

U.S. court reins in overseas surveillance

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- A classified U.S. court in Washington has reined in what intelligence agencies can capture from telephone and e-mail communications from abroad. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court's ruling in recent months only became known in the past week. It prohibits intelligence services from listening in on terror suspects in other parts of the world where the communication could come through the United States, the Los Angeles Times reported. After the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, President George Bush instituted a program where security agencies could bypass asking the court for warrants, which, when made public, prompted a firestorm of protests over civil liberties. The court's ruling also has Congress scrambling to pass temporary legislation that would protect parts of Bush's eavesdropping program before the summer recess that begins Monday, the Times said. Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman John Rockefeller, D-W.Va., said Wednesday recent intelligence reports had convinced him "we must take some immediate but interim step to improve collection of foreign intelligence in a manner that doesn't compromise civil liberties of U.S. citizens," the Times said.

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