

# BILL LEONARD ON AIPAC TRIAL

Bill Leonard, the former head of IS00 whose job David Addington tried to Pixie Dust out of existence because Leonard had the audacity to assume Dick Cheney was required to follow the same classification and declassification rules as everyone else in the executive branch, never got a chance to testify in the AIPAC trial. That's because, as soon as the Court ruled that Leonard could testify (and that judges get some say over what is introduced at trial), the government quickly dismissed the case.

But Leonard has described his take on the AIPAC case in his new blog:

The Government's premise in this case was that non-Government officials who do not possess security clearances, such as lobbyists, reporters, and think-tank specialists, can be criminally culpable for further disseminating information shared with them by Government officials, even if they solely received the information by word-of-mouth and were not necessarily informed in the first place that it was supposedly classified . Never before had the Justice Department brought such a criminal case and to me, the actions of Keith Weissman and Steven Rosen clearly should never have served as the basis for the Government's attempt to initially establish such a far-reaching precedent.

Supporters of the Government's case have stated that organizations such as AIPAC should not be able to determine what is classified and what is not. I agree – that is the role of the government. However, **I became involved in this case because it was clear to me that the government had failed to adequately**

**determine exactly what was and was not properly classified information.** All too often, in dealing with the public or the two co-equals branches of government, Executive branch officials simply assert classification. Equally disturbing, the judiciary and the Congress often reflexively defer to such claims. Fortunately, in the AIPAC case, Judge T. S. Ellis 3<sup>rd</sup> refused to allow the Government to make such an assertion. **After reviewing the evidence in detail, I became convinced that the Government would not be able to demonstrate that the specific information the defendants were accused of disclosing was indeed classified in accordance with the process set forth by the President** or that, in other instances, it would be easy for the defense to demonstrate that the information was already widely known and thus part of the vast morass of official information subject to the frequent abuse of over-classification. To be effective, the national security tool of classification must be used with precision and in accordance with the standards and limitations set forth by the President.

I guess it's clear why Leonard would have been such a damning witness for the government's case.