Leaked documents from CIA director's email reveal thoughts on torture, Iran, Afghanistan

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RELEASE: CIA Director John Brennan emails https://wikileaks.org/cia-emails/ **#CIAemails**

CIA Director John Brennan emails

Today, 21 October 2015 and over the coming days WikiLeaks is releasing documents from one of CIA chief John Brennan's non-government email accounts. Brennan used the account occasionally for several intelligence related projects.

John Brennan became the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency in March 2013, replacing General David Petraeus who was forced to step down after becoming embroiled in a classified information mishandling scandal. Brennan was made Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism on the commencement of the Obama presidency in 2009--a position he held until taking up his role as CIA chief.

The emails, obtained by a hacker earlier this week, were from Brennan's private email account, which the CIA chief appears to have used to work on several intelligence-related projects in 2007 and 2008.

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Focus on torture

The leaked papers include alleged drafts containing discussions about "*challenges for the US Intelligence Community in a post cold-war and post-9/11 world*," as well as proposals regarding "*torture methods.*"

Among the documents harvested from Brennan's personal emails is a May 2008 letter from Christopher Bond, vice-chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, proposing a

way to ban torture while continuing to interrogate *"high-value detainees."*

Both the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and CIA director at the time had objected to proposals limiting interrogation methods to the 19 techniques explicitly authorized in the Army Field Manual (AFM).

"*Rather than authorizing intelligence agencies to use only those techniques that are allowed under the AFM, I believe the more prudent approach is to preclude the use of specific techniques that are prohibited under the AFM,*" Bond wrote. This would allow the use of interrogation methods not explicitly authorized in the manual, but still considered acceptable under the Geneva Conventions and other laws.
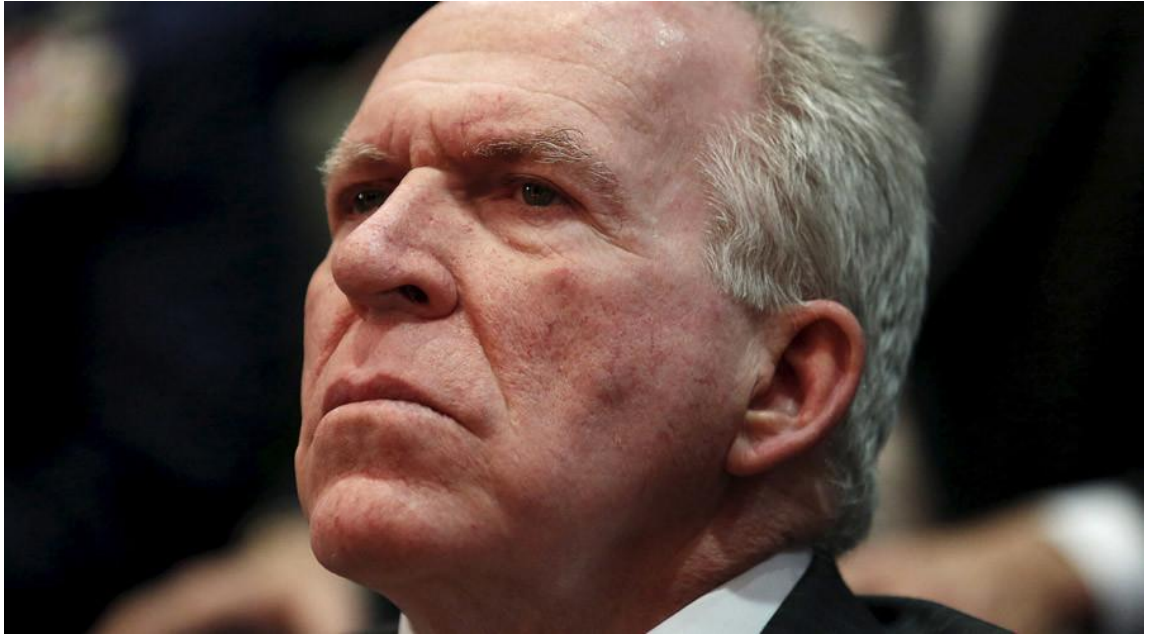
Bond lists the methods that should be prohibited: *"forcing the detainee to be naked, perform sexual acts, or pose in a sexual manner; placing hoods or sacks over the head of a detainee and using duct tape over the eyes; applying beatings, electric shock, burns, or similar forms of physical pain; 'waterboarding;' using military working dogs; inducing hypothermia or heat injury; conducting mock executions; and depriving the detainee of adequate food, water or medical care."*

Ties with Iran

A note called the Conundrum of Iran, which gave recommendations to "*whoever takes up residence at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in January 2009,*" emphasized the need for negotiations with Tehran. Brennan gave a history of Iran's political development over the centuries, criticized the Islamic republic for its support of terrorists, but also praised the efforts of Iranian diplomats in negotiations in post-Taliban Afghanistan. The note was written in 2007, when Brennan worked at The Analysis Corp (TAC), an intelligence and analysis firm he founded.

Earlier this week, an American teenage hacker with pro-Palestinian views claimed that he had broken into the personal email accounts of US top security officials, CIA director Brennan's among them.

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Calling for clear instructions to intelligence community

Another document is a July 2007 draft position paper proposing reforms within the US intelligence community. One of Brennan's suggestions is to extend the terms of the CIA Director and the Director of National Intelligence to 10 years. This would remove these positions from the *"cycle of partisan political appointments"* and *"ensure needed continuity at the helm of US Intelligence,"* he wrote.

"Backroom discussions that result in Presidential directives of dubious legality are not in keeping with our Constitutional foundations," Brennan wrote, demanding *"clear mandates, defined responsibilities, and firm criteria for domestic intelligence operations,"* so the intel agencies would know their limits and what is required of them.

Instead, he said, the *"ineffective implementation"* of the 2004 reforms that created DNI has *"resulted in confusion and competition among intelligence agencies."*

The draft peters off while discussing the importance of intelligence operations abroad, leaving unfinished the section on 'Damaging Leaks of Classified Information.'

Stranded without a strategy in Afghanistan

The hacktivist group Anonymous also released fragments of several documents, including an undated report by Louis Tucker, Minority Staff Director at the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, to Vice-Chairman Bond.

Tucker reports that he traveled to India, Afghanistan and Pakistan with four colleagues, visiting a number of cities and officials. He complained that the US Central Command (CENTCOM) in Bagram, Afghanistan "remained strongly unsupportive" of the trip at every stage.

"Everyone we spoke with on the ground in Afghanistan and Pakistan confessed that they know of no overall USG strategy for the region," Tucker wrote. "*Rather, we observed quality*

individuals serving judiciously in their own lanes ungoverned by a coordinated, comprehensive strategy."

The group concluded this lack of coordination was the greatest contributor to the US failure to achieve regional stability, urging the development of a comprehensive strategy based on clearly defined US goals in the region.

They also recommended the US to avoid cross-border attacks into the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan, as they risked alienating the Pakistani government and international opinion.

Last, but not least, the group urged the lawmakers to resist the refrain of *"send more troops,"* as that would be a recipe for disaster without a strategy.

Hacked by 'cracka'

Some of the documents have been posted on Twitter, with edited parts of them reportedly made public by the hacker under the username "cracka." Apart from the CIA chief's email, the teenager claimed to have gained access to Brennan's personal AOL account, which contained the official's own application for top security clearance.

The FBI and Secret Service said they were investigating the situation.