



## CIA pick fits Obama's mindset

By Nat Hentoff Friday, January 25, 2013

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I understand why President Barack Obama has full confidence in John Brennan, whom he has nominated to head the CIA. Brennan's record of lawlessness, starting when he became chief of staff to CIA Director George Tenet in 1999, mirrors that of Obama's.

They share contempt for the Constitution's separation of powers, allowing the executive branch to ignore Congress and the courts in the name of national security. When Obama first became president, he wanted Brennan to head the CIA, but there was so much opposition.

Instead, the president appointed Brennan as his chief counterterrorism adviser, a post not requiring Senate confirmation. In this role, Brennan has been in charge of Obama's "kill list" of drone assassinations in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Yemen, et al.

Now, for all of you who voted to re-elect Obama, here's what the president said when, on Jan. 7, he proudly declared his choice for CIA chief: "(Brennan) has worked to embed our efforts in a strong legal framework."

Wow! This from a former teacher of constitutional law at the University of Chicago? It's no wonder that Brennan has always had direct, immediate access to Obama. They are united in their ceaseless suspension of our Constitution.

The New York Post's Michael A. Walsh summarizes with piercing clarity what the Obama-Brennan conspiracy has accomplished: "In effect — and especially as employed by the Obama administration — the CIA has become the president's private army, with a classified budget, contracts with some extremely dubious operatives and under-the-table relations with thuggish and oppressive foreign governments. With its fleet of armed drones, it regularly rains death from the skies on enemies (some of them American citizens)."

Getting back to what these benighted brothers have done and how it may continue to affect us as Americans for a long time, Suzanne Nossel, who is Amnesty International USA's former executive

director, in an article in Foreign Policy, emphasizes that these Obama-Brennan crimes are taking place in nations with which we are not at war, reminding us: “The administration is now backed into claiming that a war exists because it has convinced itself that it cannot function without a broad license to kill. Short of al-Qaida suing for peace, this war may never end. The administration’s reshaping of the concept of war risks, undoing over 100 years of evolution of the laws of war and the protections those laws have delivered.”

She also explains how we have allowed Obama and Brennan to outline America’s values for the rest of the world:

“The next four years will define whether this rewriting of the rules becomes a bipartisan ‘new normal’ in the United States — and implicit permission for the rest of the world to sidestep human rights. ... The bipartisan affirmation of drone use will make those weapons routine for the United States and any other government with a kill list of its own.”

Of course, Obama is delighted to have Brennan by his side for the next four years, with ever-greater authority to impose the American stamp of identity on these Hellfire missiles.