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The Network Architecture Of Treason

Submitted by [lambert](#) on Sat, 2005-12-24 23:14.

[it's nice to be right.]

By carefully examining how Republicans parse their statements about Bush's [warrantless, openly felonious](#), and treasonous^[1] domestic surveillance program, and combining that with network engineering knowledge available through open sources, alert reader philosophicus has advanced our understanding of the NSA surveillance system Bush set up.

Long story short: (1) Internet surveillance is Bush's goal, not voice calls; (2) the Republican "wiretap" talking point is a diversion, to voice, away from from Internet surveillance; (3) Bush's domestic surveillance system would pose no engineering challenges whatever to NSA. No rocket science—or tinfoil hats—required.

In a future installment of this series, we'll look at the text mining component of this program, assess its impact, and see whether it's going to work (no). Read on:

[Portions of part 1 were originally published on [Talk Left](#) (with many good comments), and mentioned [here](#), and implicitly [here](#); links have been added here. Parts 2 and 3 are new. The indented portions of what follows are from philosophicus; the unindented framing is from Corrente. We solicit your [feedback](#).]

Part 1: The Internet is Bush's target, not voice

Let us Parse:

Why, in his [handwritten letter](#), does Rockefeller state that he's "not a technician."?

Blogs Of The Ten

[Leah](#), [Lambert](#), [Tom](#), [Xan](#), [RDF](#), [MJS](#), [chicagodyke](#), [shystee](#), [Sarah](#) and [hekebolos](#).

Contributors emeritus
[the farmer](#), [Riggsveda](#), [Tresy](#).

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Why the mention of TIA in Rockefeller's letter?

Why does Gonzales keep mentioning "changes in technology" as a dodge around FISA?

What does Condi mean when she says "communicate in much more fluid ways"?

What's the "technology" and "hot numbers" Cheney talks about?

Why this seemingly inconsequential parsing by Bush of the difference between "monitoring and detection"? Bush says they use FISA if they're monitoring, but this is about "detection."

And why the mention of "large batches of numbers all at once"?

Why?

Why? Because they're really not talking about voice—as one might think, hearing the word "wiretap." They're talking about data. **These are IP addresses; email addresses** (Note that the Times article that (very belatedly) revealed this program is careful to add the phrase "and email" throughout, whenever phone calls are mentioned.)

We believe that Bush, through the NSA, has put a system in place that, in essence, filters Internet traffic on certain triggers (text, phoneme, etc.) within Internet "conversations." This is "detection" in Bush's mind. "Monitoring" would be recording an entire conversation, like in a phone conversation. This is **the technology Cheney, Condi, Gonzales and Bush are talking about**, that didn't exist when FISA was drafted.

In part 3 of this post, philosophicus will outline the network architecture; and in a subsequent post, the "triggers." For now, let's look at why the Republican "wiretap" talking point is so pernicious.

Part 2: The Republican "wiretap" talking point is a diversionary tactic

"Wiretap" is a talking point that really sits up and works for the Republicans, because in this context, it confuses the exact issue they want to confuse. To the casual reader, wiretap suggests voice, like the FBI planting a bug in a Mafia don's phone. However, because of the way that the Patriot Act was drafted, "wiretap" *can be construed to mean Internet communication*.

Let's look at **the EFF's analysis of the Patriot Act**:

Before the PATRIOT Act, the government could only get a FISA pen-trap order when the communications to be monitored were likely to be either (1) those of an international terrorist or spy or (2) those of a foreign power or its agents relating to the criminal activities of an international terrorist or spy. PATRIOT 214 threw out this requirement. Now, any innocent person's communications can be tapped with a pen-trap so long as it is done "for" an intelligence investigation. The FBI doesn't have to

Snitchens', Anyway?

■ **Qataris have the measure of the Bush administration ...**

More...

Corrente Jukebox

1. Deuteronomy 21:15-17
2. The Fog of War
3. War of the Worlds
4. Come home soon, my only one
5. Jam it in your craw, boys!
6. Mantra to Defeat the Scoundrels (Shystee Remix)
7. Mantra to Defeat the Scoundrels.

Thought For The Day

There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. We must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures.

— W. Shakespeare

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7 hours 2 min ago
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- **equality forum**
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demonstrate to the FISA court that the communications are relevant to its investigation. Nor can the court deny the FBI's request; if the FBI certifies the tap is "for" such an investigation, the FISA court must issue the order.

That Section 214 lowered the standard for FISA pen-traps is even more disturbing in light of the fact that PATRIOT Section 216 expanded their reach. Unlike regular wiretaps issued under much stricter standards, pen-traps aren't supposed to collect the actual content of your communications, such as what you say on the telephone. Instead, they capture "non-content" information about your communications, such as the telephone numbers that you dial or the numbers of people who call you.

Before PATRIOT, the statute defined pen registers and trap-and-trace devices solely in the context of telephone communications. But Section 216, which does not sunset, expanded the pen-trap definition to include devices that monitor Internet communications, without clarifying what portions of Internet communications are "content," requiring a full wiretap order, versus "non-content," which can be legally acquired only with a pen-trap order. At the very least, this change means that the government can use a pen-trap to see the email addresses of people you're sending email to and the addresses of people who send email to you, along with the timestamp and size in bytes of each email. The FBI can monitor the IP addresses of all the computers you interact with over the Internet, or capture the IP addresses of every person visiting a particular website. Under the vaguely written statute, it may even be able to capture the URL of every web page that you read, although the FBI refuses to confirm or deny whether it has done so.

1. Anytime anyone in the administration says that everything remains the same with "wiretaps", they are parsing words. This has nothing to do with "wiretaps." "Wiretap," in common usage, is a term of art referring to analog communications. But in above section of the Patriot Act as drafted, it refers to Internet monitoring.
2. So why did Bush not get the warrants needed retroactively? I believe that the law was drafted in haste by lawyers and staff who had only a cursory knowledge of the technology. Once this was put into operation and the administration saw the result (e.g. 9,000 traffic flows with 18000 IP addrs) the career DOJ guys freaked. They probably registered their opinion which got deep-sixed by the administration and was probably leaked and sitting in the NYTimes safe, still unpublished. I believe we have some recent precedent for that.

Part 3: Bush's domestic surveillance system would pose no engineering challenges whatever to NSA.

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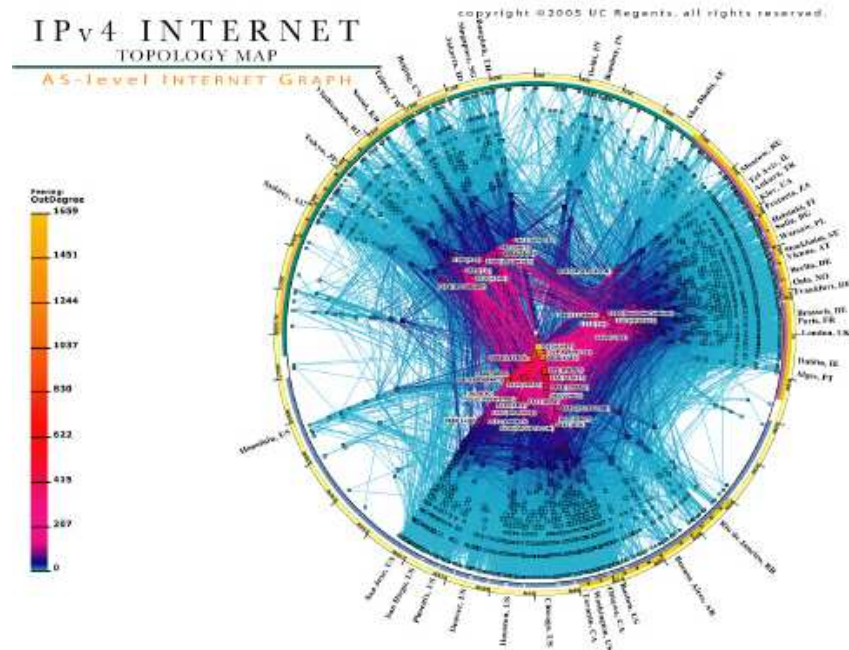
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So how would an agency go about surveillance on “overseas” Internet traffic on a massive scale? (Note: Since internet packets are routed from ISP to ISP without regard to borders, “overseas” is not really a meaningful term for Internet traffic, as opposed to point-to-point voice calls.) Could they do it without any rocket sciences, for not much money? Yes.

Step 1: Place monitors, probes, or taps on the Internet. Where would one place them? That’s pretty simple. Let’s look at [CAIDA’s Internet topology map](#).



The map shows a snapshot of the major “choke” points, or “core carriers,” for Internet traffic as it exists today. There are not that many choke points—think of these as “hubs” in a hub and spoke airline network. (The choke points are in the magenta area in the middle of the diagram.)

Step 2: Figure the compute power and storage to monitor, say, the top 20 nodes in the diagram. For that we can go to [a typical packet trace analysis](#) of one the core carriers.

Packet Trace Analysis



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Collection Date: February 6th, 2004

San Jose -- sj-20

Link Speed : OC-48 (2.5 Gbps)
Origin: NULL
Destination : NULL

Start time: Fri, Feb 6 2004 17:00:20 GMT
End time: Fri, Feb 6 2004 20:00:19 GMT
Duration: 2h 59m 59s

Size: 13 Gbytes Packets: 221136977 Link Utilization: 84 Mbps

- Link Utilization
- Active Connections
- Breakdown by Protocol
- Breakdown by Application
- Packet size distribution

Available Collection Dates

- February 6th, 2004
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- February 4th, 2004
- February 3rd, 2004
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- August 4th, 2003
- July 1st, 2003
- April 7th, 2003
- November 23rd, 2002
- October 9th, 2002
- August 5th, 2002
- April 19th, 2002
- February 3rd, 2002
- November 8th, 2001
- September 5th, 2001
- July 24th, 2001
- August 9th, 2000

San Jose -- sj-21

Link Speed : OC-48 (2.5 Gbps)
Origin: NULL
Destination : NULL

Start time: Fri, Feb 6 2004 17:00:19 GMT
End time: Fri, Feb 6 2004 20:00:18 GMT
Duration: 2h 59m 58s

Size: 12 Gbytes Packets: 203065492 Link Utilization: 42 Mbps

- Link Utilization
- Active Connections
- Breakdown by Protocol
- Breakdown by Application
- Packet size distribution

San Jose -- sj-25

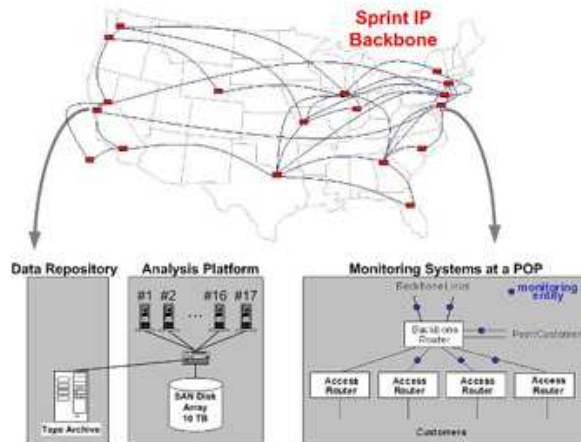
Link Speed : OC-48 (2.5 Gbps)
Origin: NULL
Destination : NULL

Notice anything interesting here? Link utilization for these links is minimal. These OC48 links can support upto 2.5 gigabits/sec but the utilization is barely more than 100megabits persecond. And the storage needed for these traces is minimal as well.

But do we have to monitor all that traffic? If we look at **the application breakdown**, we see that about 50% is http traffic. If we add email, the total is about 60%. That means that we're looking at doing **deep packet inspection**, etc. on only about 50 or 60 megabits/ sec per node. You can do that with an off-the-shelf \$1000 rack server and software from any one of the dozens of companies that specialize in this. Storage is just as cheap.

Step 3: Check existing best practices. I found a little PowerPoint slide that Amogh Dhamdhere from Georgia Tech did, illustrating **the Sprint IPMON architecture**. (You may have noticed a sprint node is one of the top twenty Sprintlink1239 in the choke point diagram^[2].)

IPMON



Monitoring like this for research motives has been going on for years. Remember, when TCP/IP was first developed, security was not the issue, survivability was the issue, and so monitoring was necessary to develop success metrics. More recently, **packet** inspection techniques have been applied by the major ISPs to thwart Denial of Service attacks, worms, and so on.

So, we know where the chokepoints to monitor are (step 1). We're know how much capacity we need to monitor the checkpoints (step 2). And we know that there's proven technology to monitor the checkpoints (step 3). On the cheap.

Part 4: If we had such a system in place, what would we monitor?

So how does one spot a DoS attack or worm? Simply by recognizing a pattern or signature in the traffic. What is the difference between a malicious pattern and a certain set of words in an email or an http flow? To the computer, no difference. To humans, semantics (or semiotics, depending on your philosophy.) Somebody decides which patterns of words are malicious or evil. Hey! I wonder who does that?

Next up: What shall we do with all this data? Munging on the cheap.

Corrente thanks alert reader philosophicus for the analysis. We think he puts all the pieces together in an original and interesting way. (And of course the crazy, *not* indented stuff is all Lambert, who may, or may not, have fully recovered from **his fever**.) Thanks also to Leah for edits and holding the fort. It takes a village to stomp a weasel.

UPDATE: Welcome, **Daou Report** readers.

UPDATE: Note well that philosophicus is defining the scale and scope for this surveillance system, and concludes it can be done with \$1000 off-the-shelf rack servers. *This system doesn't have to be **Echelon*** at all. That's old news. In fact, since the Bush administration likes to bypass existing institutions, it probably is

something entirely new.

UPDATE: Welcome [Suburban Guerilla](#) readers.

UPDATE: Welcome, [Crooked Timber](#) readers.

UPDATE Happy Holidays, [Heretik](#) readers.

NOTES

[1] Why do I (Lambert) say “treason” as opposed to (say) an impeachable offense? Here’s why. The constiution defines treason [Article III, section 3](#) as ” Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them....” Now, as Bush is fond of informing us, there’s a “new kind of war.” And Bush is waging *informational warfare* ([farmer](#); [lambert](#)) against the United States to destroy the Constitution, whether by eliminating the checks and balances carefully designed by the founders to limit executive power, or by destroying unenumerated rights retained by the people, such as the right to privacy. Who said the new kind of war was fought only with guns?

Now, I’m not a lawyer, and I doubt very much that there’s been a lot of work done on levying *informational* War against the United States. But let’s try a hypothetical. Suppose that NSA’s technical abilities are [being reported accurately](#). Bottom line: NSA can read anything, including what’s on a drive or being typed. (Maybe Rockefeller knew what he was doing when he *handwrote* his note to Cheney, eh?) How would that capability, if exercised, or even potential, square with [Article 1, section 5](#):

Each House shall keep a Journal of its Proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such Parts as may in their Judgment require Secrecy...

It wouldn’t, would it? The executive would be treating Congress as a foreign adversary, as opposed to a co-equal branch of government. Which seems to be a pretty good description of what’s going on.

[2] Via [Sprint](#):

We have built a monitoring system that meets our goal, and have created a measurement and analysis infrastructure capable of collecting GPS-synchronized **packet** traces and routing information, and analyzing terabytes of data.

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Bush warrantless domestic surveillance

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...and So Kansas Goes Bye-bye

Submitted by [kelley b](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 08:45.

Beautiful post, Lambert.

Let's show everybody just how far down the rabbit-hole goes.

*No Hell below us
Above us, only sky*

» [Reply](#)

Beyond Awareness

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 09:45.

Thank you for that clear presentation.

Mr. Bush repeatedly used "prevent" as a third term when discussing "monitor" and "detect" during his press conference. How does it fit with the other two?

What is he preventing? His answer will be "terrorism," but the question is What actions or communications is he preventing? (Distorting? Diverting?) What has he done, what is he doing now, and what would he like to do?

» [Reply](#)

What He Has Done, What He Is Doing Now, And What He Wants

Submitted by kelley b on Thu, 2005-12-22 11:14.

There's that shredding the Constitution thing for absolute neo feudal overlordship. But let's table that, because we're all aware of it. Those of us here with the witch-sight, that is.

The key to this is the Darth Rumsfeld/ Cheneyburton/ Bu\$hCo penchant for stealing as much money as they can get.

The **Echelon**/ Carnivore/ TIA system has lucrative uses.

Imagine knowing **everything** your competitors are doing.

I imagine this is the main fear driving the sudden Republican/ conservatarian opposition to Dear Leader. The faction(s) of the Company that don't hold the keys to TIA realize they have quite possibly been checkmated in their own quest for Ultimate Cosmic Power. That's gotta hurt.

*No Hell below us
Above us, only sky*

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Just Tracking DNS Requests

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 13:02.

Just tracking DNS requests at the root servers would go a long way toward creation of a social connections network analysis. Remember that Ray Ozzie's Groove was working on this and at one point signed a large

contract with an unknown government agency.

Waterhouse

» [Reply](#)

And Kansas Asks

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 13:37.

but he is still for saving fetuses right?

ppoo

» [Reply](#)

You're Just Not That Important

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 13:45.

why the hell would anyone care what you're doing?

besides, clinton "broke the law" by employing spy-satelites over US soil after the oklahoma city bombing, and I didn't hear a peep out of you motherfuckers.

once again, it's only bad when the republicans do it. as long as you have that mindset, you'll continue to be marginalized.

» [Reply](#)

Speaking Of Treason.....

Submitted by [Nudnik \(not verified\)](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 13:50.

In the past few months there have been leaks of CIA "black" prisons, renditions - including tail numbers of CIA planes, and finally the NSA's monitoring of communications between people in the US and suspected terrorists outside the US. All of these which could be very harmful to US national security.

I'm wondering when all of you, who were so exercised about the revelation of a CIA analyst's name, will be as outraged by these leaks and demand investigations and arrests of the leakers. Or is it that some national security leaks are ok, while others are not? The hypocrisy of the Left never fails to astound.

» [Reply](#)

I Love You, Pansypoo

Submitted by [lambert](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 14:04.

But we'll never impeach Bush unless we stay on topic. Yes?

Ceterum censeo, Bush delenda est!

» [Reply](#)

Thank You American Lefty Bloggers

Submitted by Akbar+Jeff (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 14:11.

I think I speak for my fellow jihadists and sleeper cell mates when I say that before this week we had no idea the US government was monitoring our phone and internet communications. The American Left has provided us, as it often does, an invaluable service.

I probably shouldn't even be writing this now. In response to these new and shocking revelations we will be transitioning to communicating exclusively with carrier pigeons.

As is our custom, we will be rewarding the lefty bloggers at Corrente with a variety of free gifts such as:

- Hizbullah Headbands, great for the gym or street protests
- "I Love Osama" totebags, convenient for holiday shopping
- "Death To America" Beer Coolers, perfect for barbecues and fishin'

Merry Christmas and Thanks Again,

Akbar + Jeff

» [Reply](#)

I Can't Believe Bandar Bu\$h Never Told You, Akbar

Submitted by kelley b on Thu, 2005-12-22 14:26.

The Ketchum crew must have been on shift that day. See what I mean about deciding which contractor has the keys to Carnivore?

I hope you and Jeff and nuddikins and all the boys at DynCorp have a good Festivus this year.

*No Hell below us
Above us, only sky*

» [Reply](#)

I Think Akbar+Jeff Are Being Sarcastic

Submitted by shystee on Thu, 2005-12-22 14:33.

The terra-ists would have to be complete morons if they didn't assume the US government was monitoring their phone and internet communications.

By extension anyone who thinks the terra-ists would be that stupid is kind of um, dense too.

» [Reply](#)

I See

Submitted by Nudnik (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 14:40.

I see.....so some leaks are ok. And of course, whether the leak is ok or not is determined by the leaker.

» [Reply](#)

Ha! Take THAT Shitheads!

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 14:42.

Senate reaches Patriot Act deal

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (right). File photo

Senator Frist said he would not "let the Patriot Act die"

The US Senate has passed a six-month extension of the anti-terrorist law known as the Patriot Act.

thank god even the dems can show a bit of common sense now and then....

oh, and shystee, the problem isn't that they may "find out" that they're being monitored. ofcourse they'd assume they are. the point is that now they know HOW they're being monitored. as long as they assumed that the government needed a warrant to tap their phones, they had an extra degree of comfort. they thought they'd be ok as long as they switched phones every couple days. now they know better, and will be even more difficult to track. so, yeah, thanks again eh?

» [Reply](#)

What A Moron

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 14:48.

try to keep it simple for Nudnink: V. Plame wasn't doing anything illegal when her cover was leaked by the white house. You try to figure the rest of it out for yourself Nudnink.

and while your at it Nudlink why don't you call for some more of those investigations into "black" prisons and renditions yourself (you can even demand the arrest of the Italian Parliament) and so....investigations... sure, Bring it on!

» [Reply](#)

Paid Trollies Are Hilarious

Submitted by kelly b on Thu, 2005-12-22 14:55.

Chances are this really *is* the first time Akbar & nuddikins were able to understand how the internet works.

People have been posting about this kind of stuff *worldwide* since that senescent minion of Morgoth, John Poindexter, got booted off the government farm by Darth Rumsfeld for shooting off his mouth about how they planned to take over the world.

And I got news for you, Akbar: *guess the nationalities of many of the people who helped put this together*, in the USA and abroad.

Saudi. Pakistani. Indian. Chinese. Russian. German. British. Even *French!*

Again, about the only people in the world who don't appreciate this are the *American* people.

[The 30%](#) that continue to support Dear Leader, anyway.

*No Hell below us
Above us, only sky*

» [Reply](#)

Illegal

Submitted by Nudnik (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 15:04.

Your argument is inane.

It has not been determined that the WH was doing anything illegal with this monitoring.

What we do know is that disclosing this monitoring was the result of a leak of classified information. So when are you guys going to get upset about it? Or are some leaks of classified information ok?

» [Reply](#)

Ofcourse They Are

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 15:06.

compromising national security is a-ok, as long as it makes the republicans look bad.

didn't you get the memo?

» [Reply](#)

Undercover

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 15:07.

i am terrorist cell. hide out in murica. get helmet head haircut. have teeth whitened. join republican party. wear bowtie to functions. learn many new dirty tricks. GOP! God is great! GOP! - no problem.

» [Reply](#)

Inane Indeed

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 15:15.

Your argument is inane. It has not been determined that the WH was doing anything illegal with this monitoring.

No, your answer is inane. Where above does it say that the WH was doing anything illegal? Answer that for me DimNik.

It says that V. Plame wasn't doing anything illegal when **she** was outted by the WH. But that's it. Reading comprehension Dimlink... practice, you'll get a hold of it one day.

Investigations... bring em on! we'll find out if anyone was doing anything illegal.

» [Reply](#)

Comprehension

Submitted by [Nudnik \(not verified\)](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 15:37.

The implication of this phrase *Plame wasn't doing anything illegal when her cover was leaked by the white house*, in the context of the argument, is that the WH was doing something illegal and therefore its ok to "out" them.

» [Reply](#)

Visitors, Meet Our Pet Trolls

Submitted by [shystee](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 16:08.

We keep them in a cage in the basement/dungeon of the Mighty Corrente Building where we poke them with ideas and facts that challenge their assumptions.

We can usually tell which posts are most threatening to their Warped, Fantasyland World View by how loudly they screech.

Strangely, the gate of their cage is unlocked so they're free to come and go as they please. I'm starting to think they enjoy the poking.

So, if you have lots of time to waste, feel free to engage them. Or not. The doors of the Mighty Corrente Building are open to all.

» [Reply](#)

Hrm

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 16:11.

You obviously don't even know what the word "troll" refers to.

How do you expect people to take your claims about "ideas and facts" seriously?

» [Reply](#)

No Answer?

Submitted by [Nudnik \(not verified\)](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 16:13.

And still no one has been able to answer my question: are some leaks of classified material ok and others are not?

» [Reply](#)

Let's Not Feed Our Pets, Today

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 16:15.

Normally, I engaged with our pets; but today let's not feed them. The topic is too important.

» [Reply](#)

Good Work

Submitted by [the cubist](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 16:18.

Well done, lambert and philosophicus. You know you've hit on a truth they're trying to conceal when you attract three paid boobies to tie up the response threads.

“Arrest the Police State!”

» [Reply](#)

Are Some Leaks Of Classified Material Ok And Others Are Not?

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 16:47.

The short answer is YES, if the release of classified material is EXPOSING illegal and/or treasonous acts/policies - hence, the information is necessary to expose the criminals and begin a judicial prosecution.

If a person or a group classify information simply to keep secret the fact they are acting illegally, it is not wrong to leak those facts because the leak is bringing to light those crimes. It's a sort of 'greater good' argument, with a dash of 'civil disobedience'.

So, leaking Plame's identity was WRONG because she was not acting illegally or improperly - it was a campaign (unsuccessful) to discredit Joseph Wilson. Leaking the info on CIA black sites, and extraordinary renditions, and now Bush's illegal and unconstitutional data mining is RIGHT because it is exposing crimes, that MUST be investigated and prosecuted to the full extent of the law, as a country that 'respects the rule of law' must, as we are repeatedly told the U.S. is.

Clear enough for you, Nudnik?

» [Reply](#)

Plame Is OT

Submitted by [lambert](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 17:11.

Please don't feed the trolls.

Ceterum censeo, Bush delenda est!

» [Reply](#)

Typical Wingnut Logic

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 17:19.

The implication of this phrase

Oh, hahaha!...Pretty lame Limpnik — you can concoct all the “implications” you like. be my guest. but the phrase says exactly what it says despite whatever made up rhetorical squirm you'd like to attach to it. Your not fooling anyone but yourself.

» [Reply](#)

Amazing

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 17:21.

Leaking the info on CIA black sites, and extraordinary renditions, and now Bush's illegal and unconstitutional data mining is RIGHT because it is exposing crimes, that MUST be investigated and prosecuted to the full extent of the law, as a country that 'respects the rule of law' must, as we are repeatedly told the U.S. is.

You do realize that you just totally contradicted the other anonymous, don't you? The dumbass who tried chewing-out nudink based on "comprehension"?

Your argument has no merit anyway. Exposing an illegal program might be seen as the right thing to do IF you could be fairly certain that it IS illegal, AND if you attempted to expose it through the system first. There is absolutely NO excuse for leaking classified info TO THE MEDIA, when you can't even be assured that any laws were broken, AND when you haven't first attempted to rectify the situation within the system. So, in other words, you should be just as outraged about the leaks in these two incidents as you are about the leak in Plame's case.

The fact that you're not speaks volumes about your hypocrisy.

» [Reply](#)

Interesting

Submitted by Nudnik (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 17:22.

Funny, most legal scholars and lawyers, as well as all courts have stated unequivocally that monitoring communications of terrorist suspects is NOT illegal. So then we should prosecute whoever leaked this info.

» [Reply](#)

More Actually Interesting Information

Submitted by shystee on Thu, 2005-12-22 17:42.

We now interrupt the wingnut screeching to bring you some actually interesting and informative content:

Hannibal at Ars Technica via [Crooked Timber](#):

[Why computer-automated mass surveillance is a bad idea.](#)

But aside from my general knee-jerk anti-government reactions against this program, there's an even deeper criticism that can be leveled against casting such a wide, computer-automated net. The problem is not that such large-scale industrial fishing invariably catches a few dolphins along with the tuna, but that between 99.999 and 100 percent of what you're going to get is dolphin.

snip

Targeted human intelligence has always been and will always be the best way to sort the sharks from the guppies (to change fish metaphors). **Government money invested in much less intrusive and much less defense contractor-friendly programs like training more Arabists and developing more “human assets” in the field will be orders of magnitude more effective than mass surveillance could ever be.** Blunt instruments like airport facial recognition software and random subway bag searches produce much more noise than they do signal, and any engineer or computer scientist worth his or her salt will tell you that an intelligent, targeted, low-tech approach beats a brute-force high-tech approach every time.

Hannibal also has more on the parsing and the techie stuff: [The new technology at the root of the NSA wiretap scandal](#)

» [Reply](#)

Great Article, But It's Talking About Voice

Submitted by [lambert](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 17:49.

And reverse engineering the system out of the lies they tell, it's not voice they're doing. It's Internet. See the discussion of “wiretap” and the Patriot Act.

Ceterum censeo, Bush delenda est!

» [Reply](#)

True, But

Submitted by [shystee](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 18:38.

I think the point about massive “wide net” surveillance being a bad idea applies to Internet surveillance as well.

» [Reply](#)

Plenty Of Bad Ideas Get Implemented, Right?

Submitted by [lambert](#) on Thu, 2005-12-22 22:02.

What really worries me about this data is that, unlike voice data, this data is, as it were, fungible. This data, unless encrypted, is text, HTML, all eminently readable by many, many systems (including, say, your employer's...). Sure, they would never do that, um,

And look again at the Patriot Act as written—there's nothing to stop these guys from capturing CONTENT, as well as the addresses.

And they are legally mandated to keep this data; they can't throw it away, even if the data is about someone entirely innocent. See [The Bush Panopticon](#).

Ceterum censeo, Bush delenda est!

» Reply

Feeding The Trolls For The Hell Of It

Submitted by Taikongren (not verified) on Thu, 2005-12-22 22:37.

...Exposing an illegal program might be seen as the right thing to do IF you could be fairly certain that it IS illegal, AND if you attempted to expose it through the system first. There is absolutely NO excuse for leaking classified info TO THE MEDIA, when you can't even be assured that any laws were broken, AND when you haven't first attempted to rectify the situation within the system...

The program came to be announced because it looks very illegal. If not to me, then at least to congress (led by Republicans) who are about to have hearings on this. And what system could be used to expose it first?

Funny, most legal scholars and lawyers, as well as all courts have stated unequivocally that monitoring communications of terrorist suspects is NOT illegal. So then we should prosecute whoever leaked this info.

Yes, but some scholars say that spying on citizens is very illegal. What this article actually is saying is that this system spies on everyone who uses the internet. Every email scanned.

We now interrupt the wingnut screeching to bring you some actually interesting and informative content:
Hannibal at Ars Technica via Crooked Timber:
Why computer-automated mass surveillance is a bad idea.[...]

Good point here. But no one "on the left" has said that the Bush administration is doing a particularly good job at tracking terrorist threats against the US, or that these illegal methods being used (torture, illegal wire-taps, the entire DHS...) do anything effective in keeping us safe.

BTW, I don't believe this is really just about internet surveillance as the original article suggests. Are not voice calls today routed through data-servers in much the same way internet traffic is?

» Reply

Hey Nuddie, I Would Be

Submitted by hobson on Thu, 2005-12-22 23:18.

Hey Nuddie,

I would be happy to have an investigation into the whole program including who leaked the info. But something tells me the administration is not anxious to have this whole issue revealed any more than it has been.

Besides, even with all this technological ability, it took how many years

to find out who leaked Plame's name? The problem w/Bushco is they don't know who a real enemy is. If they did, we would have seen arrests and convictions of the supposed 6000 sleeper cells lying in wait after Sept 11th.

» [Reply](#)

Considering How Well

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Fri, 2005-12-23 01:50.

Freeh did with puter and the CIA with surveillance BEFORE 9/11, all they are going to do is build bigger and thicker haystacks, while ignoring that mid-eastern men seem to be getting TEMP jobs at chem plants. because it's gonna be that fucking easy to do it under the ears or the returns.

it won't keep us safe and the lefties are gonna be muted so the reurds can have another cold war while destroying america from the inside.

» [Reply](#)

Treason Is Yr Only Hope Morons

Submitted by [professor-rat \(not verified\)](#) on Fri, 2005-12-23 06:36.

Treason for want of a better word is good. Treason works. Treason expresses the finest and the best of the evolutionary spirit.

But I see you have a lot to learn about treason so here goes nothing. Tim May's Cryptoanarchy. Wired article - PROMIS, Jim Bell's 'assassination politics', PAM or policy analysis markets, Golden Shield, Rotten Dead Pool, Stiffs.com
killthepresident@buttdarling.org, proffr@fuckmicrosoft.com

Is our children learning?

» [Reply](#)

Simple

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Fri, 2005-12-23 07:47.

Treason.... its just reason, with more trees.

» [Reply](#)

Followup:

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Fri, 2005-12-23 07:51.

plant a forest.

» [Reply](#)

Ooooo..rat Dood

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Fri, 2005-12-23 08:07.

like wow prof rat dood....that is all so like wild man. Those links don't even link to anything! very heavy! And a Wired article too! Oooooo
Wired.... What a groovy magazine.

Christ stupid...Learn to insert a link moron - or give it up will you. Fuckin dork.

» [Reply](#)

Very Technical But Concise

Submitted by [cp \(not verified\)](#) on Fri, 2005-12-23 09:09.

Excellent insight. Is there a site that is dedicated to parsing statements to the media?

One question: With all the focus on the terrorists use of technology to achieve their goal, wouldn't USPS, FedEx, UPS, etc. be more undetectable and more difficult to monitor? Would'nt they be using that now? A mail store is fairly anonymous. Or for that matter, any post office.

» [Reply](#)

If You Recall, There

Submitted by [logical lawyer \(not verified\)](#) on Fri, 2005-12-23 10:29.

If you recall, there wasn't really much of an internet at the time that clinton did whatever he did. Remember compuserv? Prodigy? and of course AOL?

And, while i am sure you are most unimportant, some of use have friends and family that are important.

I never liked clinton, ever. I always thought he was a "do whatever he felt like" kind of guy, and find a convenient excuse later. The one thing he was not was liberal, and it is about time that republicans and right wingers get that straight. Progressives my have voted for him, but that was an issue of the lesser of two evils for us.

The only issue I can see that clinton could be construed as liberal on, are the issues of gays in the military, gay rights generally and contraception and woman's rights. That is the reason the democrats lost the blue collar votes.

Anyway, find a new "liberal" boogiemer, because a real liberal wouldn't have done the things clinton did.

» [Reply](#)

Monitoring Vs. Detection

Submitted by [zencomix \(not verified\)](#) on Fri, 2005-12-23 11:52.

They love to play their little word games...but how can you detect something if you aren't monitoring in the first place?

» [Reply](#)

Tor Recommended On SlashDot

Submitted by [lambert](#) on Fri, 2005-12-23 12:28.

[SlashDot](#).

[Tor.](#)

Ceterum censeo, Bush delenda est!

» [Reply](#)

:D

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Fri, 2005-12-23 14:47.

Anyway, find a new "liberal" boogiemer, because a real liberal wouldn't have done the things Clinton did.

And a real communist wouldn't have done what Stalin did....

And a real hero wouldn't have done what John Kerry did....

And a real president wouldn't have done what Saddam did....

And a real Muslim wouldn't have done what Osama did....

Right. Get a clue. The Democrat ideal might be a nice fluffy-happy one, but in the real world it doesn't work that way. Ideals fall apart when they're forced to confront real-life situations, that's why the anti-war protests were ignored, it's why communism fell apart, and it's why there's no such thing as a "real" (according to you) Democrat politician. All those things are based on idealistic concepts which have no basis in reality.

» [Reply](#)

Wingnuts

Submitted by The Raven (not verified) on Sat, 2005-12-24 14:22.

They never fail to amaze me.

You point out to Mr. SUV-driving Monday-morning quarterback, Mr. I Support the Troops, and Mr. I'm a God-fearin', church-goin', Chamber-of-Commerce Rotary Republican that Bush and Cheney are screening and monitoring their every move, tapping their phones and bugging their computers, and what do they say?

"I don't think Bush did anything illegal..."

Worse, they want to shoot the messenger. But here's a bright note: Today the editors of Barron's used the 'I-word' in an editorial. Barron's. That's right. Barron's.

Barron's.

» [Reply](#)

Wingnut Shuffle

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Sat, 2005-12-24 15:41.

And a real communist wouldn't have done what Stalin did....

[like operate a vast network of state sponsored propaganda media at home and abroad, instruct his secret police and intelligence service to

spy on his own people, shift the nations resources to the expansion of a giant omnipotent all powerful military industrial complex...etc.]

And a real hero wouldn't have done what John Kerry did...

[real heroes like AWOL Bush, Cheney, Pigman Limbaugh, Thawn Hannity, Loofahboy O'Reilly et. al CHICKENHAWKS!]

And a real president wouldn't have done what Saddam did....

[like operate secret prisons, rape and torture rooms, renditions, depending only on the advice and direction of a small coterie of likeminded close personal friends and advisors, spying on his own people, ...]

And a real Muslim wouldn't have done what Osama did....

[but Dana Rohrabacker and his "freedom fighter" buddies would]

Right. Get a clue **[accuse the other of doing exactly what you are doing yourself]**. The Democrat[ic] ideal might be a nice fluffy-happy one **[like flower tossing and cake walks, mission accomplished!?**], but in the real **[inside the utopian bubble]** world it doesn't work that way. Ideals fall apart when they're forced to confront real-life situations **[WMDs!, social security privatization shams...gerrymandering and money laundering scams..etc.. but propaganda, PR and marketing schemes correct the situation and make the bubble a happy place]**, that's why the anti-war protests were ignored **[except by the millions of real people around the real world who participated in the anti-war protests]**, it's why communism fell apart **[Chinese govt spys on its own citizens internet and tele-communications. Millions of US jobs outsourced to China by US corporate interests]**, and it's why there's no such thing as a "real" (according to you) **["we create our own realities"]** democrat politician **[only the Right-Wing party can provide you with a true Dear Leader, Dear Fuhrer, Dear Monarch]** All those things are based on idealistic **[utopian radical right wing]** concepts which have no basis in reality **[a real democratic society]**.

» [Reply](#)

Oh, There Are Wingnut Dances? I Did Not Know That

Submitted by [lambert](#) on Sat, 2005-12-24 16:12.

I knew there were wingnut songs, in fact, we've even written a few, and special wingnut hand gestures, and salutes, and shibboleths, but I didn't know there were wingnut dances!

The wingnut tango?

The wingnut two-step?

The wingnut funky chicken?

I'm a nerd, so I don't dance—what are the steps?

Ceterum censeo, Bush delenda est!

[» Reply](#)

Put Your Right Foot Forward

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on Sat, 2005-12-24 17:29.

put your right foot forward put your left foot back flap your arms up and down and go quack quack quack - cluck cluck cluck - honk honk honk - do the funky chickenhawk goosestep strut.

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