

# JAY ROCKEFELLER'S SURVEILLANCE MACHINES

I don't mean to be churlish. After all, Jay Rockefeller tried to conduct some kind of oversight over Bush's illegal wiretap program. He even went so far as to write out by hand a letter to Dick Cheney telling him the wiretap program sounded like the data mining the Senate was in the process of specifically defunding. And Rockefeller was honest about his own capabilities to conduct oversight without the help of his more technical staffers.

As you know, I am neither a technician nor an attorney. Given the security restrictions associated with this activity, and my inability to consult staff or counsel on my own, I feel unable to fully evaluate much less endorse these activities.

But is there any better demonstration that members of the Gang of Four cannot exercise oversight over such programs without staffer assistance than the way former Gang of Four member Rockefeller talks about the machines that collect and store data on you?

Committee Chairman Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), who appeared not to be a frequent customer of Amazon or eBay, was worried that an online retailer "records every book you purchase" and "these machines, as I call them, are storing all of this information about you."

Apparently, the members of Congress protecting citizens from the powers of these surveillance machines are completely unfamiliar with the way they work and the data they're already collecting. Yet both the Bush and Obama Administrations want to make sure they're the

only ones who learn about the surveillance those  
surveillance machines are doing.