

161,948 SARS BECOME 103 INVESTIGATIONS AND 5 ARRESTS

The WaPo rolled out one last story to shore up their “Top Secret America” Pulitzer bid before the end of the year. I agree with Glenn’s overall assessment of this latest installment:

As was true of the first several installments of their “Top Secret America,” there aren’t any particularly new revelations for those paying attention to such matters, but the picture it paints – and the fact that it is presented in an establishment organ such as *The Washington Post* – is nonetheless valuable.

But I did want to point out what I find to be the most valuable detail in the story:

As of December, there were 161,948 suspicious activity files in the classified Guardian database, mostly leads from FBI headquarters and state field offices. Two years ago, the bureau set up an unclassified section of the database so state and local agencies could send in suspicious incident reports and review those submitted by their counterparts in other states. Some 890 state and local agencies have sent in 7,197 reports so far.

Of those, 103 have become full investigations that have resulted in at least five arrests, the FBI said. There have been no convictions yet. An additional 365 reports have added information to ongoing cases. [my emphasis]

That, as much as the skeptical comments from

true experts like Philip Mudd and Charles Allen included in the story, really lays the stark inefficiency of this entire network: Less than .1% of the Suspicious Activity Reports have resulted in any real investigation, and just 5% of those investigations—a teeny fraction of the total—have resulted in any arrest.

So I hope no one actually believes this effort is an effective means to root out terrorism, however that gets defined.

Which would suggest the larger purpose for all this surveillance of private citizens is something else. Partly, as the WaPo points out, to use to combat more pedestrian crimes. But also to create the Total Information Awareness database that Americans once rejected soundly.

But, as Glenn points out, whereas Americans objected to such an expansive invasion of the privacy in the months after 9/11, they now welcome it.

Many Americans plead with their Government in unison: *we demand that you know everything about us but that you keep us ignorant about what you do and punish those who reveal it to us.*

Often, this kind of oppressive Surveillance State has to be forcibly imposed on a resistant citizenry, but much of the frightened American citizenry – led by most transparency-hating media figures – has been trained with an endless stream of fear-mongering to demand that they be subjected to more and more of it.

All the better to distract the people from the real threat posed by the banksters and the others dismantling the middle class and our democracy.