

SECURITY CLEARANCES

I'm sitting here with Kagro X, waiting for Glenn Greenwald to interview Anthony Romero. I suspect the FISA bill will be a topic of hot conversation.

Meanwhile, I wanted to point to the "clarification" given by the guy whom Congress wants to give complete power to decide whom to wiretap and whether those wiretap targets are in the US or not. I may come back to it later (though given my posting of late, maybe not). But here's an interesting detail about the hospital visit:

I also recall that, prior to the time I departed, General Ashcroft briefly mentioned a concern about security clearances for members of his staff regarding the NSA activities that were the subject of the presidential order.

I find this interesting for several reasons. First, it suggests that Ashcroft was complaining that his staffers weren't **given** security clearances to be read into this program. Recall that Bush refused to give some Office of Professional Responsibilities investigators security clearances, which meant they couldn't investigate the program. We also know that Cheney and Addington were working directly with John Yoo, bypassing Ashcroft, to pull off their shredding of the Constitution. But this detail suggests they were also shrouding their program by preventing top DOJ officials from getting security clearances.

I'm also struck that Gonzales felt like he needed to clarify this point. Is this something that Comey—or Ashcroft himself—already testified to the Senate about? And what precisely was the issue? Why was it so important that Ashcroft was talking about it from his ICU bed?

Finally, why didn't Gonzales mention it the first time. Was this something else he was

trying to hide?