



New WikiLeaks Documents Shed Additional Light on the Mentality of Anti-Terror Warriors

The latest disclosures from battered-but-unbowed WikiLeaks, the website whose stock in trade has been publishing classified documents, including videos, throw little new light on a secret U.S. war against global terrorism that has lost the power to shock. Laid bare to the public eye are a series of documents acquired by a teenager hacker, who gained access to an e-mail account belonging to CIA director John Brennan.



Perhaps the most interesting revelation concerns not Brennan himself but former Missouri senator Chris “Kit” Bond. Bond, the vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, sent a letter to Brennan and others outlining ways that lawmakers could help U.S. intelligence services skirt laws, especially Geneva Convention restrictions, on the harsh treatment of prisoners. “Rather than authorize intelligence agencies to use only those techniques that are *allowed* under the AFM [Army Field Manual],” writes Bond, “I believe the more prudent approach is to preclude the use of specific techniques that are *prohibited* under the AFM. In this way, the Congress can state clearly that certain harsh interrogation techniques (read: torture) will not be permissible. At the same time, this approach allows for the possibility that new techniques that are not explicitly authorized in the AFM, but nevertheless comply with the law, may be developed in the future.” This approach, besides giving Congress plausible deniability, would free American interrogators from having to “rely on and interpret and Manual that was written solely for military intelligence operations.”

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In other words, the guidelines supplied for treatment of captives in wartime are not deemed adequate for the War on Terror – despite the fact that it has been sold to the American public as a war. The mental and ethical contortions enjoined by Senator Bond, whereby the law is reinterpreted from authorizing only that which is explicitly permitted to authorizing anything that is not explicitly forbidden, are philosophically indistinguishable from the overall trend away from limited constitutional government.

The Founding Fathers intended the government they created to be defined by the notion of enumerated powers — namely, only those powers expressly delegated to the Federal Government by the United States Constitution could be exercised legitimately, and all other powers were understood to be reserved to the states or to the people themselves. But nearly everyone in Washington nowadays believes that the Federal Government may do anything it pleases, so long as it is not expressly prohibited by the Constitution. The Founders understood that the nature of government is to expand its powers without limit, and wrote the 10th Amendment to ensure that the doctrine of enumerated powers would be understood. But this principle has been almost wholly set aside by Congress, the White House, and the Supreme Court alike; Senator Bond’s desire to reverse the polarity of what is prohibited and what is permitted in the treatment of prisoners in the War on Terror is precisely in alignment with that larger trend.



Written by [Charles Scaliger](#) on October 23, 2015

The rest of the leaked materials consist of relatively humdrum musings, such as a series of recommendations on Iran written by Brennan, in which he criticizes George W. Bush's harsh anti-Iran rhetoric, including his inclusion of Iran in the "Axis of Evil."

In comparison with some of WikiLeaks' earlier troves, which included videos of American helicopter pilots gratuitously machine-gunning parties of Iraqi civilians and joking about it, as well as deeply revealing diplomatic correspondence showing the extent of American involvement in various world trouble spots, this latest bunch is comparatively modest — so far. Wikileaks promises more of the same "over the coming days."

Stay tuned.

Photo of John Brennan: AP Images



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