

Trump Strikes Back at 'Ringleader' Brennan

At war with current and former intelligence officials since before he was elected, Donald Trump on Wednesday moved to strip Barack Obama's CIA chief of his security clearance, though worse may be in store for John Brennan, says Ray McGovern.

By Ray McGovern

Special to Consortium News

There's more than meets the eye to President Donald Trump's decision to revoke the security clearances that ex-CIA Director John Brennan enjoyed as a courtesy customarily afforded former directors. The President's move is the second major sign that Brennan is about to be hoisted on his own petard. It is one embroidered with rhetoric charging Trump with treason and, far more important, with documents now in the hands of congressional investigators showing Brennan's ringleader role in the so-far unsuccessful attempts to derail Trump both before and after the 2016 election.

Brennan will fight hard to avoid being put on trial but will need united support from from his Deep State co-conspirators—a dubious proposition. One of Brennan's major concerns at this point has to be whether the "honor-among-thieves" ethos will prevail, or whether some or all of his former partners in crime will latch onto the opportunity to "confess" to investigators: "Brennan made me do it."

Well before Monday night, when Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani let a small bomb drop on Brennan, there was strong evidence that Brennan had been quarterbacking illegal operations against Trump. Giuliani added fuel to the fire when he told Sean Hannity of Fox news:

"I'm going to tell you who orchestrated, who was the quarterback for all this. ... The guy running it is Brennan, and he should be in front of a grand jury. Brennan took ... a dossier that, unless he's the biggest idiot intelligence agent that ever lived ... it's false; you can look at it and laugh at it. And he peddled it to [then Senate Majority Leader] Harry Reid, and that led to the request for the investigation. So you take a false dossier, get senators involved, and you get a couple of Republican senators, and they demand an investigation—a totally phony investigation."

The Fix Brennan Finds Himself In

After eight years of enjoying President Barack Obama's solid support and defense to do pretty much anything he chose—including hacking into the computers of the

Senate Intelligence Committee—Brennan now lacks what, here in Washington, we refer to as a “Rabbi” with strong incentive to advance and protect you. He expected Hillary Clinton to play that role (were it ever to be needed), and that seemed to be solidly in the cards. But, oops, she lost.

What needs to be borne in mind in all this is, as former FBI Director James Comey himself has admitted: “I was making decisions in an environment where Hillary Clinton was sure to be the next president.” Comey, Brennan, and co-conspirators, who decided—in that “environment”—to play fast and loose with the Constitution and the law, were supremely confident they would not only keep their jobs, but also receive plaudits, not indictments.

Unless one understands and remembers this, it is understandably difficult to believe that the very top U.S. law enforcement and intelligence officials did what documentary evidence has now demonstrated they did.

So, unlike his predecessors, most of whom also left under a dark cloud, Brennan is bereft of anyone to protect him. He lacks even a PR person to help him avoid holding himself up to ridicule—and now retaliation—for unprecedentedly hostile tweets and other gaffes. Brennan’s mentor, ex-CIA Director George Tenet, for example, had powerful Rabbis in President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, as well as a bizarrely empathetic establishment media, when Tenet quit in disgrace 2004.

The main question now is whether the chairs of the House oversight committees will chose to face down the Deep State. They almost never do, and the smart money says that, if they do, they will lose—largely because of the virtually total support of the establishment media for the Deep State. This often takes bizarre forms. The title of a recent column by Washington Post “liberal” commentator Eugene Robinson speaks volumes: “God Bless the Deep State.”

Ray McGovern works with Tell the Word, a publishing arm of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in inner-city Washington. During his 27-year career as a CIA analyst, he served under nine CIA directors and seven Presidents. He is a member of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS).

‘Journey for Justice’ Caravan Launches Cross-Country Trek

The Trump administration is dismantling Temporary Protected Status, a program that protects people from deportations to countries destabilized by war, civil conflict, or natural catastrophe. One group is fighting back.

By Dennis J Bernstein



The Trump Administration, with Attorney General Jefferson Beauregard Sessions as its willing lightning rod, is in the process of dismantling key aspects of the United States political asylum program. To that end, the administration has begun to zero in on what is known as Temporary Protected Status (TPS). **TPS** was established by Congress in the Immigration Act of 1990. It's a humanitarian program that mandates that the U.S. should suspend deportations to countries that have been destabilized by war, civil conflict, or natural catastrophe.

According to the National TPS Alliance, if the Trump administration manages to crush the program, over 450,000 people would face possible deportation, putting them in harm's way, facing extreme violence and possible death.

In response, a national grassroots coalition of refugee and immigrants rights activists will caravan from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C. Those who are directly affected by Trump's extreme anti-immigrant policy—the TPS recipients themselves—will lead the Journey for Justice Caravan.

The Caravan will travel across the country to visit over 50 cities in a span of 12-weeks, kicking off the campaign from Los Angeles on Friday, Aug. 17. The movement to save TPS has greatly expanded in recent days and weeks in response to the Trump administration's hard-line decision to terminate the life-saving program as part of his ongoing and unrelenting attacks against immigrant communities from coast to coast.

The caravan will consist of over 50 TPS holders, from various countries that are currently designated TPS. "The goal of the caravan is to lift the collective voices against the termination of TPS," according to a recent press release. "The cruel dehumanization of families at the southern border and against the criminalization of immigrants throughout the United States. For 12 weeks, TPS families will ride a bus across the country, and throughout the way, the justice riders will participate in vigils, community assemblies, know-your-rights sessions, forums, roundtable discussions, concerts, demonstrations, leadership-development activities and meetings with political candidates and elected officials."

The National Day Laborer Organizing Network or NDLO is a key co-sponsor of the

national action. NDLON is a coalition of worker-centered organizations across the country that defend day laborers from exploitation and extreme immigration enforcement, help people find jobs and recover wages, and train workers in health and safety.

I spoke with NDLON Executive Director Pablo Alvarado on Aug. 9 in Los Angeles about the reasons for the cross-country action to save TPS. Alvarado knows firsthand and up-close what violence looks like in El Salvador. Alvarado witnessed the death squad murder of his fifth grade teacher, before he fled the violence and the U.S.-funded military death squads that ruled El Salvador with a bloody iron fist. His own relatives in El Salvador continue to face death threats.

Dennis Bernstein: How would you assess the current administration's policy toward immigrants and undocumented people from Central America?

Pablo Alvarado: This action on the part of the Trump administration is not just an act of cruelty but also of hatred, of bigotry. This president decided to terminate an incredible program that has facilitated the immigration of thousands and thousands of migrants. Today, 30 percent of these people own homes, over 90 percent have jobs. And yet, in an act of cruel racism, this administration has decided to get rid of this program. Their motivation is very clear: to reduce the number of non-white immigrants. They are scared of the changing demographics in our country. This is their way of slowing down the emergence of a new majority. They are no longer just going after undocumented people. They are taking away the papers of people with documents.

DB: You are from El Salvador yourself. Could you talk a little bit about the kinds of violence that people fled during this period of U.S.-supported death squads?

PA: It is important to note how many times the U.S. has intervened in Central America. The latest case is our recognition of a president in Honduras that 80 percent of the Honduran people don't want. Honduras will continue to be in flames for months to come. Already, death squads are emerging, and activists have been disappeared and tortured. Children are being gassed while protesting. All of this will lead to even greater poverty and feed the cycle of migration. This is the same thing that the United States has done in El Salvador, in Nicaragua, and throughout the region. The widespread gang violence in El Salvador is something that was imported from Los Angeles.

I can tell you that my two brothers, who are teachers and make \$450 a month, are being extorted by gang members. Temporary Protected Status was introduced following the great earthquake, but the reality is that El Salvador has not yet

recovered from that natural disaster. The country is still in dire circumstances. There are many villages that subsist on the remittances of family members who are here in the United States. This action by the Trump administration is going to lead to an even larger humanitarian crisis.

DB: Do you see this as a form of ethnic cleansing?



PA: It is clearly an effort, as I said, to slow down the emergence of a new majority. This has always been the strategy of the people around Trump. They refer to it as attrition through enforcement. This involves making the lives of immigrants so miserable that they will want to pack their bags and leave on their own. Ending TPS is essentially a step in that direction. It is interesting, right-wing pundits say, that it is the Democrats who want to allow these immigrants to come because they want to turn them into Democratic voters. This is so ridiculous. These people are leaving their countries not to be able to vote here. They are fleeing violence and extreme poverty and persecution. Any country that respects human rights is going to want to provide safe haven to people fleeing such conditions.

DB: What kinds of actions are you planning to take now?

PA: We recently put together the National TPS Alliance, a coalition of about 50 committees of TPS recipients across the country who have come to Washington several times and are coming again in the first week of February. Prior to this recent decision, they were already doing lobbying work, trying to persuade politicians from both sides of the aisle of the seriousness of their plight. Out of those conversations, four legislative proposals have been introduced to provide a permanent solution for TPS holders. The administration may want to see TPS fade away in 18 months, but we are determined to make these proposals a reality.

Dennis J. Bernstein is a host of "Flashpoints" on the Pacifica radio network and the author of *Special Ed: Voices from a Hidden Classroom*. You can access the audio archives at www.flashpoints.net. You can get in touch with the author at dbernstein@igc.org.
