

Former President Jimmy Carter says NSA likely spying on his communications

Andre Damon
26 March 2014

Jimmy Carter, the 39th president of the United States, told reporters this week that he believes that the National Security Administration (NSA) is monitoring his telephone calls and emails, and that he does not use email for sensitive political correspondence.

Carter told CNBC's Andrea Mitchell on Sunday's "Meet the Press", "You know, I have felt that my own communications are probably monitored." He added, "When I want to communicate with a foreign leader privately, I type or write a letter myself, put it in the post office and mail it... Because I believe if I send an email it will be monitored."

The fact that a former president cannot communicate without fear that his communications will be illegally read is a damning exposure of the extent to which the constitutional prohibition against unreasonable searches and seizures has been rendered a dead letter in the United States. The country is run by an unrestrained military/intelligence apparatus that has the ability to spy on the correspondence of anyone, including Congress members and presidents.

The fact is that the NSA and other intelligence agencies intercept, store, and read not only Carter's communications, but those of millions of American citizens. Carter acknowledged this fact when he noted to the Associated Press, "I don't think there's any doubt now that the NSA or other agencies monitor or record almost every telephone call made in the United States, including cellphones, and I presume email as well. We've gone a long way down the road of violating Americans' basic civil rights, as far as privacy is concerned."

Carter said that the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA), which he signed into law, had been dramatically expanded in recent decades to allow unlimited unconstitutional wiretapping by the NSA and

other intelligence agencies. "After 9/11 took place, under President George W. Bush and later under President Obama, the FISA Act has been drastically modified," Carter told the Associated Press. He said it is now used as "mainly a rubber stamp" to allow unrestrained domestic spying.

Carter also voiced limited support for NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden in his CNN interview, saying, "I think it's good for Americans to know the kinds of things that have been revealed by him and others—and that is that since 9/11 we've gone too far in intrusion on the privacy that Americans ought to enjoy as a right of citizenship."

The former president, however, added, "There's no doubt that he broke the law and that he would be susceptible, in my opinion, to prosecution if he came back here under the law."

These remarks are the latest in a string of warnings from Carter about the collapse of democratic forms of rule in the United States. At a public event last year, he declared, "America has no functioning democracy at this moment".

In June of 2012, Carter penned a column in the *New York Times*, entitled "A Cruel and Unusual Record," in which he denounced the Obama administration's drone assassination program. He wrote, "Revelations that top officials are targeting people to be assassinated abroad, including American citizens, are only the most recent, disturbing proof of how far our nation's violation of human rights has extended." (See, "Ex-US president indicts Obama as assassin")

Carter speaks out of concern that the measures taken have undermined the legitimacy of the state. His comments are all the more extraordinary in that they come from a man who has occupied the highest executive office in the United States—he knows whereof

he speaks.

What is more remarkable, however, is how isolated his comments are. Within the political establishment, his concerns over the extent of US domestic spying and the drone murder program have almost no echo. This is only further demonstration of the fact that there exists no significant constituency within the ruling class for basic democratic rights and constitutional norms.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact