

FEINSTEIN WANTS TO INTRODUCE REPORTING MANDATE JIM COMEY SAYS WE DON'T NEED

I'll have a piece in Salon shortly about the two hearings on whether FBI should be able to mandate back doors (they call them front doors because that fools some Senators about the security problems with that) in software.

One thing not in there, however, has to do with a bill the Senate Intelligence Committee is considering that would require Facebook and Twitter and other social media to report terrorist content to authorities. ABC News, quoting Richard Clarke (who hasn't had an official role in government for some years but is on ABC's payroll) reported that the social media companies were not now reporting terrorist content.

In the middle of the SSCI hearing on this topic, Dianne Feinstein asked Jim Comey whether social media companies were reporting such content. Comey said they are (he did say they've gotten far better of late). Feinstein asked whether there ought to be a law anyway, to mandate behavior the companies are already doing. Comey suggested it wasn't necessary. Feinstein said maybe they should mandate it anyway, like they do for child porn.

All of which made it clear that such a law is unnecessary, even before you get into the severe problems with the law (such as defining who is a terrorist and what counts as terrorist content).

SSCI will probably pass it anyway, because that's how they respond to threats of late: by passing legislation that won't address it.

Note, Feinstein also got visibly and audibly and persistently pissed at Ron Wyden for accurately describing what Deputy Attorney General Sally

Yates had said she wanted in an earlier hearing: for providers to have keys that the FBI could use. Feinstein seems to believe good PR will eliminate all the technical problems with a back door plan, perhaps because then she won't be held responsible for making us less secure as a result.

Update: The measures is here, in the Intelligence Authorization.

Update: Title changed for accuracy.