

On MSNBC and "Authoritarianism"

A brief response to the latest hit piece

Matt Taibbi ✓

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From top left: Watts, Wallace, Vance, Twitty, Rosenberg, Rangappa, Rhodes, Painter, McCaffrey, Kirschner, Kaytal, Haq, Figliuzzi, Brennan, Bash, McQuade

MSNBC opinion columnist Zeesham Aleem just penned the latest in what's become a parade of hit pieces from mainstream outlets directed at me and other independent journalists. Even by the low standards of the genre, "[How the populist left has become vulnerable to the populist right](#)" is a humorous standout. It argues that after I spent a month detailing how the FBI, DHS, DOD, CIA and other agencies built a system for mass delivery of censorship requests to firms like Twitter and Facebook, I helped fuel a subculture that "could funnel people from leftism to authoritarianism." Here's a brief list of talking heads at the network now claiming people like me, Glenn Greenwald, Tulsi Gabbard and Jimmy Dore are the ones guilty of funneling audiences to "authoritarianism":

[John Brennan](#), former Director of the CIA, now senior intelligence analyst at MSNBC

[Frank Figliuzzi](#), former Assistant Director of Counterintelligence at the FBI

[Asha Rangappa](#), former Special Agent for the FBI, specializing in counterintelligence

[Nicolle Wallace](#), former Communications Director for George W. Bush

[Jeremy Bash](#), former Chief of Staff of the CIA

[Clint Watts](#), former FBI counterintelligence agent and MSNBC national security analyst

[Chuck Rosenberg](#), former Acting DEA administrator and senior FBI official

[Nayyera Haq](#), former Senior Director of the White House

[Richard Painter](#), former Chief Ethics lawyer in the George W. Bush White House

[Neal Kaytal](#), former Acting Solicitor General of the United States

[Ben Rhodes](#), former National Security Advisor to Barack Obama

[Barry McCaffrey](#), former U.S. Army General and Drug Czar, security analyst for NBC and MSNBC

[Stephen Twitty](#), former Lieutenant General of the U.S. Army

[Joyce Vance](#), former U.S. Attorney

[Barbara McQuade](#), former U.S. Attorney

[Glenn Kirschner](#), former Assistant U.S. Attorney

The right word to describe this brand of gall escapes me. The nerve? The bottle? The damned cheek? Both MSNBC and similarly foundering competitor CNN (which [lost 19% and 27% of their audiences](#), respectively, last year) have been open for years now in their desire to serve as final revolving door destinations for the shadiest conceivable military and security officials. While MSNBC went after Brennan, Figliuzzi, and Bash, CNN scooped up James Clapper, Michael Hayden, and Steven Hall, among many others. The lists are so long, only an exceptional mind could keep track of them all. How many spooks fled to the Peacock?

Marky, Ricky, Danny, Terry, Mikey, Davey, Timmy, Tommy, Joey, Robbie, Johnny, and Brian. And Brennan. John Brennan. MSNBC, you're a joke.