FBI ASKS WILLIAM WEBSTER TO LOOK CLOSER AT NIDAL HASAN ANALYSIS

The WaPo reports that the FBI has appointed William Webster to review the FBI's response to Nidal Hasan's actions leading up to the Fort Hood shootings.

> FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III has asked former director and retired federal judge William H. Webster to conduct an independent review of the bureau's actions in advance of last month's deadly shootings at Fort Hood, Tex., according to government officials familiar with the move.

But the most interesting thing about the report are the details it offers on the FBI's analysis of Anwar al-Awlaki's communications.

> FBI agents in California already monitoring Aulaqi, whose violent rhetoric has inspired terrorist plots in Canada, Great Britain and the United States, forwarded two e-mails to the Washington task force, another government official confirmed. An analyst there took a few months to review the messages, before concluding they were innocent and in line with research Hasan had been conducting about Muslim soldiers and mental health issues, the official said.
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> Later e-mails between Hasan and the cleric were not sent to agents in Washington, but were reviewed by analysts in San Diego who determined they were in line with the earlier correspondence, the official added.

To sum up, the FBI maintains that Awlaki has "inspired" ~~attacks~~ plots [corrected per KenMuldrew] in Canada, the UK, and the US. Though this does not include a description of what "inspired" means.

It also reveals that the actual analysis of Awlaki's communication—which we have reason to believe were collected under FISA surveillance—was initially done in CA (presumably, in San Diego). But the initial decision whether or not to pursue an investigation of Hasan based on the wiretaps was made in DC.

Not that I have any grand conclusions about that—but I do find it curious that the analysis of communications with Awlaki—whose last US-based location was in the DC area—was done in San Diego.

One more thing. What the WaPo doesn't mention about Webster's background is that, in addition to being a judge and a former FBI Director (and an Amherst grad), he's also a former CIA Director and Chair of the Homeland Security Advisory Council. Both of those roles would add another layer of expertise that may be useful for this review.

Update: I asked Tim Shorrock, author of *Spies for Hire: The Secret World of Intelligence Outsourcing*, why they might be doing the analysis in San Diego. He said that the JTTF in San Diego is pretty substantial. Like me, he speculated that SAIC, which is located in San Diego, may be involved.

> The most likely contractor would be SAIC, and not just because it's based in San Diego. It has very close ties with the FBI and is a prime contractor on a massive FBI database called Investigative Data Warehouse. The Electronic Frontier Foundation has been trying to shine some light on IDW through FOIA, and earlier this year released some of its findings: http://www.eff.org/issues/foia/investigative