



## NSA Spying Uproar Expands; Sen. Feinstein Suddenly Sees the Light

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Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), who as chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee has defended the Obama administration up and down State Street on every single aspect of the NSA's activities until now, late yesterday got religion. She announced that, with regard to the NSA's intelligence gathering on allies such as Germany's Angela Merkel, "let me state unequivocally: I am totally opposed." She also said that the Senate Intelligence Committee "was not satisfactorily informed" that this was going on for a decade, and that "it is my understanding that President Obama was not aware Chancellor Merkel's communications were being collected since 2002." Feinstein said she would be conducting a "full review" of intelligence gathering activities. The London *Guardian's* said that, with these comments, Feinstein "dramatically broke ranks."

Hardly. Feinstein is actually desperately trying to preempt and prevent passage of the House Sensenbrenner/Conyers bill (the USA Freedom Act) which was released today, which prohibits metadata collection by the NSA, period. Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) released a companion bill in the Senate today. Feinstein for her part is rushing to release her own bill, which Sensenbrenner called a "fig leaf," and which the *Guardian* politely characterized as a "superficial reform."

Josh Rogin in *The Cable* today quoted an unnamed senior congressional aide: "It's an absolute joke to think she hasn't been reading the signals intelligence intercepts as Chairman of Senate Intelligence for year."

Similarly, today's *Los Angeles Times* reports that current and former U.S. intelligence officials told the *Times* that the White House was fully aware of what was going on. "The National Security Council and senior people across the intelligence community knew exactly what was going on, and to suggest otherwise is ridiculous." The *Times* sources further explained that "professional staff members at the NSA and other U.S. intelligence agencies are angry... believing the president has cast them adrift as he tries to distance himself from the disclosures by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden."