

LINKS, 8/2/11

Justice and Injustice

Amanda Terkel describes how the state-level budget cuts are putting courts and justice out of the reach of Americans.

Dahlia Lithwick transcribes highlights of the remarkable panel she moderated over the weekend.

The Whistleblower—the trailer for which is above—opens on Friday. Nick Schwellenbach provides background on the story it tells—how DOD Contractor Dyncorp was involved in human trafficking—here.

The other day I noted that former Director of ISOO, Bill Leonard, wanted to file a complaint against those in NSA who improperly classified one of the documents charged in the Thomas Drake case. about which he said, “I’ve never seen a more deliberate and willful example of government officials improperly classifying a document.” Leonard received permission and has now submitted that complaint. In related news, Thomas Drake and Jesselyn Raddack have an op-ed on the Obama Administration’s war on whistleblowers.

Surveillance Nation

The Obama Administration says the guidelines it uses to decide what—in addition to a Muslim’s faith—gets them targeted for FBI infiltration is a state secret. That’s an excellent way to protect the First Amendment, don’t you think?

Not only did Bill Nelson join Republicans in blocking more reporting on FISA, but the entire Intelligence Committee took a voice vote to reject Mark Udall and Ron Wyden’s attempt to make James Clapper tell us they are using our phones to track us.

Josh Gerstein reported last week that TSA was going to roll out Israeli-style behavioral screening at airports. It looks like they’re

rolling it out at Boston. The idea in principle might be great (it sure beats stripping granny of her adult diaper); but no one is going to pay TSA workers enough to do this competently, I'm betting. Meanwhile, scanner machines introduced for airport security in Australia are set off by sweaty armpits.

The US had to relax its guidance on al-Shabaab so that humanitarian groups could work with the terrorist organization to get relief to famine victims. They really ought to just rewrite the law to get rid of the stupid Holder v. Humanitarian Law interpretation.

Jeff Kaye has a story cataloging the range of uses of water in torture by DOD. Some of these pretty clearly fall into descriptions of water dousing (which DOD wasn't authorized to use, either; the others are clearly attempts to simulate drowning, like waterboarding). But I think that shows that the ways the government was stretching whatever guidance it had.