

WHY SEND ANDY CARD AND FRANCES FRAGOS TOWNSEND TO REBUT RIDGE?

Mary reminded me that I wanted to comment on the Bush Administration's response to Tom Ridge allegation—or rather, confirmation—that the terror alert system was politicized. Politico tells us that when the were asked about Ridge's allegation they—apparently all of them—referred reporters to Frances Fragos Townsend and Andy Card.

Ridge did not respond to numerous requests for comment from POLITICO and a number of former top political and national security officials within the Bush administration declined to respond to Ridge, referring POLITICO to Card and Townsend.

Don't you think that a little odd? That "a number of former top political and national security officials" would **all** tell reporters to speak to Townsend and Card? Particularly since, as Card ~~Townsend~~ tells it, he didn't know Ridge was writing a book?

"I didn't even know Tom was even really writing a book," said Card.

So what you're left with is Card claiming he never saw Bush overriding the decisions of the National Security Council and Department of Homeland Security, which is different than saying those in NSC didn't push Ridge towards certain decisions. You've got Townsend, the woman whom the Bush Administration didn't read into the warrantless wiretap program even though it was a core function of her job, claiming that (as with Jim Comey) she never saw any pressure exerted on Ridge.

“Never in my experience did I see any political influence exerted on the cabinet secretary.”

And you’ve got Andy Card, the guy who, seven years ago, was just rolling out the September new product, claiming the Bush Administration never let politics influence national security decisions.

“We went over backwards repeatedly and with great discipline to make sure politics did not influence any national security and homeland security decisions,” former White House chief of staff Andy Card told POLITICO. “The clear instructions were to make sure politics never influenced anything.”

If this is the best the Dead-Enders can do to rebut Tom Ridge, I expect Ridge will be having a long and very profitable book tour. Because this response is simply not credible.

Update: Card/Townsend error fixed.