

Snowden denounces US campaign of threats and aggression

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13 July 2013

NSA whistle-blower Edward Snowden met with human rights officials in Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow yesterday to consider his options for safe asylum, while the Obama administration intensified its campaign of international thuggery against the former Booz Allen Hamilton contractor.

Snowden, who has been forced to seek refuge for weeks in an airport transit zone, announced that he had accepted asylum offers from Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Ecuador. He also announced that he had requested temporary asylum in Russia in order to facilitate passage to Latin America, which the US government has relentlessly blocked. (See full remarks.)

In his remarks, the young whistle-blower issued a defiant defense of his actions and made a damning appraisal of the “historically disproportionate aggression” brought against him by the Obama administration.

“I believe in the principle declared at Nuremburg in 1945,” Snowden said in a statement released after meeting with human rights organizations. “Individuals have international duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience. Therefore individual citizens have the duty to violate domestic laws to prevent crimes against peace and humanity from occurring.”

“That moral decision to tell the public about spying that affects all of us has been costly, but it was the right thing to do and I have no regrets,” he added.

Snowden noted that “[t]he 4th and 5th Amendments to the Constitution of my country, Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and numerous statutes and treaties forbid such systems of massive, pervasive surveillance.” He denounced the Obama administration’s campaign to bully other nations with threats of retribution as an assault on democratic rights.

“Since [the revelations were made public], the government and intelligence services of the United States of America have attempted to make an example of me, a warning to all others who might speak out as I have. I have been made stateless and hounded for my act of political expression. The United States Government has placed me on no-fly lists. It demanded Hong Kong return me outside of the framework of its laws, in direct violation of the principle of non-refoulement—the law of nations. It has threatened with sanctions countries who would stand up for my human rights and the UN asylum system. It has even taken the unprecedented step of ordering military allies to ground a Latin American president’s plane in search for a political refugee.

“These dangerous escalations represent a threat not just to the dignity of Latin America, but to the basic rights shared by every person, every nation, to live free from persecution, and to seek and enjoy asylum.”

Snowden’s remarks come amidst an intensification of the US government’s attempts to imprison—and possibly kill—the young whistle-blower.

With visible irritation, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said yesterday that Snowden “is not a whistle-blower, he is not a human rights activist. He is wanted on a series of serious criminal charges.”

Psaki’s comments echoed those made earlier by White House spokesman Jay Carney, who said “Mr. Snowden is not a human rights activist or a dissident,” but rather, a criminal on the lam.

The mafia-boss character of the US hunt for Snowden was made clear in an account published by Wikileaks yesterday, in which a Human Rights Watch representative reportedly “had received a call from the US Ambassador to Russia [Michael McFaul], who

asked her to relay to Mr. Snowden that the US Government does not categorize Mr. Snowden as a whistle-blower and that he has broken United States law.”

The US government’s intensifying campaign against Snowden’s safety and right to asylum runs counter to the mass sympathy that Snowden has won from the population of the world.

Despite the mobilization of the entire political establishment against Snowden, a Quinnipiac University poll released recently revealed that 55 percent of Americans consider Snowden a whistle-blower, against only 35 percent who say he is a traitor. Support for Snowden is overwhelming amongst young people, with 68 percent saying they regard him as a whistle-blower.

Yet the relentless pursuit of Snowden continues. President Obama spoke directly with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the phone last night to request that the latter hand Snowden over to the US.

Earlier in the day, White House Press Secretary Carney chastised Russia for “providing a propaganda platform” for Snowden, which “runs counter to the Russian government’s previous declarations of Russia’s neutrality.”

“It’s also incompatible with Russian assurances that they do not want Mr. Snowden to further damage US interests,” Carney added.

This statement and similar ones by US and Russian officials underscore the dangers Snowden faces in relying on the Russian political establishment to secure his safety.

Yesterday, Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov reiterated claims made by Russia that Snowden would be allowed to remain in Russia only if he abstains from harming US interests or Russian-US relations. Similar conditions forced Snowden to withdraw an asylum request he had made to Russia earlier this month. Peskov earlier commented that Snowden’s actions were “aimed at bringing harm” to the US.

The Russian ruling class is itself engaged in an anti-democratic assault on the rights and living conditions of the Russian working class and for this reason is a natural enemy of whistle-blowers like Edward Snowden. Though Russia’s refusal to immediately extradite Snowden reflects conflicting interests with the US, its actions are guided by geopolitical expediency

and not political principle.

The same is true for the governments of Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Venezuela, which, despite voicing anger at the blatant violations of their sovereignty by the US, are deeply dependent on American capitalism and are susceptible to pressure from the US government.

Earlier this month, it took only one phone call by Vice President Joe Biden to cause Ecuadorean officials to deny Snowden asylum after initially facilitating his travel from Hong Kong. It is telling that none of the governments that have verbally offered Snowden asylum have taken the step of sending diplomats to Russia with travel documents and organizing his safe travel out of the country.

The young whistle-blower’s life and freedom remain in grave danger. The urgent task of defending Edward Snowden falls to the workers and youth of the world. Mass support for Snowden must be organized into a conscious political movement, independent of all bourgeois governments and parties, connecting the defense of democratic rights with the struggle against war, inequality and the capitalist system.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and Socialist Equality Party are waging a campaign to defend Edward Snowden. For more information and to get involved, [click here](#).



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