

RUSSELL TICE CONFIRMS EVERYTHING WE'VE SURMISED ABOUT BUSH'S ILLEGAL WIRETAP PROGRAM

Teddy linked to the stunning Russell Tice appearance on Keith 0 tonight. I wanted to add a few points.

First, Tice's description of the program confirms everything we have surmised about the program. The program:

- Established the means to collect **all** American communications
- Analyzed meta-data to select a smaller subset of communications to tap further
- Conducted human analysis of those messages

That is, the Bush administration used meta-data (things like length of phone call that have nothing to do with terrorism) to pick which communications to actually open and read, and then they opened and read them.

And of course, everyone's communications—everyone's—were included in the totality of communications that might be tapped.

Including—especially—journalists. We knew that both Christiane Amanpour and Lawrence Wright's communications were tapped. Well, apparently so were every other journalists'.

Tice figured out that they were getting journalists' communications when he realized

that they were separating out all the journalists' communications—but then ensuring that those communications were still collected 24/7.

I guess I was right to doubt the government's claim—made to the FISC—that it does not have a database of the communications of incidentally collected non-targeted persons, seeing as how this separate collection of journalists' communications would be just that kind of database. (Unless, of course, the Bush thugs want to admit they deliberately targeted journalists as suspected terrorists.)

Tice also explained how BushCo evaded oversight by claiming some of this program was an intelligence program, and some was a military program. (Presumably, though, my smart Senator Carl Levin might notice something like that...) That strategy seems remarkably similar to the means by which BushCo legally justify the PAA (and presumably the program operating without Congressional sanction before it)—by using hybrid means of approving the program so as to eviscerate the Fourth Amendment. Nothing was too cute for these folks in their efforts to gut the Constitution, I guess.

Now that Tice has confirmed that all those journalists who have been poo-pooing the blogosphere for its concerns about the program in the last three years were being wiretapped, we may finally get some large scale press attention on this. Russ Feingold is going to look pretty damn smart for insisting that this is precisely what was going on. And perhaps, finally, we'll have some accountability on these issues.

As I've been hinting, I did my small part in the hopes of accountability today; hopefully I'll have the video done to explain tomorrow.

I'm beginning to believe we might just hold these fuckers accountable yet.