

Civil Liberties Violations

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Attorney General Alberto Gonzales has said he was surprised and unaware of civil liberties violations committed by the FBI during its exercise of Patriot Act powers — including the use of so-called National Security Letters — until an internal Justice Department report uncovered them in March 2007. But Gonzales and his predecessor, John Ashcroft, were routinely sent notifications from the FBI when such violations occurred and had to be reported to the president's Intelligence Oversight Board (IOB), according to documents released this month under the Freedom of Information Act. Here is a timeline:

Date	Event	Documentation
2004	Attorney General John Ashcroft receives several reports of civil liberties violations from the FBI as they are being transmitted to the president's Intelligence Oversight Board.	FBI Report (PDF)
Nov. 10, 2004	Bush names Gonzales to be his next attorney general, succeeding Ashcroft.	Washington Post story
Feb. 3, 2005	Gonzales is sworn in as the nation's 80th attorney general.	Washington Post story
Feb. 10, 2005	Gonzales is sent an FBI report of an IOB violation involving an intelligence investigations of a U.S. citizen that went on for more than a year without proper notification or oversight.	IOB Violation Report (PDF)
Feb. 14, 2005	Gonzales is sent an FBI report of an IOB violation involving a counterterrorism investigation in which agents continued the collection of electronic surveillance of a U.S. person after a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court's order had expired.	IOB Violation Report (PDF)
Feb. 16, 2005	Gonzales is sent an FBI report of an IOB violation involving the improper search of a person's property in an intelligence investigation.	IOB Violation Report (PDF)
March 18, 2005	Gonzales is sent an FBI report of an IOB violation involving an error during a counterterrorism investigation.	IOB Violation Report (PDF)
March 22, 2005	Gonzales is sent an FBI report of an IOB violation involving an error made by a telephone carrier during an electronic surveillance operation.	IOB Violation Report (PDF)
April 21, 2005	Gonzales is sent an FBI report of an IOB violation involving the prohibited collection of email contents through a national security letter due to an error by the Internet provider.	IOB Violation Report (PDF)
April 27, 2005	Gonzales testifies before the Senate Intelligence Committee in favor of renewing the U.S. Patriot Act, declaring "There has not been one verified case of civil liberties abuse."	Senate Testimony
May 6, 2005	Gonzales is sent an FBI report of an IOB violation involving the unauthorized collection of the wrong person's telephone data under a national security letter because an agent made an error in listing the wrong number.	IOB Violation Report (PDF)
Dec. 11, 2006	Gonzales is sent an FBI report of an IOB violation involving the unauthorized collection of the wrong person's telephone data under a national security letter because an agent made an error in listing the wrong number.	IOB Violation Report (PDF)
Dec. 13, 2006	Gonzales is sent an FBI report of an IOB violation involving the "unintentional, unauthorized interception" of U.S. persons during a counterterrorism investigation.	IOB Violation Report (PDF)
Feb. 26, 2007	Gonzales is sent an FBI report of an IOB violation involving the unauthorized collection of the wrong person's telephone data under a national security letter because an agent made an error in listing the wrong number.	IOB Violation Report (PDF)
March 9, 2007	Gonzales gives a speech to the International Association of Privacy Professionals and reacts to the release of a Justice Department inspector general report documenting pervasive problems with the FBI's collection of phone and computer data under the Patriot Act. "I was upset when I learned this, as was Director Mueller. And to say that I am concerned about what has been revealed in this report would be an enormous understatement."	Gonzales Speech

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