

# FEINGOLD (AND ACLU): I TOLD CONGRESS SO

I'll have more on this shortly. But if I were Feingold, my statement about the abuse of the warrantless wiretapping program would have been even stronger.

Since 2001, I have spent a lot of time in the Intelligence Committee, the Judiciary Committee, and on the floor of the Senate bringing attention to both the possible and actual effects of legislation that has dangerously expanded the power of the executive branch to spy on innocent Americans.

Despite these efforts, Congress insisted on enacting several measures including the USA PATRIOT Act, the Protect America Act, and the FISA Amendments Act, embarking on a tragic retreat from the principles that had governed the sensitive area of government surveillance for the previous three decades. Congress must get to work fixing these laws that have eroded the privacy and civil liberties of law-abiding citizens. In addition, the administration should declassify certain aspects of how these authorities have been used so that the American people can better understand their scope and impact. [my emphasis]

Update: Caroline Fredrickson of the ACLU engages in some well-earned "I told you so" speech, too.

"Congress was repeatedly warned that this type of abuse would be the obvious outcome of passing the FISA Amendments Act," said Caroline Fredrickson, Director of the ACLU Washington Legislative Office. "Congressional leadership promised after this law's passage that it would be reexamined

along with the Patriot Act. It's time to fulfill that promise and restore the checks and balances of our surveillance system. Warrantless surveillance has no place in an America we can be proud of. These revelations make it clear that Congress must now make a commitment to rein in government surveillance."