

“Truth is coming and it cannot be stopped”

# NSA whistleblower Snowden issues defiant response to government threats and media lies

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Whistleblower Edward Snowden spoke publicly yesterday for the first time in a week and issued a defiant response to denunciations of his actions by both corporate-controlled parties in the US. He declared, “All I can say right now is the US government is not going to be able to cover this up by jailing or murdering me. Truth is coming and it cannot be stopped.”

Since releasing documents exposing secret spying programs targeting Americans and non-Americans alike, Snowden has been the target of an increasingly vicious campaign in the media and from government officials. The Obama administration is preparing criminal charges, and Democrats and Republicans have denounced him as a “traitor.” Meanwhile, polls show broad public support for the 29-year-old former contractor for the National Security Agency (NSA).

In comments posted Monday on the web site of the British *Guardian* newspaper, Snowden maintained that he is not deterred by the political establishment’s slanderous campaign or the fact that he could be targeted for assassination by US intelligence agencies.

Snowden issued a stinging response to accusations from former Vice President Dick Cheney and others that he is a “traitor.” He said, “[I]t’s important to bear in mind that I’m being called a traitor by men like former Vice President Dick Cheney. This is a man who gave us the warrantless wiretapping scheme as a kind of atrocity warm-up on the way to deceitfully engineering a conflict that has killed over 4,400 and maimed nearly 32,000 Americans, as well as leaving over 100,000 Iraqis dead.

“Being called a traitor by Dick Cheney is the highest honor you can give an American, and the more panicked talk we hear from people like him,

[Democratic Senator Dianne] Feinstein, and [Republican Representative Peter] King, the better off we all are. If they had taught a class on how to be the kind of citizen Dick Cheney worries about, I would have finished high school.”

Denouncing the role of the press, Snowden noted that the “mainstream media now seems far more interested in what I said when I was 17 or what my girlfriend looks like rather than, say, the largest program of suspicionless surveillance in human history.”

Asked whether analysts can listen to the content of calls without a warrant, Snowden refuted the lying denials of administration and intelligence officials and indicated that he has proof to the contrary.

“More detail on how direct NSA’s accesses are is coming, but, in general, the reality is this: if an NSA, FBI, CIA, DIA, etc. analyst has access to query raw SIGINT databases, they can enter and get results for anything they want. Phone number, email, user ID, cell phone handset ID (IMEI), and so on. It’s all the same...

“The reality is that due to the FISA Amendments Act and its section 702 authorities, Americans’ communications are collected and viewed on a daily basis on the certification of an analyst rather than a warrant. They excuse this as ‘incidental’ collection, but at the end of the day, someone at NSA still has the content of your communications.”

He added: “Even in the event of ‘warranted’ intercept, it’s important to understand the intelligence community doesn’t always deal with what you would consider a ‘real’ warrant like a police department would have to. The ‘warrant’ is more of a templated form they fill out and send to a reliable judge with a rubber stamp.”

Snowden sought to refute government attempts to downplay the profound illegality of the spying operation, as exemplified by President Obama's interview yesterday with the Public Broadcasting System's Charlie Rose. Obama claimed once again that if US intelligence agencies want to wiretap a phone, they have to "go to the FISA court with probable cause and ask for a warrant." He made the absurd claim that the program as a whole "is transparent" because "we set up the FISA court"—a secret court that last year approved every surveillance request submitted by the government.

Obama's dishonest, meandering words cannot diminish the significance of Snowden's courageous and powerful statements.

The spying operations revealed by Snowden are global in scope, with hundreds of millions of people swept up in an international dragnet that involves the complicity of other intelligence agencies. As Snowden pointed out, the claim that the programs target only non-US persons—a false assertion—is "a distraction from the power and danger of this system." He added, "Suspicionless surveillance does not become okay simply because it's only victimizing 95 percent of the world instead of 100 percent. Our founders did not write, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all US persons are created equal.'"

Snowden wrote that with the campaign of denunciations against him, the US government has "immediately and predictably destroyed any possibility of a fair trial at home, openly declaring me guilty of treason, and that the disclosure of secret, criminal and even unconstitutional acts is an unforgivable crime."

Responding to claims that the leaks had undermined the "war on terror," Snowden replied: "Bathtub falls and police officers kill more Americans than terrorism...yet we've been asked to sacrifice our most sacred rights for fear of falling victim to it."

Responding to an online question about the timing of the leaks, Snowden explained that he chose to wait to release the information because "Obama's campaign promises and election gave me faith that he would lead us toward fixing the problems he outlined in his quest for votes."

He continued: "Many Americans felt similarly. Unfortunately, shortly after assuming power, he closed the door on investigating systemic violations of law,

deepened and expanded several abusive programs, and refused to spend the political capital to end the kind of human rights violations like we see in Guantanamo, where men still sit without charge."

The hysterical lies of the ruling class over the past two weeks reflect its growing nervousness over the prospect of an entire generation of young people forming similar political conclusions.

Edward Snowden has dispensed more truth in a few paragraphs than the corporate media has in decades of twenty-four hour news cycles. His actions and words serve as a powerful refutation of the geyser of mud, endless lies and vacuity of the entire political and media apparatus.



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