

WE'RE STILL WAITING...

As I understand it, we're still waiting for "the letter" from DOJ that will tell us what we already know—these people are a bunch of sophists.

While we're waiting, though, this is the most detailed account of the letter from DNI Mike McConnell (as I understand it, Specter said on Wolf Blitzer that he still expects a letter from DOJ):

"I understand that the phrase 'Terrorist Surveillance Program' was not used prior to 2006 to refer to the activities authorized by the president," Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell wrote in a letter to Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa. Â Â

McConnell's letter comes a week after Gonzales insisted to the committee that the hospital confrontation was about some other program he would not name because it was classified. Gonzales repeatedly denied that the internal disagreement was about the "program the president has confirmed."

As McConnell noted, Bush did not disclose the existence of the program until after The New York Times revealed it in December 2005.

[snip]

Confirmed only in February as the national intelligence director, McConnell indicated the Justice Department helped define the distinction about the surveillance program.

"The details of the activities changed in certain respects over time and I understand from the Department of Justice these activities rested on different legal bases," McConnell wrote

in his one-page letter.

Right. So a guy who wasn't even read into the program when all this headfakery happened, now explains with a straight face that the name TSP didn't exist until 2006—pretty much admitting they invented the Orwellian name to give definition to the legal parts of the larger program they were willing to admit to.

And McConnell appears to be speaking second-hand about the changing legal rationalizations for the program. That is—like Congress, he has not seen the legal justifications that were deemed so troublesome by Comey.

What does it mean that, pushed into a corner, the White House and DOJ seem unprepared to have anyone fully briefed on the program talk about? Does it suggest that they're to the point where the next admission is to the full illegality of the program?