

# US officials “want to kill me,” warns Edward Snowden

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In an interview broadcast Sunday night by the German public television network ARD, Edward Snowden warned that there were “significant threats” to his life. US “government officials want to kill me,” he said.

The former contractor for the National Security Agency, who has exposed dozens of illegal NSA surveillance and spying programs, was speaking from Moscow, where he has been granted temporary political asylum.

“These people, and they are government officials, have said they would love to put a bullet in my head or poison me when I come out of the supermarket, and then watch as I die in the shower,” he told ARD’s Hubert Seipel, who said the interview took place last Thursday.

Snowden was referring to the scenario detailed by an unnamed military officer who spoke to the *Buzzfeed* web site last week. “I think if we had the chance, we would end it very quickly,” the officer said. “Just casually walking on the streets of Moscow... he is casually poked by a passerby... He goes home very innocently and next thing you know he dies in the shower.”

An unnamed NSA analyst was quoted by *Buzzfeed* as follows: “In a world where I would not be restricted from killing an American, I personally would go and kill him myself.”

Given that the Obama administration espouses a pseudo-constitutional doctrine under which the president as commander-in-chief has the unlimited and unreviewable right to order the killing of an American citizen, as exercised against Islamic fundamentalist Anwar al-Awlaki in 2011, the “world” desired by the NSA official already exists.

In his interview, Snowden rejected demands by

President Obama and other US officials that he return to the United States to face trial on charges that include violations of the 1917 Espionage Act, which carries the death penalty. He said that any such proceeding would be a show trial, in which he would be prevented from mounting a defense on the grounds of his exposure of an illegal police state spying apparatus. Documents supporting his case would be declared “classified” and ruled out of order, and he would be prevented from appealing to the democratic sentiments of the jury.

Snowden told ARD that despite the threats against his life, he did not regret his actions in exposing systematic surveillance by the NSA of virtually the entire population of the world. “I’m still alive and don’t lose sleep for what I did because it was the right thing to do,” he said. “There are significant threats, but I sleep very well.”

In response to questions about NSA spying on German citizens, Snowden declined to go beyond what he has already revealed about the US eavesdropping on the cell phone of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, although he dropped a broad hint.

“What I can say is that we know that Angela Merkel was monitored by the NSA,” said Snowden. “But the question is how logical is it that she’s the only one who was monitored, how likely is it that she was the German person the NSA was watching?”

“I’d say that it’s not very likely that anyone who was watching the German government was only watching Merkel and not her advisers nor other government officials nor ministers, heads of industries or even local government officials.”

ARD interviewer Seipel, in a published pre-broadcast interview, said that Snowden’s only “life insurance” was the material he has entrusted to journalists in several newspapers, including the *Washington Post*, the

*New York Times* and the *British Guardian*, which is being published at regular intervals. As many as 1.7 million documents are involved, he said, only a tiny fraction of which have been made public so far.

Seipel added that the interview, conducted with three cameras and a microphone, was organized using encrypted phone calls and other “safeguard measures” to preserve Snowden’s security.

The interview follows a declaration by Snowden’s Russian lawyer Anatoly Kucherena, also in response to the BuzzFeed report, demanding that US authorities look into the reported threats. Kucherena added that he would ask media reporters who learned of death threats to identify their sources by name.

Snowden also confirmed in the ARD interview that the NSA is engaged in spying on German companies to assist US corporations, specifically citing the leading German electrical engineering firm Siemens as a target. “If there’s information at Siemens that’s beneficial to US national interests,” he said, “even if it doesn’t have anything to do with national security—then they’ll take that information nevertheless.”



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