

# WHY DIDN'T WE ASK CHINA TO FIND SCOOTER LIBBY'S MISSING PLAME LEAK E-MAILS?

WSJ has an article reporting on the purportedly Chinese-launched GMail hacks that targeted top White House officials.

The article is interesting not because it claims the Chinese want to hack top officials. Who do you think they'd be most interested in hacking?

Rather, the article is interesting for some of the implications bandied about in the article. For example, Darrell Issa and CREW's Melanie Sloan suggest the only reason the Chinese would hack the GMail accounts of White House officials is if those people were improperly conducting official business on GMail.

"If all White House officials were following rules prohibiting the use of personal email for official business, there would simply be no sensitive information to find," said Rep. Darrell Issa, Republican chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, and a frequent thorn in the Obama administration's side.

"Unfortunately, we know that not everyone at the White House follows those rules and that creates an unnecessary risk."

Melanie Sloan, executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a watchdog group, said the hacking "suggests China believes government officials are using their personal accounts for official business, because I doubt they were looking for their weekend plans or a babysitter's

schedule. Presumably, the Chinese wouldn't have done this if they weren't getting something."

More plausible is the suggestion that the Chinese were phishing for information they could then use to compromise other accounts.

Stewart Baker, a former homeland security official in the Bush administration, said he suspects the ultimate goal of the hacking may have been to use the email accounts as a stepping stone to penetrate the officials' home computers.

"If you can compromise that machine, you may well be able to access the communications they are having with the office," said Mr. Baker.

I'm most interested in all the assumptions here, that a bunch of Chinese hackers know precisely how the White House email system works. If that's true, why haven't we asked the Chinese to turn over the emails OVP deleted from the first days of the Plame leak investigation? And why haven't we asked the Chinese to turn over all those emails hidden on the RNC's server? Maybe they can also help us find all of John Yoo's torture emails?

Given how common it is, these days, for top officials to just delete their most inconvenient emails, I'm thinking American citizens ought to invite Chinese hackers to help us reclaim all the official records our overlords try to destroy.