

SPEAKING OF THAT MAN-SIZED SAFE...

JimWhite noted that Senators Leahy, Jello Jay, DiFi, and Whitehouse have written the White House to warn Cheney to stop shredding. The letter seems to be a response—at least in part—to this passage from Barton Gellman's *Angler*.

The command center of "the president's program," as Addington usually called it, was not in the White House. Its controlling documents, which gave strategic direction to the nation's largest spy agency, lived in a vault across an alley from the West Wing [7] — in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, on the east side of the second floor, where the vice president headquartered his staff.

The vault was in EE0B 268, Addington's office. Cheney's lawyer held the documents, physical and electronic, because he was the one who wrote them. New forms of domestic espionage were created and developed over time in presidential authorizations that Addington typed on a Tempest-shielded computer across from his desk [8].

It is unlikely that the history of U.S. intelligence includes another operation conceived and supervised by the office of the vice president. White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card Jr. had "no idea," he said, that the presidential orders were held in a vice presidential safe. An authoritative source said the staff secretariat, which kept a comprehensive inventory of presidential papers, classified and unclassified, possessed no record of these.

In an interview, Card said the Executive

Office of the President, a formal term that encompassed Bush's staff but not Cheney's, followed strict procedures for handling and securing presidential papers.

"If there were exceptions to that, I'm not aware of them," he said. "If these documents weren't stored the right way or put in the right places or maintained by the right people, I'm not aware of it."

The Senators ask,

Have you investigated allegations reported in the Washington Post on September 14, 2008, that the "staff secretariat, which kept a comprehensive inventory of presidential papers, classified and unclassified, possessed no record of" presidential orders in the safe of the Counsel to the Vice President? If so, what were the results of your investigation.

In addition, they also ask specifically about Dick's own notes (and those of Addington and Libby and Bush, if he actually ever kept notes)a.

Does the White House believe that any notes or documents created by the President, the Vice President or their respective staffs may be destroyed without consultation with the Archivist? If so, which notes or documents, and why?

Dick and Addington, having bolloxed the Iran-Contra investigation in the House, know how someone's notes can come back to bite former Administration officials, so the Senators are right to be concerned.

Still, I'm not sure how effective yet another

letter will be at this stage of the game. Me, I think they should just work out a plan for Biden to seize the man-sized safe when he gets his tour this evening.