

THE “ACCIDENTAL” PHONE DRAGNET VIOLATIONS IDED IN 2009 WERE ACTUALLY RETAINED STELLAR WIND FEATURES

I have long scoffed at the claim that the phone dragnet violations discovered in 2009 were accidental. It has always been clear they were, instead, features of Stellar Wind that NSA simply never turned off, even though they violated the FISC orders on it.

The Stellar Wind IG Report liberated by Charlie Savage confirms that.

It describes that numbers were put on an alert list and automatically chained.

An automated process was created to alert and automatically chain new and potential reportable telephone numbers using what was called an “alert list.” Telephone numbers on the alert list were automatically run against incoming metadata to look for contacts. (PDF 31)

This was precisely the substance of the violations admitted in 2009.

So NSA lied to FISC about that, and the IC lied to us about it when this came out in 2013.

Update: Note the reference to the violations on PDF 36 – though they don’t admit that it’s the same damn alert list and that NSA’s IG considered telling FISC from the start.