

Comment Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,
On Inspector General Report On The President's Surveillance Program
July 10, 2009

“The Inspector General today released a review of the Bush-Cheney administration’s Terrorist Surveillance Program. I voted against the final version of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Amendments Act of 2008 because adequate safeguards had been excluded from the bill. Those flaws needlessly risked the freedom that all Americans should have from unchecked government powers. However, I worked to include a provision to ensure that this review was included to provide some measure of accountability for the warrantless surveillance of Americans. Unfortunately, the Bush-Cheney administration hid those actions from Congress and the American people until we learned about the program in a 2005 *New York Times* article. The conclusions of this review should help shed more light on these rule-of-law issues that the previous administration avoided for so long. While much of this report is classified, I look forward to carefully reviewing its findings.

“This report underscores why we should move forward with a nonpartisan Commission of Inquiry. Without a thorough, independent review of decisions that run counter to our laws and treaties, we cannot ensure that these same mistakes are not repeated. Such a Commission must have bipartisan support to be able to truly get to the bottom of these issues with objectivity and credibility.”