CHURCH COMMITTEE, THE BUSH II VERSION?

Because it wouldn't be a badly corrupt attempt to install a permanent Republican majority without a Church Committee to clean up afterwards…

Tim Shorrock, author of Spies for Hire, has a story in Salon describing a proposed second Church Committee.

> Now, in the twilight of the Bush presidency, a movement is stirring in Washington for a sweeping new inquiry into White House malfeasance that would be modeled after the famous Church Committee congressional investigation of the 1970s.
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> While reporting on domestic surveillance under Bush, Salon obtained a detailed memo proposing such an inquiry, and spoke with several sources involved in recent discussions around it on Capitol Hill. The memo was written by a former senior member of the original Church Committee; the discussions have included aides to top House Democrats, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Judiciary Committee chairman John Conyers, and until now have not been disclosed publicly.
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> [snip]
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> "If we know this much about torture, rendition, secret prisons and warrantless wiretapping despite the administration's attempts to stonewall, then imagine what we don't know," says a senior Democratic congressional aide who is familiar with the proposal and has been involved in several high-profile congressional investigations.

Notably, Shorrock describes discussions to investigate Bush's surveillance programs—and their antecedents in the Clinton and Reagan Administration.

The article also provides names and dates that seem to corroborate the earlier Radar story on Main Core. Shorrock explains that William Hamilton, the President of Inslaw—the maker of PROMIS, a criminal investigations database—claiming that the Reagan Administration just gave PROMIS to NSA and CIA to use for intelligence purposes. Hamilton also describes being told by a US intelligence official in 1992 and an NSA official in 1995 that the government was using PROMIS to search the Main Core database—a database of all those perceived to be domestic threats to national security within the US.

This article still doesn't clinch the case that the biggest problem with the illegal wiretap program is that it used the Main Core database—listing people perceived to be domestic enemies—to develop target lists for wiretapping. Nevertheless, it provides a lot more data points, while at the same time hinting that there might be will to actually investigate this mess.