherhood, and we learn from the piece that he played a large role in Obama's tribute to radical Islam in his infamous Cairo speech.

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The irony of Brennan's career culminating in the very secret military strikes and political espionage he once condemned is lost on him. He is still searching for "Watergate heroes," as he put it in a recent tweet. He has returned to the revolutionary ramparts of his youth, convinced more than ever that nothing is treasonous for a leftist.

Andy McCarthy thought Trump was right to pull Brennan's security clearance. However . . .

I do not share my friend David French's theoretical constitutional concerns about the president's revocation of security clearances — at least when it comes to former government officials who become media commentators and have no demonstrable need for a security clearance. Like David and many other analysts, though, I think it's a big mistake to politicize the revocation of security clearances.

Still, I am even less of a fan of the politicization of intelligence itself. And that justifies the revocation of former CIA director John Brennan's clearance.

As is often the case with President Trump, the right thing has been done here for the wrong reason, namely, for vengeance against a political critic who is always zealous and often unhinged. That a decision amounts to political payback does not necessarily make it wrong on the merits, but its in-your-face pettiness is counterproductive, undermining its justification.

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Trump political arguments, not intimating that he has knowledge of Trump corruption based on his (Hayden's) privileged access to intelligence information (which he may or may not still have — I haven't asked him). Hayden is absolutely entitled to speak out in that vein. Generally, he is a voice of reason even when one disagrees with him, and — let's be real here — even his edgier tweets are pretty tame compared to the president's.

Brennan, by contrast, speaks out in a nod-and-a-wink manner, the undercurrent of which is that if he could only tell you the secrets he knows, you'd demand Trump's impeachment forthwith. (See, e.g., tweets [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).) Indeed, "undercurrent" is probably the wrong word: Brennan, after all, has expressly asserted that our "treasonous" president is "wholly in the pocket of Putin" and has "exceed[ed] the threshold of 'high crimes and misdemeanors.'"

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Political Insider reports a vindictive Brennan leak. Possibly.

... Some have speculated that Brennan may have leaked the information of a source close to Putin to the NYT:

Jordan Schachtel @JordanSchachtel

Let me get this straight: John Brennan calls President Trump treasonous. The next day, he calls the New York Times and apparently reveals to them that the United States intelligence community has placed "a top-secret source close to Mr. Putin". Unreal...

Pwn All The Things @pwnallthethings

One of the most shockingly egregious leaks in recent years. This is just a pile of sources and methods that are gone now. And for what? To find out Trump knows Russia interfered and is lying? Congratulations on this big reveal.

If Brennan did leak this source to the NYT, he may have just signed his death warrant. This, not Trump's bungled words about Russia, is what being a traitor looks like.

Whoever leaked the source, they'll surely have blood on their hands. What do we think is going to happen with that information? Will Putin just shrug his shoulders and forget about it?

Of course not. He'll seek out this U.S.-supported spy and dispose of him in either a discreet manner, or a loud one. Either way, it'll be nasty.

And that's the kind of consequences Brennan may have helped create by tattling to the New York Times in order to make Trump look bad.

WSJ

Brennan and the 2016 Spy Scandal

Obama's CIA director acknowledges egging on the FBI's probe of Trump and Russia.

by Kimberley A. Strassel

The Trump-Russia sleuths have been back in the news, again giving Americans cause to doubt their claims of nonpartisanship. Last week it was Federal Bureau of Investigation agent Peter Strzok testifying to Congress that he harbored no bias against a president he still describes as "horrible" and "disgusting." This week it was former FBI Director Jim Comey tweet-lecturing Americans on their duty to vote Democratic in November.

But the man who deserves a belated bit of scrutiny is former Central Intelligence Agency Director John Brennan. He's accused President Trump of "venality, moral turpitude and political corruption," and berated GOP investigations of the FBI. This week he claimed on Twitter that Mr. Trump's press conference in Helsinki was "nothing short of treasonous." This is rough stuff, even for an Obama partisan.

That's what Mr. Brennan is—a partisan—and it is why his role in the 2016 scandal is in some ways more concerning than the FBI's. Mr. Comey stands accused of flouting the rules, breaking the chain of command, abusing investigatory powers. Yet it seems far likelier that the FBI's Trump investigation was a function of arrogance and overconfidence than some partisan plot. No such case can be made for Mr. Brennan. Before his nomination as CIA director, he served as a close Obama adviser. And the record shows he went on to use his position—as head of the most powerful spy agency in the world—to assist Hillary Clinton's campaign (and keep his job).

Mr. Brennan has taken credit for launching the Trump investigation. At a House Intelligence Committee hearing in May 2017, he explained that he became "aware of intelligence and information about contacts between Russian officials and U.S. persons." The CIA can't investigate U.S. citizens, but he made sure that "every information and bit of intelligence" was "shared with the bureau," meaning the FBI. This information, he said, "served as the basis for the FBI investigation." My sources suggest Mr. Brennan was overstating his initial role, but either way, by his own testimony, he as an Obama-Clinton partisan was pushing information to the FBI and pressuring it to act.

More notable, Mr. Brennan then took the lead on shaping the narrative that Russia was interfering in the election specifically to help Mr. Trump—which quickly evolved into the Trump-collusion narrative. Team Clinton was eager to make the claim, especially in light of the Democratic National Committee server hack. Numerous reports show Mr. Brennan aggressively pushing the same line internally. Their problem was that as of July 2016 even then-Director of National Intelligence James Clapper didn't buy it. He publicly refused to say who was responsible for the hack, or ascribe motivation. Mr. Brennan also couldn't get the FBI to sign on to the view; the bureau continued to believe Russian cyberattacks were aimed at disrupting the U.S. political system generally, not aiding Mr. Trump.

The CIA director couldn't himself go public with his Clinton spin—he lacked the support of the intelligence community and had to be careful not to be seen interfering in U.S. politics. So what to do? He called Harry Reid. In a late August briefing, he told the Senate minority leader that Russia was trying to help Mr. Trump win the election, and that Trump advisers might be colluding with Russia. (Two years later, no public evidence has emerged to support such a claim.)

But the truth was irrelevant. On cue, within a few days of the briefing, Mr. Reid wrote a letter to Mr. Comey, which of course immediately became public. "The evidence of a direct connection between the Russian government and Donald Trump's presidential campaign continues to mount," wrote Mr. Reid, going on to float Team Clinton's Russians-are-helping-Trump theory. Mr. Reid publicly divulged at least one of the allegations contained in the infamous Steele dossier, insisting that the FBI use "every resource available to investigate this matter."

The Reid letter marked the first official blast of the Brennan-Clinton collusion narrative into the open. Clinton opposition-research firm Fusion GPS followed up by briefing its media allies about the dossier it had dropped off at the FBI. On Sept. 23, Yahoo News's Michael Isikoff ran the headline: "U.S. intel officials probe ties between Trump adviser and Kremlin." Voilà. Not only was the collusion narrative out there, but so was evidence that the FBI was investigating.

In their recent book "Russian Roulette," Mr. Isikoff and David Corn say even Mr. Reid believed Mr. Brennan had an "ulterior motive" with the briefing, and "concluded the CIA chief believed the public needed to know about the Russia operation, including the information about the possible links to the Trump campaign." (Brennan allies have denied his aim was to leak damaging information.)

Clinton supporters have a plausible case that Mr. Comey's late-October announcement that the FBI had reopened its investigation into the candidate affected the election. But Trump supporters have a claim that the public outing of the collusion narrative and FBI investigation took a toll on their candidate. Politics was at the center of that outing, and Mr. Brennan was a ringmaster. Remember that when reading his next "treason" tweet.

American Spectator

Confirmed: John Brennan Colluded With Foreign Spies to Defeat Trump

This is the open scandal that Congress should investigate.

by George Neumayr

An article in the *Guardian* last week provides more confirmation that John Brennan was the American progenitor of political espionage aimed at defeating Donald Trump. One side did collude with foreign powers to tip the election — Hillary's.

Seeking to retain his position as CIA director under Hillary, Brennan teamed up with British spies and Estonian spies to cripple Trump's candidacy. He used their phony intelligence as a pretext for a multi-agency investigation into Trump, which led the FBI to probe a computer

server connected to Trump Tower and gave cover to Susan Rice, among other Hillary supporters, to spy on Trump and his people.

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A supporter of the American Communist Party at the height of the Cold War, Brennan brought into the CIA a raft of subversives and gave them plum positions from which to gather and leak political espionage on Trump. He bastardized standards so that these left-wing activists could burrow in and take career positions. Under the patina of that phony professionalism, they could then present their politicized judgments as "non-partisan."

The *Guardian* story is written in a style designed to flatter its sources (they are cast as high-minded whistleblowers), but the upshot of it is devastating for them, nonetheless, and explains why all the criminal leaks against Trump first originated in the British press. According to the story, Brennan got his anti-Trump tips primarily from British spies but also Estonian spies and others. The story confirms that the seed of the espionage into Trump was planted by Estonia. The BBC's Paul Wood reported last year that the intelligence agency of an unnamed Baltic State had tipped Brennan off in April 2016 to a conversation purporting to show that the Kremlin was funneling cash into the Trump campaign.

Any other CIA director would have disregarded such a flaky tip, recognizing that Estonia was eager to see Trump lose (its officials had bought into Hillary's propaganda that Trump was going to pull out of NATO and leave Baltic countries exposed to Putin). But Brennan opportunistically seized on it, as he later that summer seized on the half-baked intelligence of British spy agencies (also full of officials who wanted to see Trump lose).

The *Guardian* says that British spy head Robert Hannigan "passed material in summer 2016 to the CIA chief, John Brennan." To ensure that these flaky tips leaked out, Brennan disseminated them on Capitol Hill. In August and September of 2016, he gave briefings to the "Gang of Eight" about them, which then turned up on the front page of the *New York Times*.

All of this took place at the very moment Brennan was auditioning for Hillary. He desperately wanted to keep his job and despised Trump for his alleged "Muslim ban," a matter near and dear to Brennan's heart. Not only was he an apologist for the Muslim Brotherhood, but Brennan's Islamophilia dated to his days in college, when he spent a year in Cairo learning Arabic and taking courses in Middle Eastern studies. He later got a graduate degree with an emphasis in Middle Eastern studies. In 1996, his ties to the Islamic world tightened after he became the CIA's station chief in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He once recalled that "during a 25-year career in government, I was privileged to serve in positions across the Middle East — as a political officer with the State Department and as a CIA station chief in Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia, I saw how our Saudi partners fulfilled their duty as custodians of the two holy mosques of Mecca and Medina. I marveled at the majesty of the Hajj and the devotion of those who fulfilled their duty as Muslims by making that privilege — that pilgrimage."

Out of this Islamophilia came a special dislike of Michael Flynn, who had planned to rip up the Obama-era "reset" with Muslim countries. Furious with Flynn for his apostasy from political

correctness, Brennan and other Obama aides couldn't resist the temptation to take him out after rifling through transcripts of his calls with the Russian ambassador. They caught him in a lie to Mike Pence and made sure the press knew about it.

Were the media not so completely in the tank for Obama and Hillary, all of this political mischief would make for a compelling 2016 version of *All the President's Men*. Instead, the public gets a steady stream of Orwellian propaganda about the sudden propriety of political espionage. The headline writers at *Pravda* couldn't improve on this week's official lie, tweeted out by the Maggie Habermans: "Susan Rice Did Nothing Wrong, Say Both Dem and Republican House Aides."

Liberals pompously quote the saying — "the bigger the lie, the more it will be believed" — even as their media enshrine it. Historians will look back on 2016 and marvel at the audacity of its big lie: whispers of an imaginary Trump-Russia collusion that wafted up from the fever swamps of a real collusion between John Brennan and foreign powers seeking Trump's defeat.

American Spectator

John Brennan, the Revolutionary Who Never Grew Up

In his mind, nothing is treasonous, as long as you are leftist.

by George Neumayr

The media talks endlessly about "norms," then lionizes leftists who shatter them. John Brennan is a beneficiary of this gross hypocrisy. The more he engages in monstrously abnormal and irresponsible behavior for a former CIA director, the more the media builds him up.

Imagine a former CIA director under a Democratic president calling for members of the executive branch to defy his lawful directives, blithely spreading grave charges against him without evidence, and calling on the "country" to "defeat" him. The media would treat that figure as a dangerous weirdo. But Brennan has done all of that and more, and it has only enhanced his appeal in the eyes of the media.

"A Spymaster Steps Out of the Shadows"—that's the *New York Times's* idea of a hard-hitting take on a former CIA director who is calling in effect for insurrection. In the first paragraph of this essentially friendly, punch-pulling profile, we learn that Brennan refuses to recognize Trump as a duly elected president:

A few days before, Brennan wrote an op-ed calling Trump "a snake-oil salesman." The paper's editors tried to persuade Brennan to use the word "president," but Brennan refused. "I said no, I'm not going to refer to him as 'president,'" Brennan told me. "Because he doesn't deserve that, in my mind. Yes, he won the most electoral votes. But I think he has demonstrated, over and over again, that he is unfit to carry out the responsibilities of that office."

Naturally, the *Times* doesn't find it troubling that a former CIA director would throw such a juvenile snit. Yet it is one of the few revealing tidbits in the piece and it captures Brennan's low, demagogic complex: he is a political hack who never outgrew his revolutionary youth and is trying to rekindle it through a coup against Trump.

The author of the piece went out to dinner with Brennan and his brother, and the outing just turned into an evening of trivial Trump-bashing:

The Brennans ordered mussels and steaks. Mike got half a rack of ribs. By the time the food came, the talk had turned to Trump. Mike said he had heard a story about the Trump Organization stiffing a friend of a friend on a sizable landscaping bill.

Almost all of Brennan's criticisms of Trump are non-substantive or revolve around differences of opinion on policy that Brennan dishonestly casts as issues of character. In the end, Brennan is just an entitled left-wing revolutionary, who calls himself "non-partisan" while plunging into partisanship, accuses others of "unethical" behavior while exempting himself from ethics, and prattles on about the "rule of law" while violating it at the highest levels of government. It is forever Watergate for Brennan, even though he is the one who spied on political opponents and is now covering it up.

According to the profile, Brennan as a young boy dreamed of entering the priesthood and rising to the chair of St. Peter:

He read about the popes and noticed that there had never been an American one. He decided that he would be the first. "If you're going to be a priest, why not aspire to be the highest priest there is?" he told me.

He had to settle for the directorship of the CIA under Obama, where his imagined rectitude took the form of trying to take out Trump. The piece portrays Obama and Brennan as two peas in a pod, an unusually close relationship between a CIA director and a president. (Brennan calls himself "non-partisan" on his Twitter account, but somehow that didn't stop Brennan from donating the most amount of money allowable to Obama in 2008.)

Brennan tells the *Times* that his grandfather was a "supporter, an affiliate, say" of the Irish Republican Army, as if that's a very charming family story. But Brennan's rebellious tastes ran more toward the Muslim Brotherhood, and we learn from the piece that he played a large role in Obama's tribute to radical Islam in his infamous Cairo speech.

Brennan's vote for Gus Hall is dispatched quickly — his support for the Soviet-controlled American Communist Party at the height of the Cold War was just a reaction to "Watergate," you understand. The piece gives Brennan more of a hard time about his support for the Bush-era drone program, but doesn't really push the issue. In order to make any sense of Brennan's self-serving blather about his involvement in it, you just have to accept his premise that liberals can never do anything wrong. They aren't to be judged, you see, by the same standards as Republican drone-strikers. When Brennan killed innocents, he cared; Trump doesn't. According to the piece, Brennan dropped a drone on an American hostage. Oops. But Brennan isn't going to beat himself up about it, since war "is awful for those who had to make the tough decisions and who have to live with the results."

The irony of Brennan's career culminating in the very secret military strikes and political espionage he once condemned is lost on him. He is still searching for "Watergate heroes," as he put it in a recent tweet. He has returned to the revolutionary ramparts of his youth, convinced more than ever that nothing is treasonous for a leftist.

National Review

Revoking Brennan's Security Clearance: The Right Thing, Even if for the Wrong Reason

It's right because he is irresponsible and untrustworthy and has politicized intelligence.

by Andrew McCarthy

I do not share my friend David French's theoretical constitutional concerns about the president's revocation of security clearances — at least when it comes to former government officials who become media commentators and have no demonstrable need for a security clearance. Like David and many other analysts, though, I think it's a big mistake to politicize the revocation of security clearances.

Still, I am even less of a fan of the politicization of intelligence itself. And that justifies the revocation of former CIA director John Brennan's clearance.

As is often the case with President Trump, the right thing has been done here for the wrong reason, namely, for vengeance against a political critic who is always zealous and often unhinged. That a decision amounts to political payback does not necessarily make it wrong on the merits, but its in-your-face pettiness is counterproductive, undermining its justification.

Brennan's tweets about Trump are objectively outrageous. To compare, I think some of former CIA director Mike Hayden's tweets are ill-advised — particularly this one, comparing Trump's border-enforcement policy to Nazi concentration camps. But General Hayden is making anti-Trump political arguments, not intimating that he has knowledge of Trump corruption based on his (Hayden's) privileged access to intelligence information (which he may or may not still have — I haven't asked him). Hayden is absolutely entitled to speak out in that vein. Generally, he is a voice of reason even when one disagrees with him, and — let's be real here — even his edgier tweets are pretty tame compared to the president's.

Brennan, by contrast, speaks out in a nod-and-a-wink manner, the undercurrent of which is that if he could only tell you the secrets he knows, you'd demand Trump's impeachment forthwith. (See, e.g., tweets here, here, and here.) Indeed, "undercurrent" is probably the wrong word: Brennan, after all, has expressly asserted that our "treasonous" president is "wholly in the pocket of Putin" and has "exceed[ed] the threshold of 'high crimes and misdemeanors.'"

Such demagoguery would be beneath any former CIA director, but it is especially indecorous in Brennan's situation. There are ongoing investigations and trials. Brennan's own role in the investigation of the Trump campaign is currently under scrutiny, along with such questions as whether the Obama administration put the nation's law-enforcement and intelligence apparatus in the service of the Clinton campaign, and why an unverified dossier (a Clinton-campaign opposition-research project) was presented to the FISA court in order to obtain surveillance warrants against an American citizen. Until these probes have run their course, Brennan should resist the urge to comment, especially in ways that implicate his knowledge of classified matters. (So should the president, but that's another story.)

Quite apart from the ongoing investigations, there is considerable evidence that intelligence was rampantly politicized on Brennan's watch as CIA director and, before that, Obama's homeland-security adviser. For example, Obama-administration national-security officials deceptively downplayed weapons threats posed by Syria, Iran, and North Korea. As *The Weekly Standard's* Stephen Hayes notes, Brennan directed the CIA to keep under wraps the vast majority of documents seized in the raid on Osama bin Laden's Pakistani compound, precisely because

that information put the lie to Obama-administration narratives about a "decimated" al-Qaeda, the moderation of Iran, and general counterterrorism success. (Since this week's craze is the Trump administration's use of non-disclosure agreements, we should add Hayes's reporting that Brennan's CIA presented NDAs to survivors of the Benghazi terrorist attack — *at a memorial service for those killed during the siege* — in order to silence them while the Obama administration's indefensible performance was being investigated.) In 2015, over 50 intelligence analysts complained that their reports on ISIS and al-Qaeda were being altered by senior officials in order to support misleading Obama-administration storylines. Brennan himself was instrumental in the administration's submission to the demands of Islamist organizations that information about sharia-supremacist ideology be purged from the training of security officials.

That last decision flowed logically from Brennan's absurd insistence that the Islamic concept of "jihad" refers merely to a "holy struggle" to "purify oneself or one's community" (see my 2010 column, here). It's as if there were no other conceivable interpretation of a tenet that, as the late, great Bernard Lewis observed, is doctrinally rooted in the imperative of forcible conquest — which is exactly how millions and millions of fundamentalist Muslims, including those who threaten the United States, understand it. Airbrushing sharia-supremacist ideology in order to appease an administration's Islamist allies may be fit work for political consultants; it ill suits a director of central intelligence.

Brennan, moreover, has proved himself irresponsible and untrustworthy. In 2014, when it first surfaced that his CIA had hacked into the computer system of the Senate Intelligence Committee staff investigating the agency's enhanced-interrogation program, Brennan indignantly denied the allegation. "Nothing could be further from the truth," he insisted. "I mean, we wouldn't do that. I mean, that's just beyond the scope of reason in terms of what we would do."

Of course, it *was* the truth. An inspector-general probe established that the hacking had, in fact, occurred. And not just that; as the New York Times reported, CIA officials who were involved in spying on the Senate committee maintained that their actions "were lawful and in some cases done at the behest of John O. Brennan." Brennan eventually apologized to senior committee senators. Then he handpicked an "accountability board" to investigate the matter. As I'm sure you'll be stunned to learn, Brennan used the pendency of the accountability board's examination as a pretext to avoid answering Congress's questions; then the board dutifully whitewashed the matter, recommending that no one be disciplined.

The yanking of Brennan's security clearance is not only warranted, it is way overdue.

Yet, by singling out the former CIA director, in unconcealed retribution for his anti-Trump political diatribes, the president undermines the legitimacy of his decision. This is important. Let's put Brennan aside. There are 5.1 million people in this country with security clearances. That is insane. It is undoubtedly true that too much information in government is classified. Still, a great deal of it constitutes defense secrets that are classified because they need to be. If we've learned anything from the Snowden debacle, it is that we are extremely vulnerable because intelligence access has been given to people who don't need it and/or shouldn't have it.

There are obviously a few high-level security positions in our government, as well as positions in highly sensitive ongoing security operations, in which it makes sense for officials to maintain their clearances when they leave government service. These former government officials are a vital resource. They have knowledge of top-secret intelligence that factors heavily into policy-making and decision-making and that is unavailable to other advisers. Obviously, we want CIA director Gina Haspel, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Secretary of Defense James Mattis, or

National Security Adviser John Bolton to be able to tap into the wisdom of, say, Jim Woolsey, George Tenet, Bob Gates, or Leon Panetta. It is a great asset to the country to have that storehouse of institutional memory and sound judgment.

This, however, is the exception. For the overwhelming majority of officials, the presumption should be that security clearances lapse when they leave their government jobs. Intelligence access is a "need to know" proposition; upon exiting, a now-former official no longer needs to know. While I am skeptical, I am willing to assume for argument's sake — as did the D.C. Circuit in *Palmieri v. United States*, the case David French cites — that a *current* government official or contractor may have some cognizable liberty interest in not having his security clearance arbitrarily revoked. I don't, however, see any reason why a *former* official has any more right of access to the government's defense secrets than to the desk in the office he has vacated.

As my own experience attests, this should not be a big deal. Because I worked on national-security cases in the Justice Department, I had a high security clearance. When I left, it lapsed — which was fine: They didn't need me to have it anymore. Months later, I was asked to be a consultant regarding some war-on-terror legal issues confronting the Defense Department. To do the job, I needed my clearance back . . . and it took them just a few days to restore it. This was sensible: I had been subjected to searching background checks to get and maintain the clearance while I was a prosecutor, so it was not like they had to start from scratch; yet, before renewing my access, the government had an opportunity to assess whether I had previously adhered to the rules for handling classified information and whether any red flags had arisen since I left the Justice Department.

That is how it should be: When you leave, you lose your clearance, not as a penalty but because you don't need it for official duties. (Being a better-credentialed and thus better-compensated cable-TV pundit is not an official duty.) If the government needs to consult you because of some unique experience you had as a national-security official, it should take very little time to reestablish the clearance. If complications arise that make it impossible to renew the clearance quickly, that may be a sign that it should not be renewed, and that the government should consult someone else.

Several weeks back, when it was first suggested that the president might start pulling the clearances of his political critics, I suggested in some interviews that paring back clearances *government-wide* was a good idea. I thought the president should convene an advisory panel of current and former national-security officials held in esteem on both sides of the aisle (there are many such people). They could then recommend standards for withdrawing clearances, from both former officials and others (such as non-government contractors), if the government does not need them to have access to classified information. Presumably, Brennan and many others would have fallen into the "no need to know" category. Their clearances could then have been pulled, along with many other former officials. The process would be a necessary housecleaning, not a partisan spat.

I wish the president did not so thrive on political vendettas. As a matter of objective fact, John Brennan should not have a security clearance. Does turning objective fact into good policy always have to look like Romper Room?

Political Insider

Did John Brennan Out an American Spy in Russia to Hurt Trump?

by Jim E

If this is true, this isn't just Trump Derangement Syndrome. This is a betrayal of America and a gift to the Russians.

John Brennan, the former young communist, and Obama's CIA Director has been one of the biggest critics of Trump's behavior during the infamous press conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin. (**RELATED: Rand Paul Defends Trump, Slams 'Completely Unhinged' CIA Director.**)

He's been so critical, in fact, that some are speculating that he ran to the New York Times to provide evidence of just how wrongheaded Trump was to agree with Putin about election meddling during the conference. Here is the beginning of the NYT report:

Two weeks before his inauguration, Donald J. Trump was shown highly classified intelligence indicating that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia had personally ordered complex cyberattacks to sway the 2016 American election.

The evidence included texts and emails from Russian military officers and information gleaned from a top-secret source close to Mr. Putin, who had described to the C.I.A. how the Kremlin decided to execute its campaign of hacking and disinformation.

Brennan was the head of the C.I.A. at the time. The report further lists who was present at the briefing where Trump learned of Russian interference: "John O. Brennan, the C.I.A. director; James R. Clapper Jr., the director of national intelligence; and Adm. Michael S. Rogers, the director of the National Security Agency and the commander of United States Cyber Command."

The report also confirms that aforementioned source, which was so secretive, that Brennan actually kept mention of him or her from President Obama's daily briefing during the waning days of presidency. Instead, he would relay knowledge through a separate channel, namely with white unmarked envelopes.

Some have speculated that Brennan may have leaked the information of a source close to Putin to the NYT:

Jordan Schachtel @JordanSchachtel

Let me get this straight: John Brennan calls President Trump treasonous. The next day, he calls the New York Times and apparently reveals to them that the United States intelligence community has placed "a top-secret source close to Mr. Putin". Unreal...

Pwn All The Things @pwnallthethings

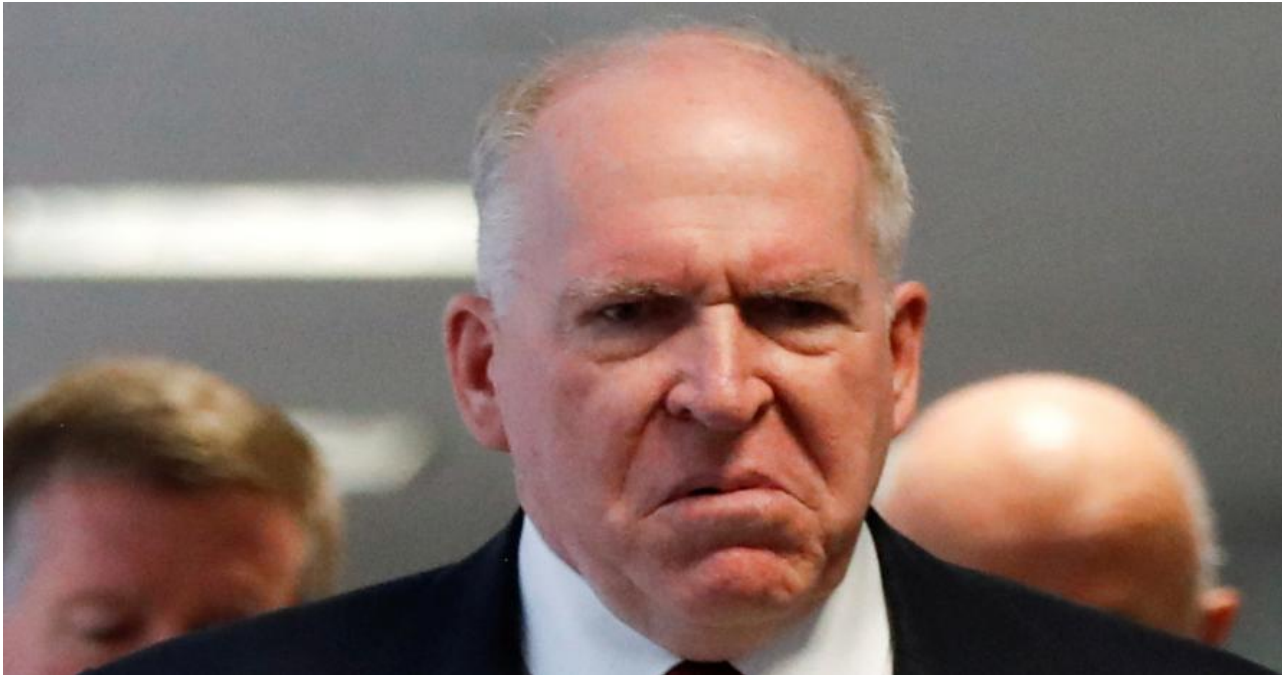
One of the most shockingly egregious leaks in recent years. This is just a pile of sources and methods that are gone now. And for what? To find out Trump knows Russia interfered and is lying? Congratulations on this big reveal.

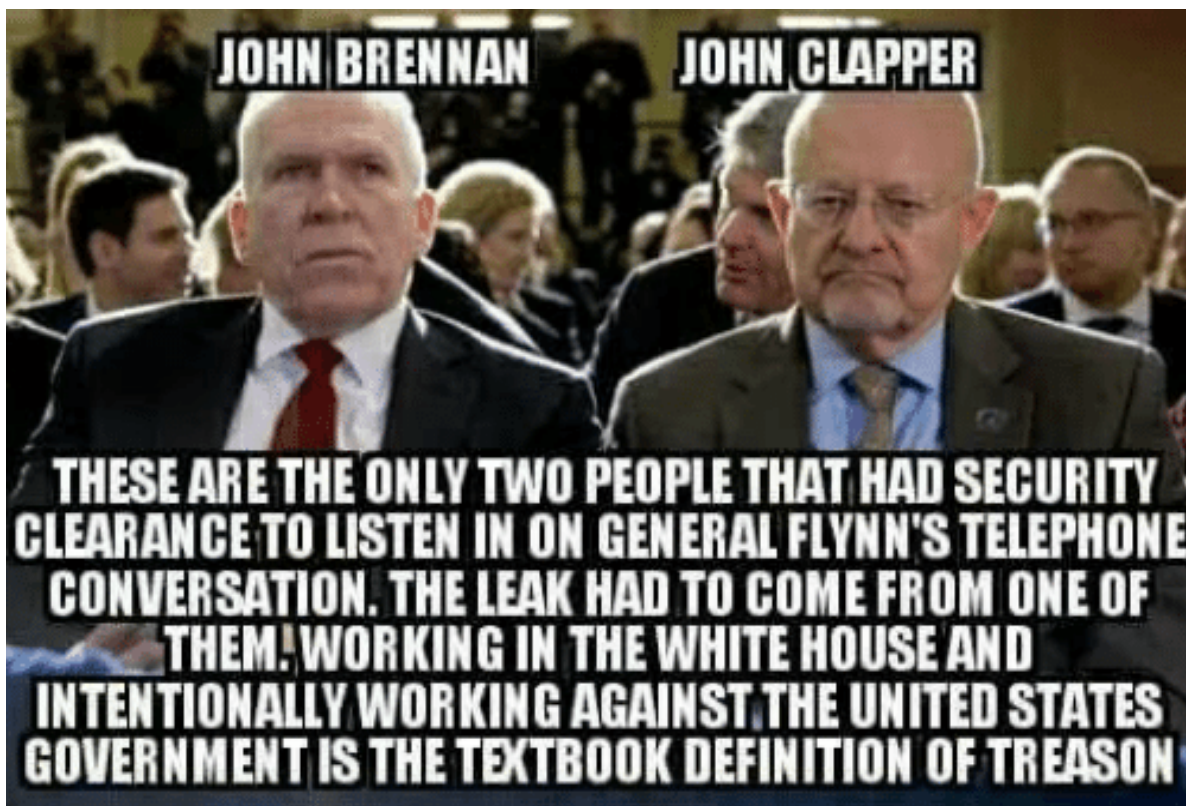
If Brennan did leak this source to the NYT, he may have just signed his death warrant. This, not Trump's bungled words about Russia, is what being a traitor looks like.

Whoever leaked the source, they'll surely have blood on their hands. What do we think is going to happen with that information? Will Putin just shrug his shoulders and forget about it?

Of course not. He'll seek out this U.S.-supported spy and dispose of him in either a discreet manner, or a loud one. Either way, it'll be nasty.

And that's the kind of consequences Brennan may have helped create by tattling to the New York Times in order to make Trump look bad.

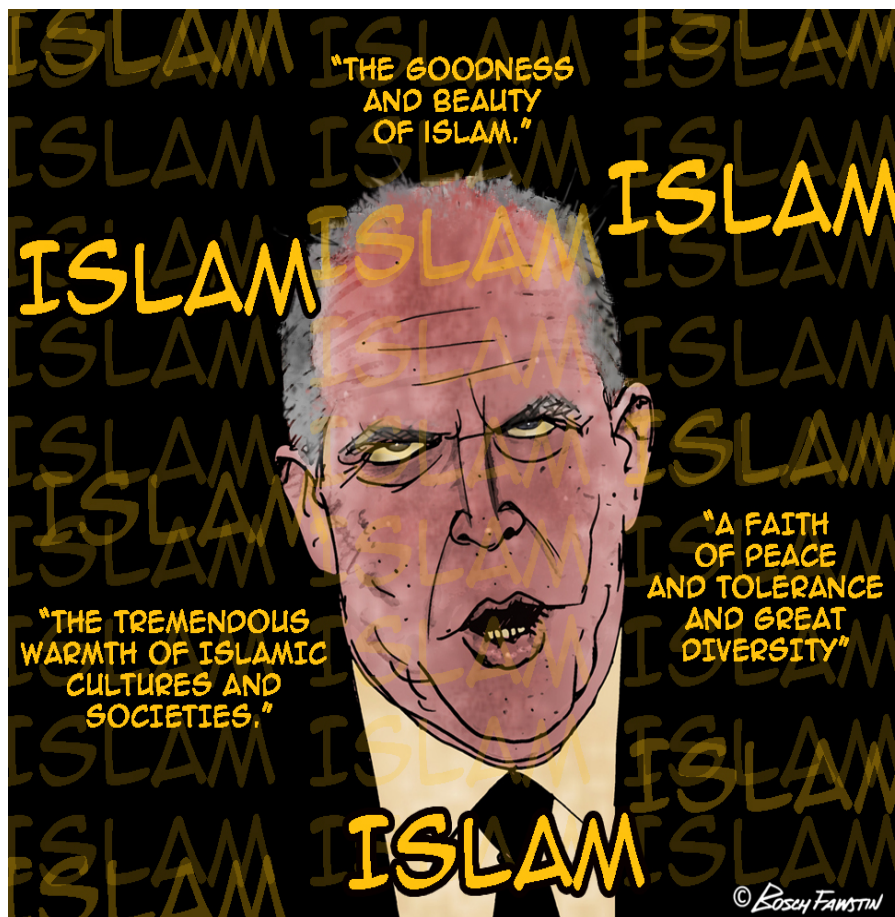




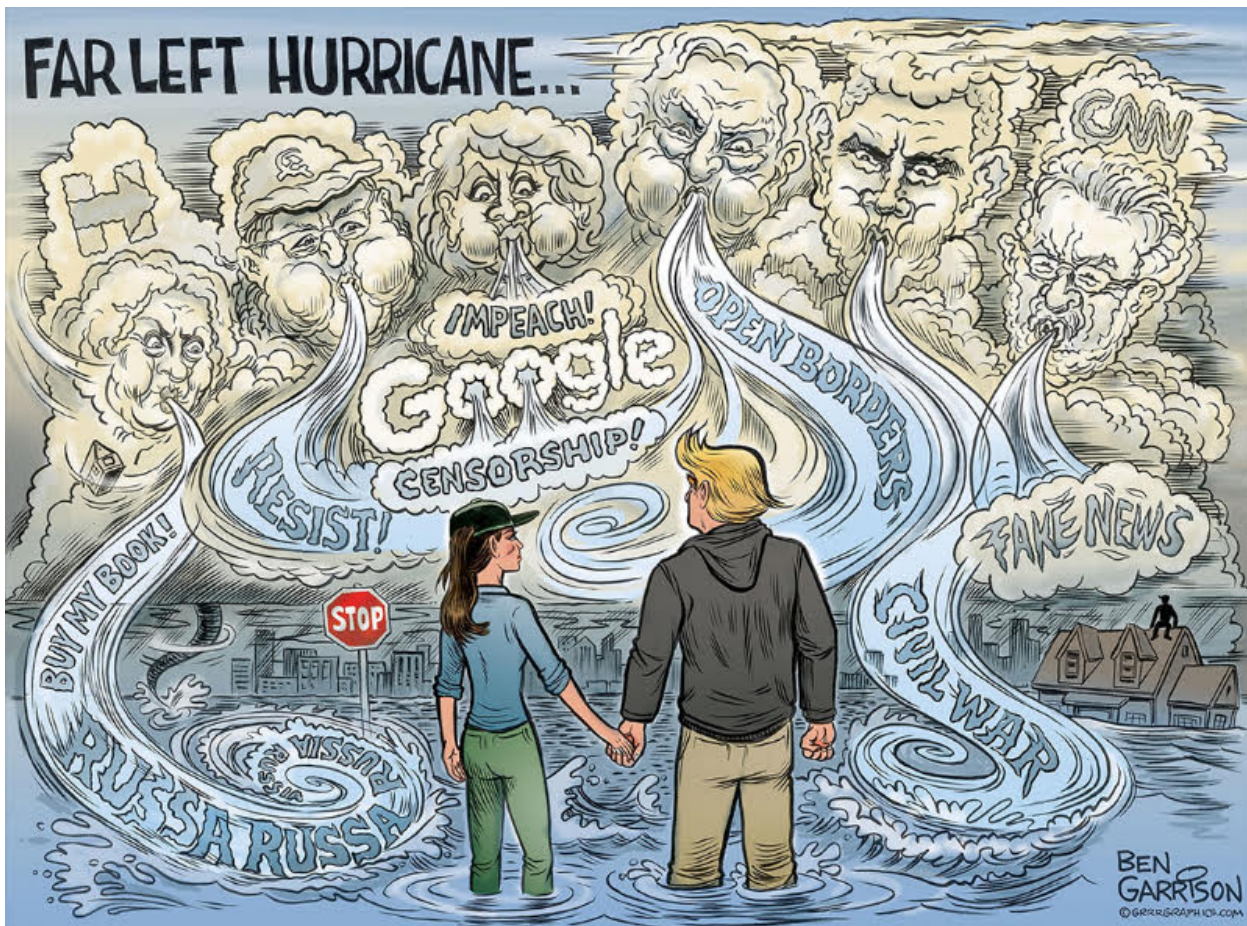
Treason? You decide.

WE WERE SPYING
ON TRUMP TO
PROTECT HIM

← **CYA**
DIRECTOR







Mike LeStok
Washington Post Writers Group
3-4-16

2012



2016



**NO ONE WOULD KNOW
WE WIRE-TAPPED TRUMP**



**IF YOU WOULD HAVE JUST
WON THE ELECTION THAT WAS
COMPLETELY RIGGED FOR YOU**



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