

THIS INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL REVIEW GROUP BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE BOOZ ALLEN HAMILTON DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE™

When Obama announced Friday the formation of a technical advisory group to review our SIGINT programs, I naively believed “outside” and “independent” meant “outside” and “independent.”

Fourth, we’re forming a high-level group of outside experts to review our entire intelligence and communications technologies. We need new thinking for a new era. We now have to unravel terrorist plots by finding a needle in the haystack of global telecommunications. And meanwhile, technology has given governments – including our own – unprecedented capability to monitor communications.

So I am tasking this independent group to step back and review our capabilities – particularly our surveillance technologies. And they’ll consider how we can maintain the trust of the people, how we can make sure that there absolutely is no abuse in terms of how these surveillance technologies are used, ask how surveillance impacts our foreign policy – particularly in an age when more and more information is becoming public. And they will provide an interim report in 60 days and a final report by the end of this year, so that we can move forward with a better understanding of how these programs

impact our security, our privacy, and our foreign policy. [my emphasis]

I also naively believed this was an effort to take up Ron Wyden and Mark Udall's call to get an independent review of the program, which the rest of the Senate Intelligence Committee thwarted a year ago.

We also proposed directing the committee's Technical Advisory Group to study FISA Amendments Act collection and provide recommendations for improvements. We were disappointed that our motion to request that the Technical Advisory Group study this issue was ruled by our colleagues to be out of order.

Nope!

In the memo Obama just released ordering James Clapper to form such a committee, those words "outside" and "independent" disappear entirely.

I believe it is important to take stock of how these technological advances alter the environment in which we conduct our intelligence mission. To this end, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, I am directing you to establish a Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies (Review Group).

The Review Group will assess whether, in light of advancements in communications technologies, the United States employs its technical collection capabilities in a manner that optimally protects our national security and advances our foreign policy while appropriately accounting for other policy considerations, such as the risk of unauthorized disclosure and our need to maintain the public trust. Within 60

days of its establishment, the Review Group will brief their interim findings to me through the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), and the Review Group will provide a final report and recommendations to me through the DNI no later than December 15, 2013. [my emphasis]

And neither Obama nor the Intelligence Committees get to hear from this Group themselves. It all goes through James Clapper.

What on Friday was an outside and independent group is now branded by the Director of National Intelligence as the Director of National Intelligence Group.

At the direction of the President, I am establishing the Director of National Intelligence Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies to examine our global signals-intelligence collection and surveillance capability.

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Huh. It took exactly 72 hours for that good idea to fizzle into a navel gaze directed by the guy who lies to Congress.