

# Snowden defends actions as Obama administration pushes for prosecution of whistleblower

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Edward Snowden, the former intelligence employee, is facing extradition and prosecution by the US government for his actions in exposing the National Security Agency's massive police state surveillance system.

In an interview with the *South China Morning Post*, Snowden asserted that the US government has been “trying to bully” Hong Kong into extraditing him.

“I am not here to hide from justice,” he said from an undisclosed location in Hong Kong. “I am here to reveal criminality.” Snowden left the hotel he was previously staying in out of concern that he would be targeted by US intelligence.

“The US government will do anything to prevent me from getting this into the public eye, which is why they are pushing so hard for extradition,” he told the *Post*.

In testimony before a House committee on Thursday, FBI Director Robert Mueller said that “all necessary steps” are being taken to prosecute Edward Snowden. “As to the individual who has admitted to making these disclosures, he is the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation,” Mueller said.

ABC News reported Thursday that US officials now consider Snowden's case a “foreign espionage matter” due to supposed concerns that he “may be attempting to defect to China with a trove of America's most sensitive secrets.”

In an effort to defend the unconstitutional programs, Obama administration officials are relying on the standard justification for every police state measure enacted since September 11, 2001: “the war on terror.”

Mueller claimed in his testimony that the spying programs—which accumulate the telephone records of hundreds of millions of people on an ongoing

basis—would have prevented the September 11 attacks and would also prevent “another Boston.”

These claims are belied by the fact that both attacks were carried out by individuals that were being closely followed by US intelligence agencies.

Speaking before the Senate Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, General Keith Alexander, the head of the NSA, made similar claims. “We had intercepts on [Khalid al-]Mihdhar,” Alexander told the hearing, referring to one of the September 11 hijackers. “But we didn't know where he was.”

“We could take [Mihdhar's cell phone number] and go backwards in time...we'd say this looks of interest and pass this to the FBI,” Alexander said.

In fact, sections of US intelligence were aware of the movements of Mihdhar, along with other hijackers, for some time preceding the September 11 attacks. Mihdhar had been placed on a CIA watch list on August 21, 2001. On August 23, the CIA notified the FBI of Mihdhar's receipt of a US visa from the embassy at Jeddah.

As for Boston, the main alleged perpetrator of the marathon bombings in April was known to the FBI, which had been warned by Russian intelligence on multiple occasions of his potential affiliation with Islamic fundamentalist groups based in Chechnya.

Adding to the strange and unexplained circumstances of the Boston attacks—which were used as a pretext to shut down an entire city and place it under de facto martial law—is the fact that a key witness, Ibragim Todashev, was killed by the FBI at the end of last month.

Alexander also held closed-door hearings with the House Intelligence Committee on Thursday, after

which leading representatives of both parties emerged to claim that the spying programs had stopped dozens of terrorist attacks.

Another secret meeting with Alexander was attended by 47 members of the Senate, organized by the Democratic Party chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Dianne Feinstein, who has previously denounced Snowden for “treason.” No evidence has been presented about the alleged attacks that had been thwarted, said Feinstein, because the NSA was taking its time in order to “be exact” about what will be shown to the public.

On Thursday, in an article titled “NSA surveillance played little role in foiling terror plots, experts say” *the Guardian* cited David Davis, a former British foreign office minister, as saying that the use of the case of Najibullah Zazi, who allegedly plotted to bomb the New York subway, by Feinstein and Obama administration officials to justify the spying programs was “misleading” and “an illusion.”

The *Guardian* also cited an anonymous former CIA official who flatly rejected Feinstein’s claim that the NSA program had been crucial in the case of David Headley, who played a role in the Mumbai attacks: “That’s nonsense. It played no role at all in the Headley case. That’s not the way it happened at all.”

The efforts of top military and government officials to concoct a “war on terror” pretext for the spying program is bound up with the effort to cover up for the real aim—the accumulation of vast amounts of data to be used against any opposition that emerges to the policies of the American ruling class.

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*The World Socialist Web Site and Socialist Equality Party are organizing a campaign in defense of Snowden and democratic rights. For more information and to get involved, click here.*



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