

A New Narrative

She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted.

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CIA's Millennials are not to blame for the Wikileaks Vault 7 leak

In an overt display of ageism, during an interview with BBC on March 8, 2017, ex-CIA Director Michael Hayden blamed millennials for the Wikileaks Vault 7 leak. After admitting he had no special knowledge of the Vault 7 leaks, Hayden launched into a discriminatory tirade against millennials, saying, "In order to do this kind of stuff we have to recruit from a certain demographic. I don't mean to judge them at all, but this group of millennials and related groups simply have different understandings of the words loyalty, secrecy and transparency than certainly my generation did."

Hayden conveniently ignored the legions of traitors from his own generation, while slandering the Intelligence Community's youngest generation. Notable turncoats from Hayden's generation include:

If we are going to group people by generation, why not race? Besides being part of Hayden's generation, what demographic group do these spies belong to? They are all White men. Statistically, White men are more likely to commit treason than any other demographic in the Intelligence Community. Why did Hayden fail to point this out during his BBC interview? Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning, the two leakers Hayden cites as evidence millennials are untrustworthy, were both White men when they unlawfully disclosed classified information.

The problem with Hayden's analysis of millennials is that once we begin categorizing demographic groups as security threats, where does it end? How does one determine whether race or age is the decisive variable? An intellectually lazy person could just as easily say, White men have a problem with loyalty, secrecy and transparency. In fact, we could insert any demographic and make similarly

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sweeping generalizations.

Character is not determined by age, similarly it is not determined by race, gender, color, sexual preference, disability status or genetic information. Although specific motives may differ, a lack of character is what drives someone to betray their country and the oath they took to safeguard the nation's secrets, membership in a particular demographic group is not the deciding factor. Why do White men account for the largest number of spies within the Intelligence Community? Because they are overrepresented in positions with access to the nation's most sensitive secrets. The Intelligence Community remains the least diverse of all US government agencies.

Just as we should not assume all White men are disloyal based on the actions of a few, we should not assume all millennials are Edward Snowden or Chelsea Mannings lying in wait. Stereotyping is not going to keep the Intelligence Community's secrets safe, and Hayden was reckless to traffick in them. Hayden and Intelligence Community leaders must remember, correlation does not imply causation. The only difference between Hayden's generation and millennials: the technology has changed and CIA's Office of Security is still operating from its 1947 model.

CIA's Office of Security is charged with protecting the Agency's secrets, Wikileaks Vault 7 is the latest example of its failure to fulfill its mission. Unfortunately, the Office of Security often escapes blame after a major security breach, with congressional investigations most often focusing on the Directorate of the CIA Officer responsible for the espionage. This approach ignores the integral role the Office of Security plays in personnel security.

- The Office of Security is responsible for ensuring Agency contractors follow proper procedures.
- The Office of Security decides who gets and keeps a security clearance.
- The Office of Security conducts background checks and polygraph exams.
- The Office of Security is responsible for maintaining control of classified documents.
- The Office of Security is also tasked with preventing espionage, arguably its most important responsibility.

What is bewildering is that the Office of Security is rarely investigated when CIA suffers a spectacular breakdown in security as it did with Wikileaks Vault 7. What is most disturbing is instead of exercising oversight, Congress often grants more authority to the Office of Security following a counterespionage disaster.

This lack of accountability has allowed the Office of Security's ineffective culture to become fossilized. In the spy-world, bureaucratic inertia is potentially deadly, but the Office of Security provokes so much fear among the CIA workforce, most do not dare criticize it. CIA employees know criticizing the Office of Security can equal career suicide, given the specter of having their

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security clearance revoked, most try to fly under the radar of the Agency's tyrannical Security Officers. Congress and Intelligence Community leadership refuse to hold the Office of Security accountable, thus it has no incentive to change, innovate, or even operate in an ethical manner.

According to Ronald Kessler in his book, "Inside the CIA," former CIA Director William Webster found the Office of Security more difficult to deal with than any other office at the Agency.

He found it to be still operating in the dark ages and the most resistant to change. Sometimes Websters' aides felt that perhaps the Office of Security considered Webster to be a security risk.

A former Office of Security official confirmed Webster's account to Kessler, adding:

Their attitude is, this is the way we do things, and we aren't going to change.

To date, nobody has forced the Office of Security's hand; nobody with the authority to do so has had the moral courage to stand up to the Office of Security and demand change.

The usual talking heads are making the rounds in print and on television trying to shift blame from CIA to third parties for the security breach that led to WikiLeaks obtaining CIA's entire hacking arsenal. Don't be distracted by CIA's attempts at damage control via Hayden or anyone else, the blame lies solely with the Agency's broken security apparatus. CIA was criminally negligent in its failure to secure highly classified information, and in order to move forward in a productive way, CIA must take full responsibility for the loss. The first step towards meaningful and sustainable change is to acknowledge there is a problem, in the same way a drug abuser must admit s/he has a problem before recovery can begin. CIA must take the first step by admitting the problem, only then will it be able to effectively address the structural problems that created the perfect storm for this historic loss of classified information.