

# ~~OBAMA'S~~ JAMES CLAPPER'S COMMITTEE TO MAKE YOU LOVE THE DRAGNET HAS A KIDDIE TABLE

Spencer Ackerman has [a review](#) of how the first two meetings of Obama's Non-Tech Tech Review panel have gone. And while they went about as horribly as I suspected – certainly there was no talk of actually fixing obvious problems with the dragnet – there are a few details that show how “[most exceptional](#)” this effort is.

The White House, having taken pains to pretend James Clapper is not in charge of the [Director of National Intelligence Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies](#), referred comment to James Clapper.

The White House deferred comment to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which did not respond.

The Non-Tech Tech Review Panel comes with a kiddie table – or rather, a conference room almost [two miles away](#) from the White House, where the tech giants got to eat.

During its first round of meetings, the panel, known as the Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technology, separated two groups of outside advisers. One group included civil libertarian organizations such as the ACLU and the Electronic Privacy Information Center. It met in a conference room on K and 20th Streets. Morrell and Clarke did not attend.

The other, which met in the White House Conference Center, included technology

companies that have participated – sometimes uneasily and at court behest – in NSA surveillance. All five panel members participated.

I'm not surprised the CIA's representative on the Committee to Make You Love the Dragnet refused to be seen at the kiddie table with civil libertarians. But Richard Clarke?

Finally, the tech companies appear not to have sent tech experts.

The meeting itself struck [New America Foundation VP Sascha] Meinrath as bizarre. Representatives from the technology firms were identified around the table not by their names, but by placards listing their employers. There was minimal technical discussion of surveillance mechanisms despite the presence of technology companies; Meinrath took the representatives to be lawyers, not technologists.

When it appeared like the meeting would discuss a surveillance issue in a sophisticated way, participants and commissioners suggested it be done in a classified meeting.

Apparently, Cass Sunstein didn't even have to [get caught proposing weird conspiracy theories](#) to make this thing a laughingstock.