

THE TALIBAN AND THE TOWERS

Barnett Rubin explains why the Taliban has been blowing up cell phone towers in Afghanistan. It's a good old-fashioned protection racket.

THE THAW THAT STARTED FIVE MONTHS AGO

The press is agog that Hillary and Richard Mellon Scaife made nice last week. But that peace-making follows five months after an earlier one between Bill Clinton and Richard Mellon Scaife. I'm not sure what that means, as far as Scaife's motives (I presume the Clintons would just like his support, or, barring that, would like him to avoid funding a bunch of wingnut bloodhounds to sniff their panties and boxers). But it does suggest the thaw is much more than a one-off thing.

THE RHETORIC OF MORE OF THE SAME

The summary of Paulson's proposed changes to our banking system is a remarkable document. It uses a bunch of rhetorical moves to deny the current crisis, all so it can propose loosening regulation, rather than tightening it.

NOT EVEN JOHN YOO APPROVED OF THE ILLEGAL WIRETAP PROGRAM

I do hope that Eric Lichtblau's book gets enough coverage this week to further stall Jello Jay's attempts to ram through telecom immunity. The excerpt in the NYT today reveals that when the illegal wiretap program started in 2001, it had no specific legal authorization—not even from the compliant John Yoo!

Robert S.

NETWORKS OR NEWSPAPERS; DEWEY OR LIPPMANN?

Eric Alterman provides a valuable service by explaining the historical dialectic between Walter Lippmann and John Dewey. But he doesn't really seem to understand Dewey as you might apply it to the dynamic between traditional journalism and blogging.

THE DNC EMAIL RULING

The Democratic National Committee has been suing the DOJ in DC District Court to obtain some 68 pages of emails relating to the US Attorney

purge. There are two issues to be contemplated here. The first is the relative propriety of Huvelle's decision, and foundation therefor, in the DNC case, and the second is what implications it may have for the greater mass of contentious email issues that are percolating in our midst.

QUESTIONS

A few questions about news stories that surfaced while I was on vacation.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE? WILKES SPRUNG FROM SLAMMER!

Almost like it was a Friday evening news or document dump coming out of the Bush White House, news has just hit the wires that convict Brent Wilkes has been released from prison pending appeal.

WHEEL SQUIRRELS STUMBLE INTO BEAR NUTS - AN ECONOMIC

UPDATE AND FORUM

A couple of days ago, we discussed what really happened, and what the longer term implications might be, in the Bear Stearns forced sale/bailout over the March 15-16 weekend. There have been several things that have come out since then that are right on point with what we were all chewing on. Consider this an open forum for all things economy related.

LISTENING TO YOU - MUKASEY PLAYS THE EMOTION CARD

The Bush Administration and their never say die FISA/Immunity push are like cockroaches. You can't kill em, and they never go away. Well, they're back again. Attorney General Michael Mukasey has graduated from DC water carrier to full fledged traveling snake oil salesman for the Cheney/Bush Administration and their sordid attempts to cover their own criminal wrongdoing via retroactive immunity for telcos. We need to saddle up and get ready as well; because next week is time to get back to work on slaying the twin headed FISA/Immunity beast.