

RUSS FEINGOLD: WE NEED TO PROTECT AMERICANS FROM JOHN BOLTON

Thanks to Selise for making this YouTube.

When introducing his amendment requiring the government to segregate any information known to be from a US person in a separate database, Russ Feingold used the example of John Bolton to demonstrate the need for protections beyond the weak minimization procedures currently in the Intelligence Bill.

...the supporters of the Intelligence Committee bill claim that minimization procedures are enough to protect Americans' privacy.

In fact, the minimization requirements in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act are quite weak. They permit the widespread dissemination throughout the United States Government of information about US persons if it is deemed foreign intelligence information which again, is very broadly defined. And they permit dissemination of the identities of these US persons if it is, quote, necessary to understand foreign intelligence information or assess its importance, unquote. Also, also a very loose standard.

Now we know, we know, Mr. President, from our experience in the nomination hearing of John Bolton to be United Nations Ambassador how easy it is for government officials to obtain access to those identities.

And when the FBI receives reports referring to a US person according to a recently declassified government

document, it will, quote, likely request that person's identity, unquote, and will likely meet the requirements for obtaining it. There are other minimization requirements in government regulations, the details of which are classified, but we know in any event that those can be changed at any time. Mr. President, minimization is simply inadequate in the context of these broad new authorities.

You'll recall that the Senate Dems held up John Bolton's appointment to the UN because the Administration refused to turn over the NSA intercepts for which Bolton requested the identity of the US person recorded on the intercept.

Democrats said they would continue to block Bolton's nomination until the White House produces records of communications intercepts he sought from the National Security Agency. The White House has refused, citing executive privilege.

Sen. Joseph Biden of Delaware, the ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, said the records could clear up allegations that Bolton used them to spy on "rivals in the bureaucracy, both inferior and superior to him."

"While I doubt this, as I've said publicly before, we have a duty to be sure that he did not misuse this data," he said.

[snip]

Little has been said publicly about the contents of the intercepts from the NSA, the highly secretive intelligence agency that specializes in electronic eavesdropping.

Biden said Bolton was given the names of 19 individuals or companies whose communications were picked up by U.S. intelligence.

He suggested Bolton might have been seeking the names of Americans whose conversations were intercepted to assist in "intramural fights within the administration."

Bolton has told senators he needed the information for "context" and out of "intellectual curiosity," Biden said.

It's a pretty good argument, really. We need to protect Americans from John Bolton's "intellectual curiosity."