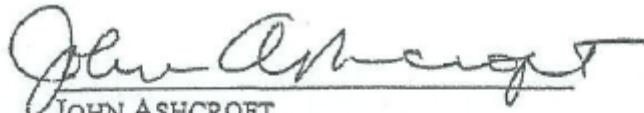# ASHCROFT, COMEY, GOLDSMITH, AND BAKER: "ALL" IS THE "BEST" READING OF "RELEVANT"

Towards the end of the Mem
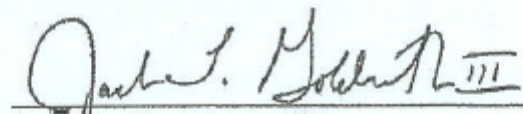

JOHN ASHCROFT
Attorney General
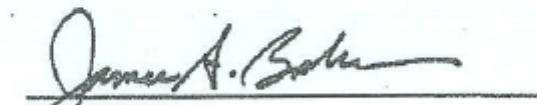
JAMES B. COMEY
Deputy Attorney General

JACK L. GOLDSMITH III
*Assistant Attorney General,
Office of Legal Counsel*

JAMES A. BAKER
Counsel for Intelligence Policy

orandum of Law in support of the Internet dragnet — which was signed by those guys ——-> — DOJ makes a claim that its reading of "relevant" to mean "almost all" was the best possible reading.

> Here, by contrast, reading the term "relevant" to permit the collection of this critical information during wartime is a construction rooted in the text that requires no stretching of the ordinary meaning of the terms of the statute at all. In fact, for all the reasons outlined above, interpreting section 402 to authorize the collection the Government has requested in the best

This is why you should not have secret courts.

I get making an aggressive push to authorize dragnet surveillance.

I get mining old and foreign dictionaries to come up with a definition that suits your needs.

But after you've made your best ditch effort to stretch the meaning of words, secretly, beyond all recognition, don't then, secretly, pat yourself on the back pretending that wasn't the game you just pulled.

But hey. Who's the chump? After all, we now *know* that Misters Ashcroft, Comey, Goldsmith, and Baker pulled this off.

Yet no one is making any effort to put the English language back on some kind of sane footing. Nothing in any of the "reform" efforts before Congress attempts to put sanity back into the word "relevant."