

# Edward Snowden

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*Further information: Global surveillance disclosures (2013–present)*

**Edward Joseph Snowden** (born June 21, 1983) is an American computer specialist, a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employee, and former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor who disclosed top secret NSA documents to several media outlets, initiating the NSA leaks, which reveal operational details of a global surveillance apparatus run by the NSA and other members of the Five Eyes alliance, along with numerous commercial and international partners.<sup>[3]</sup>

The release of classified material was called the most significant leak in US history by Pentagon Papers leaker Daniel Ellsberg. A series of exposés beginning June 5, 2013 revealed Internet surveillance programs such as PRISM, XKeyscore and Tempora, as well as the interception of US and European telephone metadata. The reports were based on documents Snowden leaked to *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post* while employed by NSA contractor Booz Allen Hamilton. By November 2013, *The Guardian* had published one percent of the documents, with "the worst yet to come".

Snowden flew to Hong Kong from his home in Hawaii on May 20, 2013, where he later met with journalists Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras and released his copies of the NSA documents.<sup>[4][5]</sup> After disclosing his identity, he fled Hong Kong and landed at Moscow's Sheremetyevo International Airport on June 23, reportedly for a one-night layover en route to Ecuador. US officials had revoked his passport on June 22.<sup>[6]</sup> According to Snowden and his traveling partner, Sarah Harrison, he was unable to leave the Moscow airport transit zone with a revoked passport.<sup>[7]</sup> He remained there until August 1, when the Russian government granted him a one-year temporary asylum.

## Edward Snowden



Screen capture from the interview with Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras on June 6, 2013

<b>Born</b>	Edward Joseph Snowden June 21, 1983 Elizabeth City, North Carolina, United States
<b>Residence</b>	Russia (temporary asylum)
<b>Nationality</b>	American
<b>Occupation</b>	System administrator
<b>Employer</b>	Booz Allen Hamilton <sup>[1]</sup> Kunia, Hawaii, US (until June 10, 2013)
<b>Known for</b>	Revealing details of classified United States government surveillance programs
<b>Home town</b>	Wilmington, North Carolina
<b>Criminal charge</b>	Theft of government property, unauthorized communication of national defense information, and willful communication of classified intelligence to an unauthorized person (June 2013).

A subject of controversy, Snowden has been variously called a hero,<sup>[8][9][10]</sup> a whistleblower,<sup>[11][12][13][14]</sup> a dissident,<sup>[15]</sup> a traitor,<sup>[16][17][18]</sup> and a patriot.

<sup>[19][20][21]</sup> Snowden's "sole motive" for leaking the documents was, in his words, "to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them."<sup>[22]</sup> The disclosures have fueled debates over mass surveillance, government secrecy, and the balance between national security and information privacy. Seven months after the NSA revelations began, Snowden declared his mission accomplished, citing the international debate sparked by his leaks. A federal judge in December 2013 ruled that the government had "almost certainly" violated the US Constitution by collecting metadata on nearly every phone call within or to the United States. Ten days later, a different federal judge ruled the surveillance program was legal, raising the likelihood that the constitutionality of the program would ultimately be decided by the Supreme Court.

He is considered a fugitive by American authorities who in June 2013 charged him with espionage and theft of government property.<sup>[23]</sup> In early 2014, numerous media outlets and politicians issued calls for leniency in the form of clemency, amnesty or pardon, while others called for him to be imprisoned or killed.<sup>[24][25]</sup> He lives in an undisclosed location in Russia and continues to seek permanent asylum.

**Awards** Sam Adams Award<sup>[2]</sup>

**Signature**



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## Background

### Childhood, family, and education

Edward Joseph Snowden was born on June 21, 1983,<sup>[26]</sup> in Elizabeth City, North Carolina<sup>[27]</sup> and grew up in Wilmington, North Carolina.<sup>[28]</sup> His father, Lonnie Snowden, a resident of Pennsylvania, was an officer in the United States Coast Guard,<sup>[29]</sup> and his mother, a resident of Baltimore, Maryland, is a clerk at the United States District Court in Maryland.<sup>[28][30]</sup> His parents are divorced, and his father has remarried.<sup>[31]</sup> Friends and neighbors described Snowden as shy, quiet and nice. One longtime friend said that he was always articulate, even as a child.<sup>[30]</sup> Speaking in an interview, Snowden's father described his son as "a sensitive, caring young man", and "a deep thinker".<sup>[32]</sup>

By 1999, Snowden had moved with his family to Ellicott City, Maryland.<sup>[28]</sup> He studied at Anne Arundel Community College<sup>[28]</sup> to gain the credits necessary to obtain a high-school diploma but he did not complete the coursework.<sup>[33][34]</sup> Snowden's father explained that his son had missed several months of school owing to illness and, rather than return, took and passed the tests for his GED at a local community college.<sup>[22][32][35]</sup>

Snowden worked online toward a Master's Degree at the University of Liverpool in 2011.<sup>[36]</sup> Having worked at a US military base in Japan, Snowden was reportedly interested in Japanese popular culture, had studied the Japanese language,<sup>[37]</sup> and also worked for an anime company domiciled in the US.<sup>[38][39]</sup> He also said he had a basic understanding of Mandarin Chinese and was deeply interested in martial arts and, at age 19 or 20, listed Buddhism as his religion on a military recruitment form, noting that the choice of agnostic was "strangely absent".<sup>[40]</sup> Snowden told *The Washington Post* that he was an ascetic, rarely left the house and had few needs.<sup>[41]</sup>

Before leaving for Hong Kong, Snowden resided in Waipahu, Hawaii, with his girlfriend.<sup>[42]</sup> According

to local real estate agents, they moved out of their home on May 1, 2013.<sup>[34]</sup>

## Political views

Snowden has said that in the 2008 presidential election, he voted for a third-party candidate. He has stated he had been planning to make disclosures about NSA surveillance programs at the time, but he decided to wait because he "believed in Obama's promises". He was later disappointed that Obama "continued with the policies of his predecessor".<sup>[43]</sup> For the 2012 election, political donation records indicate that he contributed to the primary campaign of Republican candidate Ron Paul.<sup>[44][45]</sup>

Several sources have alleged that Snowden, under the pseudonym "TheTrueHOOHA", authored hundreds of posts on technology news provider Ars Technica's chat rooms.<sup>[46][47][48]</sup> The poster discussed a variety of political topics. In a January 2009 entry, TheTrueHOOHA exhibited strong support for the United States' security state apparatus and said he believed leakers of classified information "should be shot in the balls".<sup>[49]</sup> However, in February 2010 TheTrueHOOHA wrote, "Did we get to where we are today via a slippery slope that was entirely within our control to stop, or was it an relatively instantaneous sea change that sneaked in undetected because of pervasive government secrecy?"<sup>[50]</sup>

In accounts published in June 2013, interviewers noted that Snowden's laptop displayed stickers supporting internet freedom organizations including the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) and the Tor Project.<sup>[22]</sup> Snowden considers himself "neither traitor nor hero. I'm an American".<sup>[51]</sup>

## Career

On May 7, 2004, Snowden enlisted in the United States Army Reserve as a Special Forces recruit but did not complete any training.<sup>[26][52]</sup> He said he wanted to fight in the Iraq War because he "felt like [he] had an obligation as a human being to help free people from oppression."<sup>[22]</sup> In an email to *The Guardian*, the US Army confirmed his enlistment as Special Forces recruit and said he was discharged on September 28, 2004. The email said, "He did not complete any training or receive any awards".<sup>[53]</sup> Snowden stated that this was the result of breaking both of his legs in a training accident.<sup>[54]</sup>

His next employment was as a National Security Agency (NSA) security guard for the Center for Advanced Study of Language at the University of Maryland,<sup>[55]</sup> before, he said, joining the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to work on IT security.<sup>[56]</sup> In May 2006 Snowden wrote in Ars Technica that he had no trouble getting work because he was a "computer wizard". In August he wrote about a possible path in government service, perhaps involving China, but said it "just doesn't seem like as much 'fun' as some of the other places".<sup>[52]</sup>

In 2007, the CIA stationed Snowden with diplomatic cover in Geneva, Switzerland, where he was responsible for maintaining computer network security.<sup>[57]</sup> Snowden described his CIA experience in Geneva as "formative", stating that the CIA deliberately got a Swiss banker drunk and encouraged him to drive home. Snowden said that when the latter was arrested, a CIA operative offered to intervene and

later recruited the banker.<sup>[58]</sup> Swiss Federal Council President Ueli Maurer said it did not seem likely "that this incident played out as it has been described by Snowden and by the media".<sup>[59]</sup> The revelations were said to have come at a sensitive time as the United States was pressing the Swiss government to increase banking transparency.<sup>[60]</sup>

Snowden left the CIA in 2009 and began work for Dell, a private contractor, inside an NSA facility on a US military base in Japan.<sup>[22]</sup> Snowden remained on the Dell payroll until early 2013.<sup>[61]</sup> Persons familiar with the 2013 government investigation into Snowden's history said that Snowden had downloaded sensitive NSA material in April 2012.<sup>[62]</sup> NSA Director Keith Alexander has said that Snowden held a position at the NSA for the twelve months prior to his next job as a consultant,<sup>[63]</sup> with top secret Sensitive Compartmented Information clearances.<sup>[64]</sup> Snowden took a six-day Certified Ethical Hacker training course in 2010 in India.<sup>[65][66][67][68]</sup> USIS completed a background check on Snowden in 2011.<sup>[69]</sup> On January 23, 2014, the US Department of Justice filed fraud charges against the USIS for routinely failing to properly investigate individuals.<sup>[70][71]</sup> The company falsified 665,000 background checks on government employees.<sup>[72]</sup>

Snowden described his life as "very comfortable", earning a salary of "roughly US\$200,000".<sup>[73]</sup> At the time of his departure from the United States in May 2013, he had been employed by consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton for less than three months inside the NSA at the Kunia Regional SIGINT Operations Center in Hawaii,<sup>[74][75][76]</sup> earning \$122,000.<sup>[77]</sup> While intelligence officials have described his position there as a "system administrator", Snowden has said he was an "infrastructure analyst", which meant that his job was to look for new ways to break into Internet and telephone traffic around the world.<sup>[78]</sup> He said he had taken a pay cut to work at Booz Allen,<sup>[79]</sup> and that he sought employment in order to gather data on NSA surveillance around the world so he could leak it.<sup>[80]</sup> According to *Reuters*, while in Hawaii Snowden "persuaded between 20 and 25 fellow workers" to give him their logins and passwords "by telling them they were needed for him to do his job as a computer systems administrator".<sup>[81][82]</sup> This allegation was later refuted by a source inside the NSA and by Snowden himself.<sup>[83]</sup> In a live chat in January 2014, he said that the Reuters report was "simply wrong", continuing, "I never stole any passwords, nor did I trick an army of co-workers."<sup>[84]</sup> Snowden's employment was terminated on June 10, 2013, "for violations of the firm's code of ethics and firm policy".<sup>[77][85]</sup>

Using 'internal channels of dissent', Snowden said that he told multiple employees and two supervisors about his concerns. An NSA spokesperson responded, saying they had "not found any evidence to support Mr. Snowden's contention that he brought these matters to anyone's attention".<sup>[86]</sup> Snowden elaborated in January 2014, saying "[I] made tremendous efforts to report these programs to co-workers, supervisors, and anyone with the proper clearance who would listen. The reactions of those I told about the scale of the constitutional violations ranged from deeply concerned to appalled, but no one was willing to risk their jobs, families, and possibly even freedom to go to through what Drake did."<sup>[84]</sup>

A source "with detailed knowledge on the matter" told *Reuters* that hiring screeners for Booz Allen had found some details of Snowden's education that "did not check out precisely", but decided to hire him anyway; *Reuters* stated that the element which triggered these concerns, or the manner in which

Snowden satisfied the concerns, were not known.<sup>[87]</sup> The résumé stated that Snowden attended computer-related classes at Johns Hopkins University. A spokesperson for Johns Hopkins said that the university did not find records to show that Snowden attended the university, and suggested that he may instead have attended Advanced Career Technologies, a private for-profit organization which operated as "Computer Career Institute at Johns Hopkins".<sup>[87]</sup> The University College of the University of Maryland acknowledged that Snowden had attended a summer session at a UM campus in Asia. Snowden's resume stated that he estimated that he would receive a University of Liverpool computer security master's degree in 2013. The university said that Snowden registered for an online master's degree program in computer security in 2011 but that "he is not active in his studies and has not completed the program".<sup>[87]</sup>

A former NSA co-worker told Forbes that although the NSA was full of smart people, Edward Snowden was "a genius among geniuses". He was described as a "principled and ultra-competent, if somewhat eccentric employee, and one who earned the access used to pull off his leak by impressing superiors with sheer talent". Snowden created a backup system for the NSA that was implemented, and often pointed out security bugs to the agency. The former colleague said Snowden was "given full administrator privileges, with virtually unlimited access to NSA data" because he could "do things nobody else could". Snowden had been offered a position on the NSA's elite staff of hackers, Tailored Access Operations (TAO), but turned it down for the contractor position at Booz Allen.<sup>[88]</sup>

## NSA leaks

### Disclosure

Snowden first made contact with Glenn Greenwald, a journalist working at *The Guardian*, in late 2012.<sup>[89]</sup> He contacted Greenwald anonymously and said he had "sensitive documents" that he would like to share.<sup>[90]</sup>

Greenwald found the measures that the source asked him to take to secure their communications, such as encrypting email, too annoying to employ. Snowden then contacted documentary filmmaker Laura Poitras in January 2013.<sup>[91]</sup> According to Poitras, Snowden chose to contact her after seeing her *New York Times* documentary<sup>[92]</sup> about NSA whistleblower William Binney. *The Guardian* reported that what originally attracted Snowden to both Greenwald and Poitras was a *Salon* article penned by Greenwald detailing how Poitras' controversial films had made her a "target of the

government".<sup>[90][93]</sup> Greenwald began working with Snowden in either February<sup>[94]</sup> or in April after Poitras asked Greenwald to meet her in New York City, at which point Snowden began providing documents to them both.<sup>[89]</sup> Barton Gellman, writing for *The Washington Post*, says his first "direct contact" was on May 16, 2013.<sup>[95]</sup> According to Gellman, Snowden approached Greenwald after the *Post* declined to guarantee publication of all 41 of the PRISM PowerPoint slides within 72 hours and publish online an encrypted code allowing Snowden the ability to later prove that he was the source.<sup>[95]</sup>



Glenn Greenwald

Snowden communicated using encrypted email,<sup>[91]</sup> using the codename "Verax". He asked not to be

quoted at length for fear of identification by stylometry.<sup>[95]</sup>

According to Gellman, prior to their first meeting in person, Snowden wrote, "I understand that I will be made to suffer for my actions, and that the return of this information to the public marks my end."<sup>[95]</sup> Snowden also told Gellman that until the articles were published, the journalists working with him would also be at mortal risk from the United States Intelligence Community "if they think you are the single point of failure that could stop this disclosure and make them the sole owner of this information."<sup>[95]</sup>

In May 2013, Snowden was permitted temporary leave from his position at the NSA in Hawaii, on the pretext of receiving treatment for his epilepsy.<sup>[22]</sup> In mid-May Snowden gave an electronic interview to Poitras and Jacob Appelbaum which was published weeks later by *Der Spiegel*.<sup>[96]</sup>

After disclosing the copied documents, Snowden promised that nothing would stop subsequent disclosures. In June 2013, he said, "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."<sup>[97]</sup>

## Publication

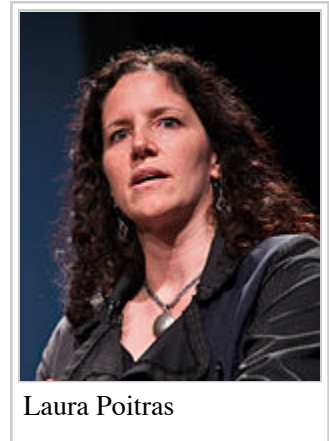
On May 20, 2013, Snowden flew to Hong Kong,<sup>[98][99]</sup> where he was staying when the initial articles based on the leaked documents were published,<sup>[98][100]</sup> beginning on June 5.<sup>[101][102]</sup> Within months, documents had been obtained and published by media outlets worldwide, most notably *The Guardian* (Britain), *Der Spiegel* (Germany), *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* (US), *O Globo* (Brazil), *Le Monde* (France), and similar outlets in Sweden, Canada, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Australia.<sup>[103]</sup> In 2014, NBC broke its first story based on the leaked documents.<sup>[104]</sup>

## Leaks

*Main article: Global surveillance disclosure*

The ongoing publication of leaked NSA documents has revealed previously unknown details of a global surveillance apparatus run by the United States' NSA<sup>[107]</sup> in close cooperation with its Five Eyes partners: Australia (ASD),<sup>[108]</sup> Great Britain (GCHQ),<sup>[109]</sup> Canada (CSEC),<sup>[110]</sup> and New Zealand (SIS), along with cooperation from the security agencies of "most other Western countries".<sup>[3]</sup>

*The Guardian*'s editor-in-chief Alan Rusbridger said in November 2013 that only one percent of the documents had been published.<sup>[111]</sup> Officials warned that "the worst is yet to come", a sentiment echoed by Glenn Greenwald and by Lon Snowden.<sup>[112][113][114]</sup> The extent of the leaks may never be known, according to US investigators, due in part to outdated software at the Hawaiian NSA facility.<sup>[115]</sup> NSA Director Keith Alexander initially estimated that Snowden had copied anywhere from 50,000 to 200,000



Laura Poitras

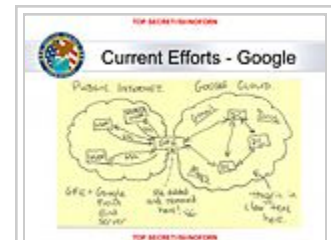
NSA documents.<sup>[116]</sup> Later estimates ran as high as 1.7 million.<sup>[117]</sup>

Media reports documenting the existence and functions of classified surveillance programs and their scope began on June 5, 2013 and continued throughout the entire year. The first program to be revealed was PRISM, with reports from both *The Washington Post* and *The Guardian* published an hour apart. PRISM allows for a court-approved, front-door access to Americans' Google and Yahoo accounts.<sup>[105][118]</sup> The *Post*'s Barton Gellman was the first journalist to report on Snowden's documents. He said the US government urged him not to specify by name which companies were involved, but Gellman decided that to name them "would make it real to Americans".<sup>[119]</sup> Reports also revealed details of Tempora, a British black-ops surveillance program run by the NSA's British partner, GCHQ.<sup>[120][121]</sup> The initial reports included details about NSA call database, Boundless Informant, and of a secret court order requiring Verizon to hand the NSA millions of Americans' phone records daily,<sup>[122]</sup> the surveillance of French citizens' phone and internet records, and those of "high-profile individuals from the world of business or politics".

<sup>[123][124][125]</sup> XKeyscore, which allows for the collection of 'almost anything done on the internet', was described by *The Guardian* as a program that "shed light" on one of Snowden's more contentious claims: "I, sitting at my desk [could] wiretap anyone, from you or your accountant, to a federal judge or even the president, if I had a personal email".<sup>[126]</sup>

It was revealed that the NSA was harvesting millions of email and instant messaging contact lists,<sup>[127]</sup> searching email content,<sup>[128]</sup> tracking and mapping the location of cell phones,<sup>[129]</sup> undermining attempts at encryption via Bullrun<sup>[130][131]</sup> and that the agency was using cookies to "piggyback" on the same tools used by internet advertisers "to pinpoint targets for government hacking and to bolster surveillance".<sup>[132]</sup> The NSA was shown to be "secretly" tapping into Yahoo and Google data centers to collect information from "hundreds of millions" of account holders worldwide by tapping undersea cables using the MUSCULAR program.<sup>[105][106]</sup>

The NSA, the US CIA and GCHQ spied on users of Second Life and World of Warcraft by creating make-believe characters as a way to "hide in plain sight".<sup>[133]</sup> Leaked documents showed NSA agents spied on their "love interests", a practice NSA employees termed LOVEINT.<sup>[134][135]</sup> The NSA was also shown to be tracking the online sexual activity of people they termed "radicalizers", in order to discredit them.<sup>[136]</sup> The NSA was accused of going "beyond its core mission of national security" when articles were published showing the NSA's intelligence-gathering operations had targeted Brazil's largest oil company, Petrobras.<sup>[137]</sup> The NSA and the GCHQ were also shown to be surveilling charities



Slide from an NSA presentation on "Google Cloud Exploitation" from its MUSCULAR program,<sup>[105]</sup> the sketch shows where the "Public Internet" meets the internal "Google Cloud" where user data resides<sup>[106]</sup>



Logo for the XKeyscore program



A reference to Tailored Access Operations (TAO) in an XKeyscore slide



including Unicef and Médecins du Monde, as well as allies such as the EU chief and the Israeli Prime Minister.<sup>[138]</sup>

By October 2013, Snowden's disclosures had created tensions<sup>[139][140]</sup> between the US and some of its close allies after they revealed that the US had spied on Brazil, France, Mexico,<sup>[141]</sup> Britain,<sup>[142]</sup> China,<sup>[143]</sup> Germany,<sup>[144]</sup> and Spain,<sup>[145]</sup> as well as 35 world leaders,<sup>[146]</sup> most notably German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who said "spying among friends" was "unacceptable"<sup>[147]</sup> and compared the NSA with the Stasi.<sup>[148]</sup>

The NSA's top-secret "black budget", obtained from Snowden by *The Washington Post*, exposed the "successes and failures" of the 16 spy agencies comprising the US intelligence community,<sup>[149]</sup> and revealed that the NSA was paying US private tech companies for "clandestine access" to their communications networks.<sup>[150]</sup> The agencies were allotted \$52 billion for the 2013 fiscal year.<sup>[151]</sup>

An NSA mission statement titled "Sigint Strategy 2012–2016" affirmed that the NSA plans for continued expansion of surveillance activities. Their stated goal was to "dramatically increase mastery of the global network" and "acquire the capabilities to gather intelligence on anyone, anytime, anywhere."<sup>[152][153]</sup>

In July 2013, Greenwald said that Snowden had additional sensitive information about the NSA he had chosen not to make public, including "very sensitive, detailed blueprints of how the NSA does what they do".<sup>[154]</sup> A joint statement issued by the House Intelligence Committee's Republican Chairman and Ranking Democrat in January 2014 asserted that "Though press reporting to date has focused on NSA's foreign intelligence collection, much of the information stolen by Snowden is related to current U.S. military operations."<sup>[155]</sup>

In a December 2013 letter to the people of Brazil, Snowden wrote:

"There is a huge difference between legal programs, legitimate spying ... and these programs of dragnet mass surveillance that put entire populations under an all-seeing eye and save copies forever ... These programs were never about terrorism: they're about economic spying, social control, and diplomatic manipulation. They're about power."<sup>[156]</sup>

## Motivations

Snowden's identity was made public by *The Guardian* at his request on June 9, 2013.<sup>[94]</sup> He explained: "I have no intention of hiding who I am because I know I have done nothing wrong."<sup>[22]</sup> He added that by revealing his identity he hoped to protect his colleagues from being subjected to a hunt to determine who had been responsible for the leaks.<sup>[157]</sup> According to Poitras, who filmed the interview with Snowden in Hong Kong, he had initially not wanted to be seen on camera, because "he didn't want the story to be about him."<sup>[158]</sup> Poitras says she convinced him it was necessary to have him give an account of the leaked documents' significance on film: "I knew that the mainstream media interpretation would be predictable and narrow, but because to have somebody who understands how this technology works,

who is willing to risk their life to expose it to the public, and that we could hear that articulated, would reach people in ways that the documents themselves wouldn't." <sup>[158]</sup> Snowden explained his actions saying: "I don't want to live in a society that does these sort of things [surveillance on its citizens]... I do not want to live in a world where everything I do and say is recorded... My sole motive is to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them."<sup>[159]</sup> Snowden said in a later interview that his "mission's already accomplished" and that he had already won.<sup>[41]</sup> He declared:

For me, in terms of personal satisfaction, the mission's already accomplished. I already won. As soon as the journalists were able to work, everything that I had been trying to do was validated. Because, remember, I didn't want to change society. I wanted to give society a chance to determine if it should change itself. All I wanted was for the public to be able to have a say in how they are governed.<sup>[41]</sup>

When Snowden met with representatives of human rights organizations on July 12, he said:

The 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. While the US Constitution marks these programs as illegal, my government argues that secret court rulings, which the world is not permitted to see, somehow legitimize an illegal affair....

I believe in the principle declared at Nuremberg in 1945: "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."<sup>[160]</sup>

Snowden said that in the past, whistleblowers had been 'destroyed by the experience', and that he wanted to "embolden others to step forward" by demonstrating that "they can win".<sup>[161]</sup> In October, Snowden spoke out again on his motivations for the leaks in an interview with *The New York Times*, saying that the system for reporting problems does not work. "You have to report wrongdoing to those most responsible for it", Snowden explained, and pointed out the lack of whistleblower protection for government contractors, the use of the 1917 Espionage Act to prosecute leakers, and his belief that had he used internal mechanisms to 'sound the alarm', his revelations "would have been buried forever".<sup>[162][163]</sup>

In December 2013, upon learning that a US federal judge had ruled the collection of US phone metadata conducted by the NSA as likely unconstitutional, Snowden stated: "I acted on my belief that the NSA's mass surveillance programs would not withstand a constitutional challenge, and that the American public deserved a chance to see these issues determined by open courts...today, a secret program authorized by a secret court was, when exposed to the light of day, found to violate Americans' rights. It is the first of many."<sup>[164]</sup> Snowden, in his words, "didn't want to change society", he "wanted to give society a chance to determine if it should change itself."<sup>[41]</sup>

In a December 2013 interview, Snowden spoke to the question of 'who elected' him to expose the NSA surveillance programs:

Dianne Feinstein elected me when she asked softball questions [in committee hearings]. Mike Rogers elected me when he kept these programs hidden. . . . The FISA court elected me when they decided to legislate from the bench on things that were far beyond the mandate of what that court was ever intended to do. The system failed comprehensively, and each level of oversight, each level of responsibility that should have addressed this, abdicated their responsibility.

It wasn't that they put it on me as an individual – that I'm uniquely qualified, an angel descending from the heavens – as that they put it on someone, somewhere ... You have the capability, and you realize every other [person] sitting around the table has the same capability but they don't do it. So somebody has to be the first.<sup>[41]</sup>

Snowden, in a January 2014 interview, said that the "breaking point" which led to his leaks was "seeing the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, directly lie under oath to Congress." He furthered, "There's no saving an intelligence community that believes it can lie to the public and the legislators who need to be able to trust it and regulate its actions. Seeing that really meant for me there was no going back. Beyond that, it was the creeping realization that no one else was going to do this. The public had a right to know about these programs."<sup>[165]</sup>

## Flight from the US

### Hong Kong



Protesters rally in Hong Kong to support Edward Snowden, June 15, 2013

In May 2013 Snowden took a leave of absence, telling his supervisors he was returning to the mainland for epilepsy treatment, but instead left Hawaii for Hong Kong<sup>[166]</sup> where he arrived on May 20. Wikileaks reported that he was seeking asylum in Iceland because of the country's "shared values".<sup>[22][167]</sup> Iceland's ambassador to China said Icelandic law requires that asylum applications be made from within Iceland.<sup>[168]</sup> Snowden explained why he did not go directly from the US to Iceland: "Leaving the US was an incredible risk, NSA employees must declare their foreign travel 30 days in advance and are monitored. There was a distinct possibility I would be interdicted en route, so I had to travel with no advance booking to a country with the cultural and legal framework to allow me to

work without being immediately detained. Hong Kong provided that. Iceland could be pushed harder, quicker, before the public could have a chance to make their feelings known, and I would not put that past the current US administration."<sup>[79]</sup>

Snowden vowed to challenge any extradition attempt by the US government, and had reportedly approached Hong Kong human rights lawyers.<sup>[169]</sup> Snowden told the *South China Morning Post* that he planned to remain in Hong Kong until "asked to leave",<sup>[170]</sup> adding that his intention was to let the "courts and people of Hong Kong" decide his fate.<sup>[171]</sup> While in Hong Kong Snowden supplied

information about US intelligence operations in China to the *South China Morning Post*, which Glenn Greenwald explained as reflecting "a need to ingratiate himself to the people of Hong Kong and China."<sup>[172]</sup> In late August the Russian newspaper *Kommersant* reported that Snowden was living at the Russian consulate shortly before his departure from Hong Kong to Moscow.<sup>[173]</sup> Anatoly Kucherena rejected the *Kommersant* story, stating that Snowden "did not enter into any communication with our diplomats when he was in Hong Kong."<sup>[174][175]</sup> Kucherena became Snowden's lawyer in July and was then head of the Russian Interior ministry's public council,<sup>[176]</sup> in addition to serving as a member<sup>[177]</sup> of the public council for the Federal Security Service (FSB).<sup>[178]</sup> In early September, however, Russian president Vladimir Putin acknowledged that "Mr. Snowden first appeared in Hong Kong and met with our diplomatic representatives."<sup>[179]</sup> Ben Wizner, a lawyer with the ACLU and legal adviser to Snowden, said in January 2014 "Every news organization in the world has been trying to confirm that story. They haven't been able to, because it's false."<sup>[180]</sup>

US officials revoked Snowden's passport on June 22.<sup>[181][182]</sup> On June 23 Snowden boarded the commercial Aeroflot flight SU213 to Moscow, accompanied by Sarah Harrison of WikiLeaks.<sup>[183][184]</sup> Hong Kong authorities said that Snowden had not been detained as requested by the United States, because the United States' extradition request had not fully complied with Hong Kong law,<sup>[185][186][187]</sup> and there was no legal basis to prevent Snowden from leaving.<sup>[188][189][Notes 1]</sup> On June 24, U.S. State Department spokesman Patrick Ventrell said "we're just not buying that this was a technical decision by a Hong Kong immigration official. This was a deliberate choice by the government to release a fugitive despite a valid arrest warrant.... though the Privacy Act prohibits me from talking about Mr. Snowden's passport specifically, I can say that the Hong Kong authorities were well aware of our interest in Mr. Snowden and had plenty of time to prohibited his travel."<sup>[192]</sup> That same day, Julian Assange said that WikiLeaks had paid for Snowden's lodging in Hong Kong and his flight out.<sup>[193]</sup> Assange would later say that "While Venezuela and Ecuador could protect him in the short term, over the long term there could be a change in government. In Russia, he's safe, he's well-regarded, and that is not likely to change."<sup>[166]</sup> When Assange was asked "What was the most difficult part on getting Snowden out of the U.S.?" Assange said he wasn't sure he could answer the question given "the legal situation".<sup>[194]</sup>

## Russia

On June 23, 2013, Snowden landed in Moscow's Sheremetyevo international airport.<sup>[195][196][197]</sup> Wikileaks stated that he was "bound for the Republic of Ecuador via a safe route for the purposes of asylum".<sup>[198]</sup> According to Gellman, Snowden "didn't choose Russia. He was literally changing planes in the Moscow airport when the United States revoked his passport. He was stuck there by that. He's said from the beginning that he wanted asylum in a Western country, for example, Iceland, that, from his point of view, respects rights of free speech and whistleblowers. He is not looking to live in a country like Russia or China."<sup>[199]</sup> A US official said that Snowden's passport was



Arrival at Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow on June 23, 2013

annulled before he left Hong Kong<sup>[200]</sup> and along with other sources, such as legal expert James C. Hathaway, said not having a passport would not prevent Russia from allowing Snowden to board an onward flight as a matter of law.<sup>[201][202][203]</sup>

Snowden remained in the Sheremetyevo transit zone for 39 days until being granted temporary asylum by the Russian government on August 1. In a statement made on July 1, Snowden said:

Although I am convicted of nothing, [the US government] has unilaterally revoked my passport, leaving me a stateless person. Without any judicial order, the administration now seeks to stop me exercising a basic right. A right that belongs to everybody. The right to seek asylum."<sup>[204][205]</sup>

According to Russian news services, Snowden had a seat reserved to continue on to Cuba within 24 hours of arriving in Moscow.<sup>[206][207]</sup> Snowden did not board that onward flight, however, saying in a January 2014 interview that he was "stopped en route" despite an intention to be "only transiting through Russia". According to Snowden, "I was ticketed for onward travel via Havana — a planeload of reporters documented the seat I was supposed to be in — but the State Department decided they wanted me in Moscow, and cancelled my passport." He decided to remain in Russia because whilst he was "considering possibilities for asylum in Latin America, the United States forced down the Bolivian President's plane." He said that he would travel from Russia if there was no interference from the US government.<sup>[180]</sup>

## Morales plane incident

*Main article: Evo Morales grounding incident*

On July 1, 2013, president Evo Morales of Bolivia, who had been attending a conference of gas-exporting countries in Russia, suggested during an interview with Russia Today that he would be 'willing to consider a request' for asylum.<sup>[208]</sup> The following day, Morales' plane en route to Bolivia was rerouted to Austria and reportedly searched there after France, Spain and Italy denied access to their airspace.<sup>[209][210][211]</sup> US officials had raised suspicions that Snowden may have been on board.<sup>[212][213]</sup> Morales blamed the US for putting pressure on European countries, and said that the grounding of his plane was a violation of international law.<sup>[214]</sup>

## Asylum applications

Snowden had applied for political asylum to 20 countries by July 1.<sup>[215]</sup> A statement attributed to Snowden also contended that the US administration, and specifically Vice President Joe Biden, had pressured the governments of these countries to refuse his petition for asylum.<sup>[216]</sup> In a July 1 statement published by WikiLeaks, Snowden accused the US government of "using citizenship as a weapon" and using what he described as "old, bad tools of political aggression". Citing Obama's promise to not allow "wheeling and dealing" over the case, Snowden commented "This kind of deception from a world leader is not justice, and neither is the extralegal penalty of exile."<sup>[217]</sup>

Snowden made a second batch of applications for asylum to 6 more countries several days later, but declined to name them citing prior interference by US officials.<sup>[218][219]</sup> Finland, Germany, India, Poland, Norway, Austria, Italy, and the Netherlands cited technical grounds for not considering the application, saying that applications for asylum to these countries must be made from within the countries' borders or at border stations.<sup>[215][220][221][222][223][224]</sup> Ecuador had initially offered Snowden a temporary travel document but later withdrew it;<sup>[225]</sup> on July 1, President Rafael Correa said the decision to issue the offer had been "a mistake".<sup>[226][227]</sup>

Russian president Putin said that Snowden's arrival in Moscow was "a surprise" and "like an unwanted Christmas gift".<sup>[228]</sup> Putin said that Snowden remained in the transit area of Sheremetyevo, noted that he had not committed any crime on Russian soil,<sup>[229]</sup> and declared that Snowden was free to leave and should do so.<sup>[230]</sup> He added that Russia's intelligence agencies neither "had worked, nor were working with" Snowden.<sup>[228][230]</sup> Putin's claims were received skeptically by some observers.<sup>[231][232]</sup>

Putin said on July 1 that if Snowden wanted to be granted asylum in Russia, Snowden would be required to "stop his work aimed at harming our American partners".<sup>[233][234]</sup> A spokesman for Putin subsequently said that Snowden had withdrawn his asylum application upon learning of the conditions.<sup>[215][235]</sup>

In a July 12 meeting at Sheremetyevo Airport with representatives of human rights organizations and lawyers, organized in part by the Russian government,<sup>[236]</sup> Snowden said he was accepting all offers of asylum that he had already received or would receive in the future, noting that his Venezuela's "asylee status was now formal",<sup>[160]</sup> he also said he would request asylum in Russia until he resolved his travel problems.<sup>[237]</sup> Russian Federal Migration Service officials confirmed on July 16 that Snowden had submitted an application to them for temporary asylum.<sup>[238]</sup> According to Kucherena, Snowden agreed to meet Putin's condition for granting asylum, and would not further harm US interests 'by releasing more intelligence secrets'.<sup>[238][239]</sup> On July 23 Kucherena said his client intended to settle in Russia.<sup>[240]</sup> Snowden explained that he applied for asylum in Russia because, with no direct flights from Moscow to asylum offers in Latin America, he did not feel he could safely travel to them, and claimed that the US had pressured countries along his route to "hand him over".<sup>[239]</sup>

Amid media reports in early July 2013 attributed to US administration sources that Obama's one-on-one meeting with Putin, ahead of a G20 meeting in St Petersburg scheduled for September, was in doubt due to Snowden's protracted sojourn in Russia,<sup>[241][242]</sup> top US officials repeatedly made it clear to Moscow that Snowden should immediately be returned to the United States to face justice.<sup>[243][244][245]</sup> Snowden needed asylum, according to his lawyer, because "he faces persecution by the US government and he fears for his life and safety, fears that he could be subjected to torture and capital punishment."<sup>[246]</sup> In a letter to Russian Minister of Justice Alexander Kononov dated July 23, US Attorney General Eric Holder sought to eliminate the "asserted grounds for Mr. Snowden's claim that he should be treated as a refugee or granted asylum, temporary or otherwise":<sup>[247][248]</sup> he assured the Russian government that the US would not seek the death penalty for Snowden irrespective of the charges he might eventually face and said Snowden would be issued a limited validity passport for returning to the US, and that upon

his return, Snowden would benefit from legal and constitutional safeguards and not be tortured, as "torture is unlawful in the United States".<sup>[247]</sup> The same day, the Russian president's spokesman reiterated the Kremlin's position that it would "not hand anyone over"; he also noted that Putin was not personally involved in the matter as Snowden "had not made any request that would require examination by the head of state" and that the issue was being handled through talks between the FSB and the FBI.<sup>[249][250]</sup>

## Criminal charges

On June 14, 2013, United States federal prosecutors filed a criminal complaint against Snowden, charging him with theft of government property, and alleging he had violated the US' 1917 Espionage Act through unauthorized communication of national defense information and "willful communication of classified communications intelligence information to an unauthorized person".<sup>[251][247]</sup>

## Temporary asylum in Russia

Snowden left the Moscow airport on August 1 after more than a month in the transit section. He had been granted temporary asylum in Russia for one year, an asylum that could be extended indefinitely on an annual basis.<sup>[252]</sup> According to his lawyer, Snowden went to an undisclosed location kept secret for security reasons.<sup>[253]</sup>

In response to the asylum grant, White House spokesman Jay Carney said the US administration was "extremely disappointed" by the Russian government's decision and that the meeting scheduled for September between Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin was under reconsideration.<sup>[254][255]</sup> Some US legislators urged the president to take a tough stand against Russia, possibly including a US boycott of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.<sup>[255][256]</sup> On August 7, the White House announced that Obama had canceled the meeting previously planned with Putin in Moscow citing lack of progress on a series of issues that included Russia's granting Snowden temporary asylum.<sup>[257][258][259]</sup> Following cancellation of the bilateral talks, Putin's foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov said they were "disappointed" and that it was clear to him that the decision was due to the situation around Snowden, which they "had not created"; Ushakov alleged that the US had been avoiding signing an extradition agreement and had "invariably" used its absence as a pretext for denying Russian extradition requests.<sup>[260][261]</sup>

In late July 2013, Lon Snowden said he believed his son would be better off staying in Russia, and didn't believe he would receive a fair trial in the US.<sup>[262][263]</sup> In mid October, he visited his son in Moscow, later telling the press that he was pleased with Edward's situation, and still believed Russia was the best choice for his asylum, saying he wouldn't have to worry about people "rushing across the border to render him". Snowden commented that his son found living in Russia "comfortable", and Moscow "modern and sophisticated".<sup>[264]</sup> Snowden's lawyer, Kucherena, announced on October 31 that his client had found a technical support job providing maintenance for Russia's largest website.<sup>[265][266][267]</sup>

Former CIA analyst Ray McGovern said that Snowden did not give any computer files to Russia or China. American officials said that they have no proof of Russia or China having received such files.

<sup>[268]</sup><sup>[269]</sup> In an October 2013 interview, Snowden maintained that he did not bring any classified material into Russia "because it wouldn't serve the public interest". He added "there's a zero percent chance the Russians or Chinese have received any documents".<sup>[163]</sup>

Wikileaks released video of Snowden on October 11 taken during the Sam Adams Award reception in Moscow, his first public appearance in three months. Former US government officials attending the ceremony said that, contrary to claims from the US government, Snowden did not appear to be under the control of 'local security forces'. The whistle-blower group said that he was in good spirits, looked "remarkably well", and that he still believes he was right to release the NSA documents.

<sup>[270]</sup><sup>[271]</sup> In the video, Snowden said "people all over the world are coming to realize" that the NSA's surveillance programs put people in danger, hurt the US and its economy, and "limit our ability to speak and think and live and be creative, to have relationships and associate freely" as well as putting people "at risk of coming into conflict with our own government".<sup>[272]</sup>



Edward Snowden speaks about various topics at the Sam Adams Award presentation in Moscow

On October 31, Snowden met with German lawmaker Hans-Christian Ströbele, a visit prompted by a recent leak revealing NSA surveillance of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's mobile phone for the past decade.<sup>[273]</sup><sup>[274]</sup> Snowden was invited to testify in Germany to "assist investigations" into the alleged surveillance of the German leader by explaining how the leaked documents 'fit together'; according to Stroebel, Snowden showed he "knew a lot" about the matter.<sup>[275]</sup><sup>[276]</sup><sup>[277]</sup> After the visit, Snowden indicated a willingness to testify, though not from Moscow as Germany requested. Snowden said he would rather give testimony before the US Congress, his second choice being Berlin.<sup>[278]</sup>

Wikileaks' representative Sarah Harrison, who accompanied Snowden from Hong Kong to Moscow, left Russia for Germany in early November after waiting until she felt confident he had "established himself and was free from the interference of any government." Her lawyers advised her to not return to her home in the UK, fearing she would be prosecuted under anti-terrorism laws.<sup>[279]</sup> In a statement released November 6 upon arrival in Germany, Harrison wrote "I...negotiated [Snowden's] safe exit from Hong Kong to take up his legal right to seek asylum. I was travelling with him on our way to Latin America when the United States revoked his passport, stranding him in Russia."<sup>[280]</sup> Journalist Glenn Greenwald commented on Snowden's Russian asylum: "[Snowden] didn't choose to be there. He was trying to get transit to Latin America, and then the US revoked his passport and threatened other countries out of offering Snowden safe passage."<sup>[281]</sup>

NSA whistleblower Thomas Drake, who was also charged with espionage for leaking classified materials, said he believes Snowden would not be able to return to the US in the "foreseeable future", as he has "essentially been declared enemy of the State number 1, exhibit number 1".<sup>[282]</sup> After his recent visit with German officials, Snowden commented that he was seeking asylum 'in a "democratic" country' such as Germany or France, and wanted to leave Russia at the end of his year-long asylum.<sup>[283]</sup>



On December 17, 2013 Snowden wrote an open letter to the people of Brazil offering to assist the Brazilian government in investigating allegations of US spying, and added that he continued to seek, and would require, asylum.<sup>[284]</sup> Snowden wrote, "Until a country grants permanent political asylum, the US government will continue to interfere with my ability to speak...going so far as to force down the Presidential Plane of Evo Morales to prevent me from traveling to Latin America!"<sup>[285]</sup> Brazil had been in an uproar since Snowden revealed that the US was spying on Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, her senior advisors, and Brazil's national oil company, Petrobras.<sup>[286]</sup>

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff and officials of the Brazilian foreign ministry said in response to the letter that they could not consider asylum for Snowden because they had not received any formal request for asylum from him.<sup>[287][288][289]</sup> A representative of the foreign ministry said that a fax requesting asylum had been sent to the Brazilian embassy in Moscow in July but it had not been signed and could not be authenticated.<sup>[287]</sup> David Miranda, the Brazilian partner of Glenn Greenwald, launched an internet petition urging the Brazilian president to consider offering Snowden asylum.<sup>[290]</sup> Some prominent Brazilian senators expressed support for giving asylum to Snowden,<sup>[288]</sup> including Senator Ricardo Ferraco (president of the Senate Foreign Relations and Defense Committee),<sup>[287][289]</sup> although some other politicians, mainly opponents of Rousseff's government, said Brazil should not risk further harming relations between Brazil and the US by offering Snowden asylum.<sup>[289]</sup> In July, the Brazilian Senate's Foreign Relations and Defense Committee had unanimously recommended granting asylum to Snowden.<sup>[288]</sup>

Snowden met with Barton Gellman of *The Washington Post* six months after the disclosure for an exclusive interview spanning 14 hours, his first since being granted temporary asylum. Snowden talked about his life in Russia as "an indoor cat", reflected on his time as an NSA contractor, and discussed at length the revelations of global surveillance and their reverberations. Snowden said, "In terms of personal satisfaction, the mission's already accomplished...I already won. As soon as the journalists were able to work, everything that I had been trying to do was validated."<sup>[41]</sup> He commented "I am not trying to bring down the NSA, I am working to improve the NSA...I am still working for the NSA right now. They are the only ones who don't realize it." On the accusation from former CIA and NSA director Michael Hayden that he had defected, Snowden stated, "If I defected at all, I defected from the government to the public."<sup>[291]</sup>

Snowden's Russian attorney, Anatoly Kucherena, announced in January 2014 that recent media reports coming from the US have left his client in fear for his life.<sup>[292][293]</sup> An interview with Pentagon officials and NSA analysts, published by BuzzFeed in mid-January, detailed ways they said Snowden can be killed, as well as a strong desire by some to carry out such plans.<sup>[24][294]</sup> Kucherena said he may request the names of those who made explicit threats against his client. Snowden reportedly has plans to ask the Russian Police for protection.<sup>[293]</sup> He could be walking home from the grocery store, according to claims in the article, "going back to his flat and he is casually poked by a passerby. He thinks nothing of it at the time starts to feel a little woozy ... and next thing you know he dies in the shower." Kucherena stated, "This is a real death threat and we are concerned about the fact it has prompted no reaction from anybody."<sup>[292]</sup> A State Department spokesperson said that the statements were unacceptable, clarifying that she hadn't read the *Buzzfeed* article.<sup>[295]</sup> Snowden wrote that the threats on his life were

"concerning" but "primarily for reasons you might not expect ... That current, serving officials of our government are so comfortable in their authorities that they're willing to tell reporters on the record that they think the due process protections of the 5th Amendment of our Constitution are outdated concepts. These are the same officials telling us to trust that they'll honor the 4th and 1st Amendments. This should bother all of us. The fact that it's also a direct threat to my life is something I am aware of, but I'm not going to be intimidated."<sup>[84]</sup> He was asked about the threats, and whether he lost sleep over them, in his first television interview<sup>[25]</sup> which aired on Germany's NDR January 26, 2014.<sup>[165]</sup> "I'm still alive and don't lose sleep for what I did because it was the right thing to do," he responded.<sup>[296]</sup>

On *Meet the Press* in late January, speculation arose from top US officials in the House and Senate Intelligence Committees that Snowden might have been assisted by Russian intelligence,<sup>[297]</sup> prompting a rare interview during which Snowden spoke in his defense. He told *The New Yorker* "this 'Russian spy' push is absurd", adding that he "clearly and unambiguously acted alone, with no assistance from anyone, much less a government."<sup>[180]</sup> The *New York Times* reported that investigations by the NSA and the FBI "have turned up no evidence that Mr. Snowden was aided by others".<sup>[298]</sup> Days later, Feinstein stated that she had seen no evidence that Snowden is a Russian spy.<sup>[299]</sup> Germany's *Der Spiegel* suggested the accusations were part of a 'smear campaign' by US officials. For Snowden, the smears didn't "mystify" him, but rather "that outlets report statements that the speakers themselves admit are sheer speculation".<sup>[300]</sup>

In late January 2014, US attorney general, Eric Holder in an interview with *MSNBC* indicated that the US could allow Snowden to return from Russia under negotiated terms, saying he was prepared to engage in conversation with him, but that full clemency would be going too far.<sup>[301]</sup>

## Reaction

*Main article: Aftermath of the global surveillance disclosure*

*See also: PRISM#Responses to disclosures*

Snowden's release of NSA material was called the most significant leak in US history by Pentagon Papers leaker Daniel Ellsberg.<sup>[302][303]</sup> Ellsberg said "Snowden's disclosures are a true constitutional moment" enabling the press to hold the Executive branch of the US federal government accountable, while the legislative and judiciary branch refused to do so.<sup>[304]</sup> The 'accountability' mechanisms of the US government, he said, are "a one-sided secret court, which acts as a rubber stamp, and a Congressional 'oversight' committee, which has turned into the NSA's public relations firm."<sup>[304]</sup> On January 14, 2014, Ellsberg posted to his Twitter page: "Edward Snowden has done more for our Constitution in terms of the Fourth and First Amendment than anyone else I know."<sup>[305]</sup>

United States President Barack Obama was initially dismissive of Snowden, saying in June 2013, "I'm not going to be scrambling jets to get a 29-year-old hacker".<sup>[306][307][308]</sup> In August, Obama rejected the suggestion that Snowden was a patriot<sup>[309]</sup> and would later say that "the benefit of the debate he generated was not worth the damage done, because there was another way of doing it."<sup>[310]</sup>

In January 2014, Obama mentioned Snowden in a speech covering proposed reforms to the NSA's surveillance program and said that "our nation's defense depends in part on the fidelity of those entrusted with our nation's secrets. If any individual who objects to government policy can take it into their own hands to publicly disclose classified information, then we will not be able to keep our people safe, or conduct foreign policy." Obama also objected to the "sensational" way the leaks had been reported, saying the reporting often "shed more heat than light". He went on to assert that the disclosures had revealed "methods to our adversaries that could impact our operations".<sup>[311]</sup>

On his blog, Vermont senator Bernie Sanders praised Snowden for sparking a debate on a matter of surveillance.<sup>[312]</sup>

Ex-CIA director James Woolsey said in December 2013 that if Snowden was convicted of treason, he should be hanged.<sup>[313]</sup> One of Snowden's legal advisers, Jesselyn Radack, said that Snowden "has concerns for his safety" based on this and joking remarks between Hayden and House Intelligence Committee chairman Mike Rogers about putting Snowden on a "kill list".<sup>[314][315]</sup>

According to Mike Rogers and ranking member Dutch Ruppersberger, a classified Pentagon report written by military intelligence officials contends that Edward Snowden's leaks had put US troops at risk and prompted terrorists to change their tactics, and that "most files copied" were related to current US military operations.<sup>[316]</sup> Glenn Greenwald and Ben Wizner, an UCLU lawyer representing Snowden, disputed these claims, stating that Snowden's leaks overwhelmingly relate to NSA activities and noting that similar claims were made about the Pentagon Papers.<sup>[317]</sup>

On January 1, 2014, the Editorial Board of *The New York Times* praised Snowden as a whistleblower and wrote in favor of granting him clemency or "at least a substantially reduced punishment," arguing that while Snowden may have broken the law, he had "done his country a great service" by bringing the abuses of the NSA to light. "When someone reveals that government officials have routinely and deliberately broken the law," they wrote, "that person should not face life in prison at the hands of the same government." The *Times* further criticized James Clapper for lying to Congress about the NSA's surveillance activities and cast doubt on the claim made by Snowden's critics that he had damaged national security. The editorial concluded with a request to President Obama to discontinue the "vilification" of Snowden and to offer Snowden "an incentive to return home."<sup>[318][319]</sup> The article garnered an unusual amount of "heat" for an editorial, with responses from multiple media outlets.<sup>[320]</sup> The editorial board of *The Guardian* called for a pardon in an article coincidentally published on the same day. They board asked President Obama to "use his executive powers to treat [Snowden] humanely and in a manner that would be a shining example about the value of whistleblowers and of free speech itself."<sup>[321][322]</sup>

In his article dated January 4, 2014, *Moves to Curb Spying Help Drive the Clemency Argument for Snowden*, Peter Baker of *The New York Times* laid out the polarization of opinions throughout the US and the impetus toward clemency gained by the public reaction to the revelations of the surveillance. He notes that officials in the intelligence establishment "warn that letting Mr. Snowden off the hook would set a dangerous precedent" and contrasts that with the statement of attorney Bruce Fein about the protections afforded by the First Amendment, "It prohibits government from punishing communications that expose government lawlessness whether or not the illegality is classified" and saying further,

"Calling government to account for breaking the law is a compelling civic duty of all citizens."<sup>[323]</sup> The author also noted that similar polarization has arisen in judicial review, citing judge Leon's ruling that the surveillance program in question "was probably unconstitutional", implying that laws passed to enable such programs could be struck down.

Cybersecurity scholar Peter Singer divided the material disclosed by Snowden into three categories: "smart, useful espionage against enemies of the United States; legally questionable activities that involved US citizens through backdoors and fudging of policy/law; un-strategic (stupid) actions targeting American allies that has had huge blowback on US standing and US business." It was postulated that these were differing ways people viewed Snowden, which could explain why he was so polarizing.<sup>[324]</sup> Singer also spoke of a "double legacy" from the NSA revelations released by Snowden: "One, it's hollowed out the American ability to operate effectively in ensuring the future of the internet itself, in the way we would hope it would be. That has huge long-term consequences. And the second is, it's been and will be a hammer-blow to American technology companies. The cloud computing industry, for example, had a recent estimate that they'll lose \$36 billion worth of business because of this."<sup>[325]</sup>

## Debate

Snowden said in December 2013 that he was 'inspired by the global debate' ignited by the leaks, and stated that NSA's 'culture of indiscriminate global espionage "is collapsing"'.<sup>[326]</sup>

## International community

Crediting the Snowden leaks, a United Nations committee unanimously adopted an 'anti-spying resolution' to 'protect the right to privacy against unlawful surveillance' in the wake of reports that 35 foreign leaders were subjects of US eavesdropping.<sup>[327][328]</sup> The resolution "unequivocally states that the same rights that people have off-line must also be protected online."<sup>[329][330]</sup>

The European Parliament invited Snowden to make a pre-recorded video appearance to aid their NSA investigation, though he has yet to accept the invitation and no date has been set.<sup>[331][332]</sup>

## United States

In the US, Snowden's actions precipitated an intense debate on privacy and warrantless domestic surveillance.<sup>[333][334]</sup> Jim Sensenbrenner, author of the Patriot Act, submitted a proposal on October 29, 2013 called the "USA Freedom Act", which would end the bulk collection of Americans' metadata, and reform the FISA court.<sup>[335]</sup>

Director of National Intelligence James Clapper condemned Snowden's actions as having done "huge,



Demonstration at Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin against the NSA surveillance program PRISM during Barack Obama's visit, June 18, 2013

grave damage" to US intelligence capabilities, while United States Secretary of State John Kerry stated that "in some cases" the NSA had gone "too far" in some of its surveillance activities, and promised that it would be stopped.<sup>[336][337]</sup>

At the end of 2013, *The Washington Post* noted that the public debate, lawsuits, "presidential task forces, and attempts at legislative remedy" had not brought about any "meaningful policy change". They printed: "...the status quo continues, if with forced disclosures and administration arguments that the public just doesn't understand how difficult it is to prevent the next 9/11 – even though there's been no evidence publicly revealed so far that these measures have prevented the next 9/11."<sup>[134]</sup>

An analysis released by the New America Foundation in January 2014 reviewed 225 terrorism cases since the September 11 attacks found that the NSA's bulk collection of phone records "has had no discernible impact on preventing acts of terrorism", and that US governments' claims of the program's usefulness were "overblown".<sup>[338][339]</sup> Officials maintained that the program was a good "insurance policy".<sup>[340]</sup>

Another review in January 2014, this from the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB), found the NSA's phone metadata program to be illegal and of "only limited value". The board, chosen by Obama, said it "implicates constitutional concerns under the First and Fourth Amendments." The board was unable to find "a single instance" that the program "made a concrete difference in the outcome of a terrorism investigation" or "directly contributed to the discovery of a previously unknown terrorist plot or the disruption of a terrorist attack."<sup>[341]</sup> The White House rejected the findings, saying "We simply disagree with the board's analysis on the legality of the program".<sup>[342]</sup>

A survey conducted by USA Today and Pew Research Center in January 2014 revealed a change in American's opinion of phone and Internet metadata collection. In July 2013, 50 percent supported the NSA programs. Six months later, the percentage dropped to 40.<sup>[343]</sup>

The Republican Party in early 2014 voted unanimously to pass a "Resolution To Renounce The National Security Agency's Surveillance Program" which called for a "special committee to investigate, report, and reveal to the public the extent of this domestic spying". They said that Snowden's revelations had uncovered "an invasion into the personal lives of American citizens that violates the right of free speech and association afforded by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution" and that "the mass collection and retention of personal data is in itself contrary to the right of privacy protected by the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution."<sup>[344]</sup> The resolution endorses legislation proposed by Justin Amash.<sup>[345]</sup>

## Presidential panel

Obama also said that he himself had called for a review of US surveillance activities even before Snowden had begun revealing details of the NSA's operations.<sup>[309]</sup> On August 9, Obama announced that he was ordering Director of National Intelligence James Clapper to arrange for "a high-level group of outside experts to review our entire intelligence and communications technologies."<sup>[346][347]</sup> In December, the task force issued 46 recommendations that, if adopted, would subject the NSA to

additional scrutiny by the courts, Congress, and the president, and would strip the NSA of the authority to infiltrate American computer systems using "backdoors" in hardware or software.<sup>[348]</sup> Geoffrey Stone, a panel member, said there was no evidence that the bulk collection of phone data had stopped any terror attacks.<sup>[349]</sup>

## NSA rulings in federal court

### Judge Leon

On December 16, 2013, US Federal Judge Richard J. Leon ruled that bulk collection of American telephone metadata likely violates the Constitution of the United States. The judge wrote, "I cannot imagine a more 'indiscriminate' and 'arbitrary' invasion than this systematic and high-tech collection and retention of personal data on virtually every single citizen for purposes of querying and analyzing it without prior judicial approval ... Surely, such a program infringes on 'that degree of privacy' that the founders enshrined in the Fourth Amendment."<sup>[350]</sup> Leon, the first judge to examine an NSA program outside of the secret FISA court on behalf of a non-criminal defendant, described the technology used as "almost Orwellian", referring to the George Orwell novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in which the world has come under omnipresent government surveillance . In the 68-page ruling, Leon said that he had "serious doubts about the efficacy" of the program.<sup>[351]</sup> The US government was unable to cite "a single instance in which analysis of the NSA's bulk metadata collection actually stopped an imminent attack, or otherwise aided the government in achieving any objective that was time-sensitive." The judge ruled that a 1979 case, *Smith v. Maryland*, which established that phone metadata is not subject to the Fourth Amendment, did not apply to the NSA program as the US Justice Department has claimed, citing the NSA's vast scope and 'the evolving role of phones and technology'. Judge Leon's opinion, according to the is its recognition that the Fourth Amendment needs to adapt to the digital age.<sup>[352]</sup> Judge Leon stayed the ruling, giving the US government 6 months to appeal.<sup>[353]</sup>

On the ruling, the *Washington Post* printed: "NSA officials, who rarely miss a chance to cite Snowden's status as a fugitive from the law, now stand accused of presiding over a program whose capabilities were deemed by the judge to be "Orwellian" and likely illegal. Snowden's defenders, on the other hand, have new ammunition to argue that he is more whistleblower than traitor."<sup>[354]</sup>

Debates regarding offering amnesty to Snowden began to appear in publications and on the Internet immediately following Leon's ruling. Some of the reasons suggested in a *The New Yorker* article included benefits for the NSA.<sup>[355]</sup>

Snowden said in a statement that the ruling justified his disclosure:

"I acted on my belief that the NSA's mass surveillance programs would not withstand a constitutional challenge, and that the American public deserved a chance to see these issues determined by open courts. Today, a secret program authorized by a secret court was, when exposed to the light of day, found to violate Americans' rights. It is the first of many."<sup>[356]</sup>

### Judge Pauley

On December 28, 2013, Judge William Pauley dismissed a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) alleging that the NSA's phone records program was unconstitutional. In an argument regarding the ACLU's claim that the NSA was exceeding the bounds of section 215 of the Patriot Act Judge Pauley wrote:

"The ACLU would never have learned about the section 215 order authorizing collection of telephone metadata related to its telephone numbers but for the unauthorized disclosures of Edward Snowden. Congress did not intend that targets of section 215 order would ever learn of them. And the statutory scheme also makes clear that congress intended to preclude suits by targets even if they discovered section 215 orders implicating them. It cannot possibly be that lawbreaking conduct by a government contractor that reveals state secrets—including the means and methods of intelligence gathering—could frustrate Congress's intent. To hold otherwise would spawn mischief: recipients of orders would be subject to 215's secrecy protocol confining challenges to the FISC while targets could sue in any federal district court. A target's awareness of section 215 does not alter the Congressional calculus. The ACLU's statutory claim must therefore be dismissed."<sup>[357]</sup>

Judge Pauley said that the U.S. government's global telephone data-gathering system is needed to thwart potential terrorist attacks, and that it can only work if everyone's calls are swept in. The judge also concluded that the telephone data being swept up by NSA did not belong to telephone users, but to the telephone companies. And further he ruled that, when NSA obtains such data from the telephone companies, and then probes into it to find links between callers and potential terrorists, this further use of the data was not a search under the Fourth Amendment. He also concluded that the controlling precedent is *Smith v. Maryland*: "Smith's bedrock holding is that an individual has no legitimate expectation of privacy in information provided to third parties"<sup>[358][359][360]</sup>.

## Recognition

Edward Snowden was voted as *The Guardian's* person of the year 2013, garnering four times the number of votes than any other candidate.<sup>[361]</sup>

The 2013 list of leading Global Thinkers,<sup>[362]</sup> published annually by *Foreign Policy* placed Snowden in first place due to the impact of his revelations. *FP's* "Global Conversation visualization"<sup>[363]</sup> showed that Snowden "occupied a role in 2013's global news media coverage just slightly less important than President Barack Obama himself"<sup>[364]</sup>.

Snowden was named *Time's* Person of the Year runner-up in 2013, behind Pope Francis.<sup>[365]</sup> *TIME* was criticized for not placing him in the top spot.<sup>[366][367][368]</sup>

Snowden headed the *Ten Tech Heroes of 2013* at TechRepublic, the site of an on-line newsletter circulated among IT professionals. Editor Jack Wallen placed Snowden in the number one position of his list and wrote, "Ed Snowden was a whistle blower the likes of which the world has never seen. Many consider him a villain. I, on the other hand, hold him up in the hero category for one simple reason: His disclosure of classified documents unveiled the NSA's mass surveillance program. Snowden's goal was "...to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them." Prior

to this leak, the public was unaware of the depth of surveillance and the true nature of government secrecy. His disclosures have also had major implications for those in the technology field."<sup>[369]</sup>

Snowden joined the board of directors of the Freedom of the Press Foundation, co-founded by Daniel Ellsberg, in January 2014. Journalists Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras serve as staff members of the organization.<sup>[370]</sup>

Nominated in January 2014 as one of five candidates for the Rector of the University of Glasgow, Snowden is a "strong favourite" to be elected for the three-year post.<sup>[371][372]</sup> Elections are scheduled for February 2014. The nomination was arranged by a group of Glasgow students along with the help of Snowden's Russian lawyer.<sup>[371]</sup> A student from the campaign to elect Snowden as their representative stated, "We're giving students a stage, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to voice their own discontent with mass surveillance. By electing Edward Snowden, we're sending a clear message, also to our government, that we will not allow this kind of surveillance."<sup>[373]</sup>

In January 2014, former Norwegian environment minister Bård Vegar Solhjell and member of the Parliament of Norway Snorre Valen nominated Snowden for the Nobel Peace Prize, saying in the nomination letter, "The public debate and changes in policy that have followed in the wake of Snowden's whistleblowing have contributed to a more stable and peaceful world order."<sup>[374]</sup>

### **German "Whistleblower Prize"**

Edward Snowden was awarded the biennial German "whistleblower prize" in August 2013, in absentia, with an accompanying award equal to 3,000 euro. Established in 1999, the award is sponsored by the German branch of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms and by the Association of German Scientists.<sup>[375]</sup> Organizers in Berlin said the prize was to acknowledge his "bold efforts to expose the massive and unsuspecting monitoring and storage of communication data, which cannot be accepted in democratic societies".<sup>[376]</sup> Snowden responded to the award, saying it was "a great honor to be recognized for the public good created by this act of whistleblowing", and that it was not he, but the public who effected "this powerful change to abrogation of basic constitutional rights by secret agencies".<sup>[377]</sup>

### **Sam Adams Award**

The Sam Adams Award was presented to Snowden by a group of four American former intelligence officers and whistleblowers in October 2013. After two months as an asylee, Snowden made his first public appearance in Moscow to accept the award, a candlestick holder meant to symbolize "bringing light to dark corners".<sup>[270]</sup> One of the presenters, FBI whistleblower Jesselyn Radack of the Government Accountability Project, told *The Nation* "We believe that Snowden exemplifies Sam Adams's courage, persistence and devotion to truth—no matter what the consequences. We wanted Snowden to know that, as opposed to the daily vitriol from the US government and mainstream media, 60 percent of the United States supports him, including thousands in the national security and intelligence agencies where we used to work."<sup>[378][379][380]</sup> Radack was joined by Ray McGovern, a former CIA analyst, ex-NSA



executive Thomas Drake and former FBI agent Coleen Rowley.

### Alternative Christmas Message

Snowden was chosen to give Britain's 2013 "Alternative Christmas Message", Channel 4's alternative to the Royal Christmas Message by Queen Elizabeth II.<sup>[381]</sup> The Message is normally given by non-establishment figures.<sup>[382][383]</sup> In what was Snowden's first television appearance since arriving in Russia, the address focussed on the importance of privacy and the need for an end to government surveillance.<sup>[384]</sup> In the 1.5-minute segment<sup>[385]</sup> he said that the recently revealed "worldwide mass surveillance", a system resulting from teamwork between governments, is what George Orwell warned about in *1984*, a novel about a society controlled by an ever-present Big Brother.<sup>[386]</sup> The difference is, Snowden noted, that today's surveillance capabilities far surpass those Orwell described, saying "We have sensors in our pockets that track us everywhere we go ... A child born today [will] never know what it means to have a private moment to themselves, an unrecorded, un-analyzed thought. That's a problem because privacy matters; [it] allows us to determine who we are, and who we want to be." On the debate initiated by his leaks, he stated:

"The conversation occurring today will determine the amount of trust we can place both in the technology that surrounds us and the government that regulates it. Together we can find a better balance, end mass surveillance and remind the government that if it really wants to know how we feel asking is always cheaper than spying."<sup>[387][388]</sup>

The piece was filmed, edited and produced by Laura Poitras.<sup>[389]</sup>

### Lavabit

The owner of a secure email service which Snowden used, Lavabit, shut down the business after being forced to release the secure keys to his site to the FBI, exposing all 410,000 users to FBI's resulting ability to read all email routed via Lavabit.<sup>[390]</sup> The move was mirrored days later by a similar email provider called Silent Circle.<sup>[391]</sup> Three months later, owners of the two companies joined forces and announced their new email service, "Dark Mail Alliance",<sup>[392]</sup> designed to be resistant to government surveillance.<sup>[393][394]</sup>

### In popular culture

Snowden's passage through Hong Kong inspired a local production team to produce a low-budget five-minute film entitled *Verax*. The film, depicting the time Snowden spent hiding in the Mira Hotel while being unsuccessfully tracked by the CIA and China's Ministry of State Security, was uploaded to YouTube on June 25, 2013.<sup>[395][396]</sup>



Edward Snowden during the Sam Adams Award ceremony in Moscow, October 2013

A dramatic thriller about Edward Snowden, *Classified: The Edward Snowden Story*, is scheduled for release on September 19, 2014. The film is being crowdfunded and plans are to release the final product as a free download. The feature-length film is directed by Jason Bourque and produced by Travis Doering; actor Kevin Zegers plays the character of Edward Snowden. Michael Shanks stars as journalist Glenn Greenwald and Carmen Aguirre plays filmmaker Laura Poitras.<sup>[397]</sup>

In September 2013, the TV series *South Park* parodied the Snowden revelations, with Eric Cartman standing in for Snowden. The episode, titled "Let Go, Let Gov", received the highest ratings for the show in two years.<sup>[398][399]</sup>

## See also

- 2013 global surveillance disclosures
  - Timeline of mass surveillance disclosures
  - Aftermath of the global surveillance disclosure
- Classified information in the United States
- Extraordinary rendition
- Information sensitivity
- List of people granted asylum
- List of people who have lived at airports
- List of United States extradition treaties
- List of whistleblowers
- Martin and Mitchell defection
- Mass surveillance
  - Mass surveillance in the United Kingdom
  - Mass surveillance in the United States
- NSA warrantless surveillance (2001–07)
- NSA whistleblowers
  - William Binney
  - Thomas Andrews Drake
  - Perry Fellwock
  - Mark Klein
  - Thomas Tamm
  - Russ Tice
- Stellar Wind (code name)
- Terrorist Surveillance Program

## Notes

1. ↑ Hong Kong's Secretary for Justice Rimsky Yuen argued that government officials did not issue a provisional arrest warrant for Snowden due to "discrepancies and missing information" in the paperwork sent by US authorities. Yuen explained that Snowden's full name was inconsistent, and his US passport number was also missing.<sup>[190]</sup> Hong Kong also wanted more details of the charges and evidence against Snowden to make sure it was not a political case. Secretary for Justice Rimsky Yuen said he spoke to US Attorney General Eric Holder by phone to reinforce the request for details "absolutely necessary" for detention of Snowden. Yuen said "As the US government had failed to provide the information by the time Snowden left Hong Kong, it was impossible for the Department of Justice to apply to a court for a temporary warrant of arrest. In fact, even at this time, the US government has still not provided the details we asked for."<sup>[191]</sup>

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Snowden has been working at the National Security Agency for the last four years as an employee of various outside contractors, including Booz Allen and Dell."

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- "NSA leaks: a timeline" (<http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/fault-lines/FaultLinesBlog/2013/11/1/nsa-leaks-a-timeline.html>). Al Jazeera. November 1, 2013.
- "Free Snowden" (<http://freesnowden.is/>). (Journalistic Source Protection Defense Fund)
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- Gellman, Bartman. "Edward Snowden, after months of NSA revelations, says his mission's accomplished" ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/edward-snowden-after-months-of-nsa-revelations-says-his-missions-accomplished/2013/12/23/49fc36de-6c1c-11e3-a523-fe73f0ff6b8d\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/edward-snowden-after-months-of-nsa-revelations-says-his-missions-accomplished/2013/12/23/49fc36de-6c1c-11e3-a523-fe73f0ff6b8d_story.html)). *The Washington Post*. December 23, 2013.
- Margulies, Joseph. "The Promise of May, the Betrayal of June, and the Larger Lesson of Manning and Snowden" (<http://verdict.justia.com/2013/07/17/the-promise-of-may-the-betrayal-of-june-and-the-larger-lesson-of-manning-and-snowden>). (Archive (<http://archive.is/ZadEm>)) *Verdict*. Justia. July 17, 2013.

## External links

- Edward Snowden (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm5722984/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "The NSA Files" (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/the-nsa-files>). *The Guardian*. (Index of articles)
- "DNI Statement on Recent Unauthorized Disclosures of Classified Information" (<http://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/191-press-releases-2013/868-dni-statement-on-recent-unauthorized-disclosures-of-classified-information>). (Archive (<http://www.webcitation.org/6HI2NS9XS>)) Office of the Director of National Intelligence. June 6, 2013. PDF Version (<http://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/191-press-releases-2013/868-dni-statement-on-recent-unauthorized-disclosures-of-classified-information?tmpl=component&format=pdf>) (Archive (<http://www.webcitation.org/6HI2KVOzq>))
- "Global Surveillance" (<http://www.ub.uio.no/fag/informatikk-matematikk/informatikk/faglig/bibliografier/no21984.html>). An annotated and categorized "overview of the revelations following the leaks by the whistleblower Edward Snowden. There are also some links to

comments and followups". By Oslo University Library.

Retrieved from "[http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward\\_Snowden&oldid=593014470](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward_Snowden&oldid=593014470)"

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# Talk:Edward Snowden

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This is the talk page for discussing improvements to the Edward Snowden article.

- **This is not a forum for general discussion of the article's subject.**
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- Be polite, and welcoming to new users
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- For disputes, seek dispute resolution

## Article policies

- No original research
- Neutral point of view
- Verifiability



**This is not a forum for general discussion about Edward Snowden.** Any such comments may be removed or refactored. Please limit discussion to improvement of this article. You may wish to ask factual questions about Edward Snowden at the Reference desk, discuss relevant Wikipedia policy at the Village pump, or ask for help at the Help desk.



Discussions on this page may escalate into heated debate. Please try to keep a cool head when commenting here. See also: [Wikipedia:Etiquette](#).



The subject of this article is controversial and content may be in dispute. When updating the article, be bold, but not reckless. Feel free to try to improve the article, but don't take it personally if your changes are reversed; instead, come here to the talk page to discuss them. Please supply full citations when adding information, and consider tagging or removing unciteable information.

This article must adhere to the **biographies of living persons** policy, even if it is not a biography, because it contains material about living persons. Unsourced or poorly sourced contentious material about living persons **must be removed immediately** from the article and its talk page, especially if

potentially libellous. If such material is repeatedly inserted, or if you have other concerns, please report the issue to this noticeboard. If you are connected to one of the subjects of this article and need help, please see this page.



**This article is of interest to the following WikiProjects:**

### WikiProject Biography (Rated B-class)



This article is within the scope of **WikiProject Biography**, a collaborative effort to create, develop and organize Wikipedia's articles about people. All interested editors are invited to join the project and contribute to the discussion. For instructions on how to use this banner, please refer to the documentation.

**B**

This article has been rated as **B-Class** on the project's quality scale.

### WikiProject Espionage (Rated B-class, Mid-importance)



**Edward Snowden** is within the scope of **WikiProject Espionage**, which aims to improve Wikipedia's coverage of Espionage and Espionage-related topics. If you would like to participate, visit the project page, or contribute to the discussion.

**B**

This article has been rated as **B-Class** on the quality scale.

**Mid**

This article has been rated as **Mid-importance** on the importance scale.

### WikiProject United States / North Carolina / Government (Rated B-class, Low-importance)



This article is within the scope of **WikiProject United States**, a collaborative effort to improve the coverage of topics relating to the United States of America on Wikipedia. If you would like to participate, please visit the project page, where you can join the ongoing discussions.

Template Usage · **Articles Requested!** · Become a Member · Project Talk · Unreferenced BLPs · Alerts

**B**

This article has been rated as **B-Class** on the project's quality scale.

**Low**

This article has been rated as **Low-importance** on the project's importance scale.



This article is supported by **WikiProject North Carolina**.



This article is supported by **WikiProject U.S. Government** (marked as Mid-importance).

### WikiProject North Carolina To-do:

edit ([//en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_North\\_Carolina/to\\_do&action=edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject_North_Carolina/to_do&action=edit)) • history ([//en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_North\\_Carolina/to\\_do&action=history](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject_North_Carolina/to_do&action=history)) • watch ([//en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_North\\_Carolina/to\\_do&action=watch](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject_North_Carolina/to_do&action=watch)) • purge ([//en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Edward\\_Snowden&action=purge](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Edward_Snowden&action=purge))



Here are some **tasks you can do**:

- **Cleanup**: North Carolina articles needing attention,
  - \*Add city infobox to all town/city articles missing one.
  - \*Add appropriate bio infobox to all North Carolina bio articles missing one.
- **Expand**: Watauga River, Cliffside Lake Recreation Area, Wake County, North Carolina History sections, Sign Pine, North Carolina, Roman Catholic Diocese of Charlotte
- **Featured article candidates**: No results were found.
- **Featured list candidates**: No results were found.
- **Featured sound candidates**: No results were found.
- **Good article nominations**: No results were found.
- **Geographical coordinates**: North Carolina articles missing geocoordinate data
- **Infobox**: North Carolina articles needing infoboxes
- **Map**: Requested maps in North Carolina
- **Photo**: Requested photographs in North Carolina
- **Stubs**: Stub-Class North Carolina articles
- **Unreferenced**: Unreferenced North Carolina articles
- **Other**:
  - Coordinate with North Carolina Portal to provide quality articles for use.
  - Place the `{{WikiProject United States|class=|importance=|NC=Yes|NC-importance=}}` banner into North Carolina related articles and assess

### WikiProject U.S. Government To-do:

edit ([//en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_United\\_States\\_Government/to\\_do&action=edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject_United_States_Government/to_do&action=edit)) • history ([//en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_United\\_States\\_Government/to\\_do&action=history](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject_United_States_Government/to_do&action=history))

action=history) • watch (//en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:WikiProject\_United\_States\_Government/to\_do&action=watch) • purge (//en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Edward\_Snowden&action=purge)

Funk



Here are some **tasks you can do**:

- **Article requests**: Bring Federal government of the United States to GA. Rescue *99 Percent Declaration* from deletion.
- **Cleanup**: United States Government articles needing attention, Federal government of the United States#Executive branch
- **Expand**: Office of Surface Mining, General Land Office
- **Featured article candidates**: No results were found.
- **Featured list candidates**: No results were found.
- **Featured sound candidates**: No results were found.
- **Good article nominations**:
  - Idaho v. United States
  - United States Senate election in Massachusetts, 2012
  - Voting Rights Act of 1965
  - Alexander White (Virginia)
- **Infobox**: United States Government articles needing infoboxes
- **Map**: Wikipedia requested maps of the United States Government
- **Photo**: Requested photographs of the United States Government
- **Stubs**: Stub-Class United States Government articles, Category:United States government stubs, Bureau of Engraving and Printing
- **Update**: U.S. Food and Drug Administration, United States House of Representatives elections in California, 2008; United States House of Representatives elections in Idaho, 2006, United States House of Representatives elections in Nevada, 2006; United States mayoral elections, 2007
- **Unreferenced**: Unreferenced United States Government articles
- **Verify**: Bureau of Reclamation, United States Grazing Service, General Land Office, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Factions in the Republican Party
- **Other**:
  - List of U.S. states by GDP per capita (nominal) is self contradictory

- Place the {{WikiProject United States|class=|importance=|USGov=Yes|USGov-importance=}} banner into United States Government related articles and assess

### WikiProject Human rights (Rated B-class, Mid-importance)



This article is within the scope of **WikiProject Human rights**, a collaborative effort to improve the coverage of Human rights on Wikipedia. If you would like to participate, please visit the project page, where you can join the discussion and see a list of open tasks.

- B** This article has been rated as **B-Class** on the project's quality scale.
- Mid** This article has been rated as **Mid-importance** on the project's importance scale.

### WikiProject International relations (Rated B-class, Top-importance)



This article is within the scope of **WikiProject International relations**, a collaborative effort to improve the coverage of International relations on Wikipedia.

If you would like to participate, you can edit the article attached to this page, or visit the project page, where you can join the project and see a list of open tasks.

- B** This article has been rated as **B-Class** on the project's quality scale.
- Top** This article has been rated as **Top-importance** on the project's importance scale.

### WikiProject Mass surveillance (Rated B-class, Mid-importance)



**Edward Snowden** is within the scope of **WikiProject Mass surveillance**, which aims to improve Wikipedia's coverage of mass surveillance and mass surveillance-related topics. If you would like to participate, visit the project page, or contribute to the discussion.

- B** This article has been rated as **B-Class** on the quality scale.
- Mid** This article has been rated as **Mid-importance** on the importance scale.



This page was nominated for deletion on June 10, 2013. The result of

the discussion was **keep** per Snowball clause.



The content of **Edward Snowden in Hong Kong** ([//en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward\\_Snowden\\_in\\_Hong\\_Kong&redirect=no](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward_Snowden_in_Hong_Kong&redirect=no)) was merged into Edward Snowden. That page now redirects here. For the contribution history and old versions of the redirected page, please see its history ([//en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward\\_Snowden\\_in\\_Hong\\_Kong&action=history](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward_Snowden_in_Hong_Kong&action=history)); for the discussion at that location, see its talk page. *(June 16, 2013)*



A news item involving **Edward Snowden** was featured on Wikipedia's main page in the *In the news* section on 2 August 2013.



*This article has been mentioned or used by several media organizations. The references are in:*



- Michael Jaccarino (August 04 2013). "Snowden a friend or foe? Wikipedia fight takes both sides" (<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/08/04/snowden-friend-or-foe-wikipedia-fight-takes-both-sides/>). Fox News. Retrieved August 4, 2013. (details)
- Ryan Gorman (August 04 2013). "Someone within the US Senate edited Edward Snowden's Wikipedia page to change his description from 'dissident' to 'traitor'" (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2384188/Edward-Snowdens-Wikipedia-page-edited-dissident-traitor-US-Senate.html>). The Daily Mail. (details)

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**Archives**

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Threads older than 30 days may be archived by MiszaBot I.

- became more well known than Assange
- 7 Needed: Edward Snowden advice on how not to be surveilled
- 8 Should add link to US spying on Israel
- 9 "According to the Washington Post..."
- 10 Passport
- 11 "seat reserved to fly on June 24 through Cuba"
- 12 Tweaking marginal stuff from leaked media reports on Snowden is probably playing into hands of Intelligence handlers
- 13 "...thinks it's a parasite from the local water..."
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- 15 Restoring talk page section & the definition of TL:DR
- 16 Caprarescu accuses CIA and SRI of staging the case of Edward Snowden
- 17 Typo

## added videos

*The following discussion is closed. **Please do not modify it.** Subsequent comments should be made in a new section.*

Hi all

I've added videos from the Sam Adams award presentation in Moscow (one of which is media of the day on commons today), I think the videos are a worthwhile addition to the article but the descriptions may need some work.

Thanks

Mrjohncummings (talk) 13:57, 16 October 2013 (UTC)

Removed as this gives WP:UNDUE emphasis to a minor story that is pure WP:RECENTISM about an organization that barely exists. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 23:08, 17 October 2013 (UTC)

I am adding them back; your rational doesn't hold water. If your reasoning was that the Award is entirely undue, you would have no reason for having left the section about the Award in the article. I disagree that this could be categorized as a minor story - with regard to the subject matter and a quick look at reliable sources, it is not. Although the award may not be well known, the people behind the award are highly notable, all ex-intelligence officials and most are quite famous.

This 'organization that barely exists' has been active since at least 2002.

This is the second of two videos appearances we have of the Snowden, and is his first public appearance since becoming an asylee, which makes these videos even more notable, as we can see from the coverage in RS below. **petrarchan47tc** 01:43, 18 October 2013 (UTC)

- USA Today: 4 Americans meet to give Snowden an award (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/10/10/edward-snowdens-father-arrives-in-moscow/2957557/>)
- AP: 4 US Whistleblowers Meet Snowden In Moscow (<http://www.lex18.com/news/4-us-whistleblowers-meet-snowden-in-moscow/>)
- Coverage on Guardian (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2013/oct/12/edward-snowden-awarded-sam-adams-prize-integrity-intelligence-video>)
- Coverage on Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-switch/wp/2013/10/11/snowdens-life-in-exile-is-starting-to-come-out-of-the-shadows-heres-what-we-know/>)
- Coverage on Democracy Now ([http://www.democracynow.org/2013/10/14/edward\\_snowden\\_is\\_a\\_patriot\\_ex](http://www.democracynow.org/2013/10/14/edward_snowden_is_a_patriot_ex))

I'm not saying anything about the reliability of the sources; WP:UNDUE is about neutrality, not verifiability. The award is already covered in the text. On top of that it gets not one, not two, but **four** videos? Whether it's intended this way or not, it comes off as abject hero-worshiping. Even a single video is inappropriate, as it puts disproportionate emphasis on a very small aspect of Snowden's biography. He is famous for his leaks, not the award he received for his leaks. This is not the Nobel Prize. And yes, this is an organization that barely exists. They have no website and you won't find a *single* reliable source that even acknowledges their existence prior to Snowden's disclosures. And every other recipient of the award has an article, but you won't find links to videos of any of them receiving it. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 04:16, 18 October 2013 (UTC)

*This is the second of two videos appearances we have of the Snowden, and is his first public appearance since becoming an asylee, which makes these videos even more notable.* (I've just re-added my note from above.) In media coverage these videos are receiving attention not for the award, the catalyst for the visit and public appearance, but because since becoming a household name after the Guardian interview, no one has heard from him until now. Regarding the videos, I'd like to hear more from the editor who added them as well as the rest of the community. Regarding "hero worship", that is a personal judgement void of substance, given that editors are simply reflecting RS and should not be made to feel guilty for that. The opposite of hero worship is equally egregious for an editor, and I would point to the removal of Snowden's White House petition as well as the recent grumbling at Sam Adams Award as red flags for a certain potential POV. **petrarchan47tc** 22:27, 18 October 2013 (UTC)

The fact that content is supported by reliable sources doesn't mean we



abdicate our responsibility to ensure that the content is presented in a neutral and WP:BALANCED way without giving WP:UNDUE weight to any particular aspect of the subject. I do not dispute that Snowden's public reappearance is notable; indeed it is. What I dispute is that his reappearance is somehow so much more notable than *all other aspects* of his biography that it gets *four* videos, while the rest of his biography gets *none*. And the fact that these four videos paint him in an overwhelmingly positive light, far more positively than the article as a whole. Where is the video of the DOJ announcing his indictment? Or the C-SPAN coverage of the congressional hearings about him? --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 22:52, 18 October 2013 (UTC)

The videos are important IMHO and should be in Blade-of-the-South (talk) 07:21, 19 October 2013 (UTC)

Please point to a comparable article that has links to a video concerning a comparable event. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 04:33, 21 October 2013 (UTC)

It has been a week without a response. I sense stonewalling. Someone please respond re comparable articles, or I'll interpret silence as acquiescence. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 08:53, 28 October 2013 (UTC)

Interesting, no response. I'm re-deleting the videos. If anyone disagrees with this, please make an effort to advance this discussion. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 05:19, 5 November 2013 (UTC)

I re-added the videos again as it seems their removal is controversial (3 against removal on talk). Receiving the award was a notable event, we're lucky enough to have footage of it-- it doesn't strike me as UNDUE to link to the footage of the event. --HectorMoffet (talk) 05:38, 5 November 2013 (UTC)

We're "lucky enough" to have footage of lots of other things, both related to Snowden and not, that never gets a link on WP. Why is this special? --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 05:59, 5 November 2013 (UTC)

Why does this article have videos when most articles still don't? Well, most video producers don't release their videos under Creative Commons, and thus they can't be uploaded to our servers. In this case, the footage was released under CC. Most editors don't understand how to upload and include videos, so articles that attract the interest of tech-saavy editors are probably going to be more prone to have videos.

I do agree we should worry about hagiography-- for example, the video clip where he's handed the award might be best put in the gallery and a still image used to illustrate the event. The gallery, meanwhile, might belong in the section on the award, rather than 'motivations'.

I recognize that even in 2013, it IS unusual for our articles to have videos (sigh). And I recognize the videos we do have present Snowden in the best possible light. So I do see your concerns that that article is getting 'special treatment'-- but the solution is for us to make video galleries a more regular occurrence on WP, not to delete links to the footage we already have. --HectorMoffet (talk) 07:15, 5 November 2013 (UTC)

Your response doesn't hold water, for two reasons. First, there's lots of relevant footage available, such as C-SPAN footage, that may be freely used

for non-commercial purposes with attribution. We could include all sorts of video coverage of Snowden related events, such as congressional hearings and NSA/DCI press conferences. Second, just because it might be desirable to promote video galleries on WP doesn't in any way negate the requirement that we adhere to WP:UNDUE and WP:BALANCE. You acknowledge that the videos present Snowden in the best possible light; that should settle the matter, as we have a responsibility to present the facts neutrally, rather than in any sort of good or bad light. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 07:31, 5 November 2013 (UTC)

"We could include all sorts of video coverage of Snowden related events, such as congressional hearings and NSA/DCI press conferences"-- You'll get no argument from me! There's a definite 'need for balance' in the video sections-- I think Congressional Hearings would make fine addition-- either hosted on Commons or at minimum linked to. That might be a great way to have our cake and eat it too. --HectorMoffet (talk) 07:56, 5 November 2013 (UTC)

How about 4 videos for each congressional hearing and each press conference? Ok, I'm not serious. But do you see what I'm getting at? --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 09:01, 11 November 2013 (UTC)

## RfC: Should the links to the four Sam Adams Award videos be deleted?

*The following discussion is closed. **Please do not modify it.** Subsequent comments should be made on the appropriate discussion page. No further edits should be made to this discussion.*

There are currently four links to uploaded videos related to the Sam Adams Award footage: one to Snowden receiving the award (in the Edward Snowden#Awards subsection), and three of Snowden speaking at the same event (in the Edward Snowden#Motivations subsection). The question is whether these links should be removed. Arguments for removal have centered around WP:UNDUE and WP:BALANCE. Arguments against removal have mostly said that the event was highly notable. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 06:12, 5 November 2013 (UTC)

Plural was used for describing "argument(s) for". If this was in error, please correct your entry to reflect the singular. Thanks, **petrarchan47**<sup>tc</sup> 09:13, 9 November 2013 (UTC)

- **Delete most, keep one.** Four videos seems to me

**Non-Admin Closure:** The obvious consensus is to either keep and/or merge the videos. Three of the videos have been merged into File:Edward Snowden speaks about everything.webm and the fourth video was replaced by a still image. Theses edits all have the backing of consensus. I must add my personal opinion in that I believe this discussion and the compromises are a great example of team work on en.wikipedia. It should be noted that this closure is just to put a stamp of evidence of consensus as the parties involved seemed to have resolved this situation. -- **ТимофейЛееСуда**. 20:45, 1 January 2014 (UTC)

excessive for anything short of the Kennedy assassination. FWIW, I wouldn't support four videos if Snowden had won the Nobel Prize, much less this comparatively obscure award. Adding this many video links makes it seem the most important moment of Snowden's life, but I think few reliable sources would consider it such (it certainly didn't dominate world headlines similarly to other Snowden events). This emphasis also raises some mild neutrality concerns. For comparison, we would never include four video links to White House spokespeople discussing and condemning Snowden's actions, though White House press broadcasts are presumably public domain. -- Khazar2 (talk) 13:36, 10 November 2013 (UTC)

But we did include the White House reaction to the Russian asylum - it is the largest paragraph in that section. Further, media covering Snowden didn't just talk about this event, they included these videos. Wikipedia is in keeping with RS in this regard. If you haven't researched the coverage, let me know and I will add links.

**petrarchan47tc** 18:49, 10 November 2013 (UTC)

Reactions to Snowden were moved to the 2013 global surveillance disclosures article, where there is a good amount of space dedicated to WH reaction/condemnation. For inclusion in this article, (video) statements by Snowden can't be compared with WH reactions. It might make to sense to give equal space in this way if the article was 'Snowden controversy' or 'Snowden relationship with US government'. **petrarchan47tc** 21:11, 10 November 2013 (UTC)

Adding four video snippets that make Snowden's case, and zero that criticize him, really does raise POV issues, unless your plan is to correspondingly overemphasize anti-Snowden views in the prose for some kind of overall balance. Despite taking the time to respond twice, I think you've missed the point here in both. Of course there are reliable sources about this event, but I'm not arguing that it didn't exist (and in fact argued that one video should be kept). I'm arguing that it's undue weight to link readers to this ceremony four additional times. This event doesn't even appear in the article's own lead section, for crying out loud. -- Khazar2 (talk) 01:41, 12 November 2013 (UTC)

Khazar2 makes a good argument that's hard to dispute. As a reader, I certainly don't want to look at four videos, which is why I have brought up other technical solutions that obviously won't happen within the time frame of this RfC. No matter how many arguments people make to keep these videos, it is an inescapable fact that from a merely aesthetic POV, it doesn't work. Viriditas (talk) 07:07, 12 November 2013 (UTC)

Khazar2 -- These are not video snippets about any ceremony, they were simply recorded at one. The snippets are not "pro-Snowden", they inform the reader about him using his own words. To me, that is good, encyclopedic content. If there has been criticism or notable response to his statements in the videos, I would add them to page myself. As for their placement in the article, I would agree

this isn't the best. The videos were added by an editor who has not worked on the article before. I do wish the three could be linked to play as one, which is how media outlets such as Washington Post covered this. But for now, even with the 4 clips and 3 still images, the Snowden article is sparse and visually unappealing compared with most Wikipedia articles, in my mind. To remove more media would certainly not help the situation, and is in no way a POV issue any more than text detailing his childhood history would be. It's information about the subject of the article. I don't see the problem. **petrarchan47tc** 22:22, 14 November 2013 (UTC)

Update: The 4th video, showing Snowden accepting the award, was removed and in its place is a still image. The 3 video clips now have context, with an introduction and a proper spot chronologically in the Temporary Russian asylum section. **petrarchan47tc** 00:01, 15 November 2013 (UTC)

Do you really think it would be neutral to have videos of Barack Obama or George W. Bush talking about their political beliefs on their own pages? --Dr.

Fleischman (talk) 00:11, 15 November 2013 (UTC)

Exactly. I'd also add that responding twice to every post someone makes in a discussion borders on bludgeoning; instead, let's agree to disagree. You still have plenty of space to explain your rationale in your own !vote without needing to also pound mine into the ground. -- Khazar2 (talk) 20:10, 16 November 2013 (UTC)

- **keep** The videos are all very short. The three in the "motivations" section are all very short snippets, probably all taken from a single, much longer, video (someone please correct me if this assumption is incorrect). They are useful because they help explain Snowden's motivations. The one showing him receiving the award is also relevant to its section. Its removal would not be a great loss to the article, but it does little harm, in my view, to keep such a short clip. --NSH001 (talk) 18:17, 10 November 2013 (UTC)

The short, seconds-long video clips were released by Wikileaks in this format. A longer video, or the source video, has not been released or doesn't exist AFAIK. **petrarchan47tc** 18:53, 10 November 2013 (UTC)

- **Keep** per NSH001; this article is quite anemic with regard to non-text content, and as information trickles out about the subject, I expect editors to add more, be it text, video or still images just as we do any other article. Check out Deepwater Horizon oil spill, another article I've worked on a bit, to get an idea how comparably sparse this one is, making this

RfC seem a bit of a time-waste. Frankly I'm getting sick of the needless difficultly placed on editors trying to work on this and the Sam Adams Award - a related article and recipient of similar complaints by the same RfC-filing editor. **petrarchan47tc** 18:35, 10 November 2013 (UTC)

- **Delete most, keep one.** Four videos is overkill. --Inayity (talk) 18:42, 10 November 2013 (UTC)
- **Comment:** It's sad that in 2013 (going on 2014), Wikipedia has *still* not integrated multiple media formats into its articles. We should be able to easily link to and play all four videos in one small window with a loadable playlist template that can handle all types of media files. Otherwise, a variation of the `{{collapse}}` template would provide a quick fix for those wishing to preserve the videos. But really, we need a way to easily integrate slideshows, audio recordings, and video in a single display. Viriditas (talk) 04:05, 11 November 2013 (UTC)
- **Delete.** This event is simply not particularly notable. Yes, it received some press, so it merits mention in the text, but there are lots and lots of *more* notable events mentioned in the article that don't have any videos, despite them being available. This event probably wouldn't make the top 10. Bear in mind that this is an extremely obscure group that doesn't have a website and whose very existence isn't supported by reliable sources prior to this particular event. And aside from the notability issue, no one has explained how the videos provide any benefit over and above what's in the text. So he won the award. We say he won the award; isn't that enough? Likewise, the motivations videos "explain Snowden's motivations" (quoting Petrarchan); are his motivations unclear from our text? And if so, isn't the solution to change the text? --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 09:15, 11 November 2013 (UTC)
  - **Comment:** this is a biography article. It doesn't matter if the event was notable, what matters is if the commentary in the video helps illustrate the subject. For what it's worth, it wouldn't matter if it was a home video taken in a hotel room or a major production. What matters here is content, not the notability of the event. Viriditas (talk) 23:24, 11 November 2013 (UTC)

Per WP:BALASPS, the weight given to the Sam Adams event shouldn't be disproportionate to its significance to the biography of Edward Snowden. I believe we've all been using the terms "significance" and "notability" interchangeably. The point, though, is that whether content is "helpful" or "illustrative" doesn't end our inquiry; there's still a neutrality standard (BALASPS) that must be met. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 06:22, 12 November 2013 (UTC)

The videos show Snowden talking about NSA programmes, the dangers to democracy, and about government transparency. Those issues are entirely relevant and significant in this article. The fact that he is speaking at a conference that you may or may not heard of is *irrelevant*. WP:BALASP has no application here, and I'm surprised you even brought it up. Viriditas (talk) 07:00, 12 November 2013 (UTC)

On what basis would WP:BALASPS not be applicable? As far as I know it *always* applies. And, as it says, it's about *proportionality* of the event's significance, not simply whether the event is or isn't significant. Put another way, we don't get to put in unlimited videos (or text) just because an event meets some "significance" threshold. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 17:42, 12 November 2013 (UTC)

The event has no bearing on the content. I'm not going to repeat myself again. Viriditas (talk) 01:33, 14 November 2013 (UTC)

I'm sorry, for some reason I can't make heads or tails of your comment "The event has no bearing on the content." How is WP:BALASPS not applicable? --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 06:06, 14 November 2013 (UTC)

- **Merge:** There's absolutely no reason to split a short videos into three even shorter parts. Having said that, the video itself is worth keeping but should be moved to Edward\_Snowden#Political\_views. -A1candidate (talk) 23:36, 12 November 2013 (UTC)
- **Merge.** Before A1candidate made his comment, I requested further input on a proposed merge here. Anyone who has the skills to merge these segments together is invited to do so provided it won't cause any problems for our readers (or the servers). Thanks. Viriditas (talk) 01:30, 14 November 2013 (UTC)
- **Merge or Keep One.** Multiple videos of the same event do not belong in an encyclopedic article unless each video, on its own, provides important content that is not already incorporated by the balance of the text and other videos. In this instance, all videos are of the same event and each does not sufficiently expand or extend the theme to warrant multiple inclusions. Factchecker25 (talk) 14:08, 21 November 2013 (UTC)

I still oppose keeping any of these videos, but if the decision is between merging or keeping one I strongly prefer keeping one, the awards ceremony itself. The other three videos are Snowden elucidating his political views and motivations, things that are already well covered in the text of this article, and additional video coverage of the same material creates a neutrality issue. We would never allow similar footage in a politician's article, and I don't see any meaningful difference. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 20:22, 21 November 2013 (UTC)

- **Merge** - per reasoning stated above by Viriditas. This is information that improves the the article, as it presents the subject in his own words. I call that encyclopedic, as I define it in the year 2013. Jusdafax 22:00, 23 November 2013 (UTC)
- **Keep** the videos, separately or Merged into one is fine by me. The videos facilitate seeing the subject in his own words in a story that has gone viral, and due to the subject's necessary removal from US jurisdiction, a story that has mostly been told for him by media intermediaries. Cheers. N2e (talk) 19:19, 2 December 2013 (UTC)

**Merge is possible**

Thanks to help from User: Viriditas and the good folks at Village Pump, we should have a single video containing all 3 clips shortly ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Village\\_pump\\_%28technical%29#Help\\_with\\_merging\\_3\\_video\\_files](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Village_pump_%28technical%29#Help_with_merging_3_video_files)) :)  
**petrarchan47**tc 22:33, 23 November 2013 (UTC)

It should be noted that with this merged video to replace the three clips (having already replaced the fourth video from the "Sam Adams" section with a still image), we are now left with a single video. **petrarchan47**tc 22:56, 23 November 2013 (UTC)

 **Done**

This is certainly a step in the right direction, and I appreciate your efforts, Petrarchan47, but we still have neutrality/BALASPS issues. Why do we have two redundant paragraphs about the Sam Adams Award? And as for the content of the video, we still have the subject of the article speaking his mind on his political views - how is this neutral? --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 07:56, 24 November 2013 (UTC)

I added a YouTube video reference towards the end of the 'Alternate Christmas Message, 2013' and removed the "YouTube" claim from the ref that was *not* YouTube. — Charles Edwin Shipp (talk) 04:19, 27 December 2013 (UTC)

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*The discussion above is closed. **Please do not modify it.** Subsequent comments should be made on the appropriate discussion page. No further edits should be made to this discussion.*

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*The above discussion is preserved as an archive. **Please do not modify it.** Subsequent comments should be made in a new section.*

**"Debate" section**

Just leaving notes for future additions: **petrarchan47**tc 22:53, 2 December 2013 (UTC)

- Edward Snowden revelations prompt UN investigation into surveillance (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/02/edward-snowden-un-investigation-surveillance>) 12.2.13. Guardian. By Nick Hopkins and Matthew Taylor.

 **Done**

- Edward Snowden says he accomplished his Mission to raise **national debates**. — Charles Edwin

Shipp (talk) 04:23, 27 December 2013 (UTC)

✔ **Done petrarchan47tc** 23:31, 14 January 2014 (UTC)

## Misinformation and Credibility

There should be a section detailing what Snowden has gotten wrong with his leaks. Also, his lying about his education, army service, and role at the NSA are well known and are dispersed throughout the article but are not listed in a single section. Snowden's credibility is under serious question and this article effectively ignores that fact. There needs to be a section detailing his credibility and why some people disregard anything he says based not on their unwillingness to listen but because his track record for telling the truth is so poor. Eyes down, human. (talk) 15:55, 27 December 2013 (UTC)

Snowden's statements are backed up by *decades* of earlier disclosures (See Global surveillance disclosure). If any biography deserves such a "misinformation and credibility" section, it should be added to that of Barack Obama ("*There is no spying on Americans* (<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/08/06/209692380/obama-to-leno-there-is-no-spying-on-americans>)").

-A1candidate (talk) 16:19, 27 December 2013 (UTC)

But Mr Obama's reaction suggests there is rather a lot of truth in what Snowden has told us. People are not really interested in his education or army service, are they? Martinevans123 (talk) 18:00, 27 December 2013 (UTC)

If there actually is more information of any sort about Snowden's education or military service I'm not aware of it. Perhaps Eyes down could present what he has found and we could discuss it. As for the problem s/he is having with the order info is placed in the article, it seems to me that it is similar to other bios. Not sure what s/he means by "what he has gotten wrong" ... Gandydancer (talk) 19:55, 27 December 2013 (UTC)

They aren't listed as a single section because WP:SYNTH and WP:OR. If WP:RS, however, synthesized this information and due weight considerations were met, a section such as the one MKRa desires would be justified. petrarchan47tc 21:03, 27 December 2013 (UTC)

Where is the reliable source that synthesized the "Recognition" section currently in this article?--Brian Dell (talk) 19:03, 31 December 2013 (UTC)

## Semi-protected edit request on 29 December 2013

### Federal court ruling of Judge Pauley

On 27 December 2013, US Federal Judge William H. Pauley III ruled that bulk collection of American telephone metadata was legal. Regarding the ACLU's statutory arguments, the judge wrote, "...there is another level of absurdity in this case. The ACLU would never have learned about the section 215 order authorizing collection of telephony metadata related to its telephone numbers but for the unauthorized disclosures by Edward Snowden. Congress did not intend that targets of section 215 orders would ever learn of them. And the statutory scheme also makes clear that Congress intended to



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preclude suits by targets even if they discovered section 215 orders implicating them. It cannot possibly be that lawbreaking conduct by a government contractor that reveals state secrets - including the means and methods of intelligence gathering - could frustrate Congress's intent. To hold otherwise would spawn mischief: recipients of orders would be subject to section 215's secrecy protocol confining challenges to the FISC, while targets could sue in any federal district court. A target's awareness of section 215 orders does not alter the Congressional calculus. The ACLU's statutory claim must therefore be dismissed."<sup>[1]</sup> Regarding the privacy implications and concerns of bulk meta data collection, the judge wrote, "The ACLU argues that analysis of bulk telephony metadata allows the creation of a rich mosaic: it can 'reveal a person's religion, political associations, use of a telephone-sex hotline, contemplation of suicide, addiction to gambling or drugs, experience with rape, grappling with sexuality, or support for particular political causes.' But that is at least three inflections from the Government's bulk telephony metadata collection. First, without any additional legal justification--subject to rigorous minimization procedures--the NSA cannot even query the telephony metadata database. Second, when it makes a query, it only learns the telephony metadata of the telephone numbers within three 'hops' of the 'seed' [a known terrorist associated number]. Third, without resort to additional techniques, the Government does not know who ANY of the telephone numbers belong to. In other words, all the Government sees is that telephone number A called telephone number B. It does not know who subscribes to telephone numbers A or B. Further, the Government repudiates any notion that it conducts the type of data mining the ACLU warns about in its parade of horrors."<sup>[2]</sup> Judge Pauley also noted in his 54 page ruling that the inclusion of a public privacy advocate's voice in the presentations to the FISC may be needed. The judge wrote: "As FISA has evolved and Congress has loosened its individual suspicion requirements, the FISC has been tasked with delineating the limits of the Government's surveillance power, issuing secret decision without the benefit of the adversarial process. Its ex parte procedures are necessary to retain secrecy but are not ideal for interpreting statutes. This case shows how FISC decisions may affect every American--and perhaps, their interests should have a voice in the FISC."<sup>[3]</sup>

Trwithe (talk) 16:01, 29 December 2013 (UTC)

Is it essential that the entire passage be quoted verbatim? Could it be partly paraphrased, as with the material in the section on Judge Leon's ruling? Dezastru (talk) 16:36, 30 December 2013 (UTC)

This level of coverage is better for the inevitable "NSA rulings" or "Pauley NSA ruling" articles than for Snowden. **petrarchan47tc** 02:08, 31 December 2013 (UTC)

✓ **Done** --**Mdann52***talk to me!* 14:51, 29 January 2014 (UTC)

## Photo and gallery edits

I don't care for the recent edits. I find the gallery edits to be not especially related to this bio of Snowden. I also feel that the two photos, Greenwald and Poitras, are too large since this article is a Snowden bio. Thoughts? Gandydancer (talk) 03:27, 30 December 2013 (UTC)

The NSA programs being featured in the gallery are what put Snowden on the map. I would strongly argue that they are very encyclopedic additions, and along with the journalists' photos, are well-placed in the article. As a reader, the images bring to memory all that I have heard about

the programs. Pure text, on the other hand, for the majority of us who skim rather than read, doesn't have the same effect. When these programs were in the news, the images were displayed as they were being discussed. This is why the images add actual information, and help the reader soak in the (somewhat dry) content. You will remember too, I was complaining a while back that this article is lacking visuals, and used the BP oil spill article as an example of a visually-rich article. These additions balance the article out well, imo. **petrarchan47tc** 04:14, 31 December 2013 (UTC)

Agree that the photos are not helpful, since this is an article about Snowden. If photos of Poitras and Greenwald are included, why not also include photos of Gellman, Putin, Obama, Judge Leon, Daniel Ellsberg etc? Dezastru (talk) 16:20, 30 December 2013 (UTC)

The portraits are HUGE. If they could be smaller, it does seem fitting to have images of Greenwald and Poitras, in my mind. They continue to play a huge role in Snowden's life (Greenwald speaks or emails with him daily) and in the whole Snowden saga, from the very beginning. The reason we don't also have an image of Gellman is because one doesn't exist yet on Commons, unfortunately. It wouldn't be a huge loss without the images, but I do prefer offering these visuals to the reader. The NSA programs' presentation could be less conspicuous, perhaps on the right side, or better yet in some kind of scrolling gallery (which we don't have available), but again, personally I think it is a service to the reader and does add context and content to the article without overloading it in any way. **petrarchan47tc** 01:03, 31 December 2013 (UTC)

Obama and Putin also continue to play huge roles in Snowden's life. There are Wiki links for Greenwald and for Poitras. Interested readers can see photos of them on their Wiki bio pages. Dezastru (talk) 02:36, 31 December 2013 (UTC)

The way that it serves the reader, in my mind, is that they don't have to click on a link to get more information about two of the most pivotal people in Snowden's life and in the story of the NSA leaks. Putin and Obama are well-known and an image does nothing to inform readers. They are also peripheral. It looks silly to argue these are in the same vein simply because they've played a role in Snowden's life, frankly. Is there some other reason you don't like these particular images? **petrarchan47tc** 03:59, 31 December 2013 (UTC)

I feel that the smaller photos of Greenwald and Poitras fit better and are useful for the article. However, I still strongly object to the others. They are available at the other article while in this article there is no discussion about what they are even about--nor should there be, IMO. Gandydancer (talk) 00:12, 1 January 2014 (UTC)

I don't feel strongly one way or another, though I do think adding the most well known leaks (which could be narrowed to three: MUSCULAR, XKeyscore and PRISM) is a good addition and totally fitting. When we first heard of and saw Snowden, it was in tandem with these programs/leaks/images. He is famous *because* of these very leaks (and subsequent ones). However it makes sense to expand a bit on the programs with a short description of each, imo. **petrarchan47tc** 05:05, 1 January 2014 (UTC)

The Leaks section is now filled out, and considering the

importance of the leaks to the Snowden 'story', as well as the nice visual break from text that the images offer, I now lean in favor of keeping them. **petrarchan47tc** 07:57, 1 January 2014 (UTC)

## Snowden and Assange: FP analysis of how Snowden became more well known than Assange

- Leetaru, Kalev. "King Snowden and the Fall of Wikileaks ([http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/12/30/silver\\_lining\\_the\\_year\\_2013\\_in\\_human\\_rights](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/12/30/silver_lining_the_year_2013_in_human_rights)). " *Foreign Policy*. December 30, 2013.

WhisperToMe (talk) 15:17, 1 January 2014 (UTC)

## Needed: Edward Snowden advice on how not to be surveilled

Apparently, Edward Snowden has also dispensed advice (not part of what he has leaked) on how not to be surveilled or otherwise get netted in the NSA surveillance haystack, and it is changing the way many people communicate worldwide.

For instance, see: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/05/nsa-how-to-remain-secure-surveillance>

A section on this aspect of the Snowden case would have to provide the information with a neutral POV, which should not be too difficult. As it is of general interest regardless of the outcome of any criminal proceedings, it bears mention to the general readership. There should be no legal difficulties with this. Danshawen (talk) 03:52, 4 January 2014 (UTC)danshawen

As useful as this material might be, Wikipedia is not a how-to manual. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 04:47, 4 January 2014 (UTC)

Start something on Wikibooks. They'll love it. WhisperToMe (talk) 06:53, 5 January 2014 (UTC)

It should definitely be mentioned in the article, because almost nobody reads Wikibooks. Wikipedia is not censored, or is it? --85.197.10.39 (talk) 10:27, 20 January 2014 (UTC)

## Should add link to US spying on Israel

Given the high profile nature of the US-Israel relation, and past stories about Israeli spying on the US, it would be appropriate to add Israel to the list of countries that the US has spied on in the article. From <sup>[4]</sup>:

"Among allegations aired by Snowden last year were that the US National Security Agency and its British counterpart GCHQ had in 2009 targeted an email address listed as belonging to then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and monitored emails of senior defense officials.

...

Greenwald voiced understanding for the Pollard linkage.

"I think you are absolutely right to contrast the Jonathan Pollard case with revelations of American spying on their closest allies within the Israeli government, because it does underlie, underscore exactly the hypocrisy that lies at the center of so much of what the US government does," he said.

" — Preceding unsigned comment added by Richesla2 (talk • contribs) 19:09, 8 January 2014 (UTC)

Thanks, there is going to be a lot coming out soon, per Greenwald, about information contained in the leaks regarding Israel. It will be added. **petrarchan47tc** 08:11, 9 January 2014 (UTC)

## "According to the Washington Post..."

...his passport was voided by US officials "as he tried to change planes en route to Latin America."

This is misleading. The Washington Post in fact says "He said that once the U.S. government voided his passport as he tried to change planes en route to Latin America, he had no other choice." The material between the quote marks appearing in Wikipedia (that is, "as he tried to change planes en route to Latin America") should be attributed to "He", not the Washington Post, when the Washington Post does not use its own voice to state what Wikipedia presents within quotation marks. Changing "Washington Post" to "Barton Gellman" is still misleading because the "He" here in "He said" is neither WaPo nor Gellman but Snowden. It ought to therefore say that according to SNOWDEN his passport was voided by US officials "as he tried to change planes en route to Latin America."

I just deleted this sentence rather than correct it (quotes should not be used at all here since WaPo does not follow "He said" with quotes) simply because the article already has this. We've already got Greenwald claiming that "[Snowden] didn't choose to be there. He was trying to get transit to Latin America, and then the US revoked his passport..." As if that isn't enough, we've also got Harrison claiming that "I was travelling with him on our way to Latin America when the United States revoked his passport, stranding him in Russia." I accordingly don't see the necessity of repeating the claim again at length when the article is already repeating for the third time the claim with Barton Gellman's assertion that Snowden "didn't choose Russia. He was literally changing planes in the Moscow airport when the United States revoked his passport. He was stuck there by that." That isn't enough? You STILL need to add this additional sentence here on top of what Gellman said? What does it say that Gellman doesn't already say in the very next sentence?

Meanwhile, until I just added it today there was nothing that pointed out that the "stranded" narrative has been challenged and contradicted. One can try and call the U.S. official saying Snowden's passport was annulled BEFORE he left Hong Kong a liar (as if a U.S. official is not reliable when it was U.S. officials who took the action) but one cannot deny that this same official has significant agreement re the additional claim that in fact Russia could overlook the absence of a valid passport and allow Snowden to travel on should both Moscow and Snowden so desire. As the legal scholar cited by the Associated Press notes, "Moscow airport is as much a part of Russia as is the Kremlin... Many nations pretend that airport transit lounges are not part of their territory, indeed not under their jurisdiction. As a matter of

international law, this is completely false." The idea that Snowden was "stranded" in the airport is a "pretend" fiction created by the Kremlin and then re-propagated by Greenwald, Wikileaks, and Barton Gellman. If Wikipedia is going to in turn re-propagate this "stranded" line, once is enough (you can take your pick of Greenwald, Harrison, and Gellman), and the contradictory statements from U.S. officials and legal experts should be admitted.--Brian Dell (talk) 02:10, 12 January 2014 (UTC)

No one has argued against the inclusion of official statements, ever. If I inaccurately attributed a quotation to Gellman when in fact it was Snowden's, you can simply fix it in the text next time, yes? **petrarchan47tc** 03:40, 12 January 2014 (UTC)

## Passport

According to Gellman, after his interview with Edward Snowden in December 2013, and to Wikileaks, who was overseeing Snowden's travel from Hong Kong, Snowden was **stuck** in Moscow due to US' revocation of his passport. This information was left in the article, but is being questioned ([https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward\\_Snowden&diff=590566558&oldid=590532871](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward_Snowden&diff=590566558&oldid=590532871)) again.

This passport issue is a sticky subject, and deserves better coverage in the article. For now, I'll leave some research here. **petrarchan47tc** 22:58, 13 January 2014 (UTC)

- "The document reportedly allows him to leave the airport transit zone where he arrived June 23 with a revoked U.S. passport, which did not allow him to legally enter Russia or board a flight elsewhere" LATimes (<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/jul/24/world/la-fg-wn-edward-snowden-moscow-airport-20130724>)
- "Although Snowden was able to stay in Russia, revocation of his U.S. passport has been a crucial weapon to prevent him from crossing an international border for any reason other than to come home to prison in the United States." HuffPo ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/norman-solomon/why-snowdens-passport-mat\\_b\\_4150236.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/norman-solomon/why-snowdens-passport-mat_b_4150236.html))
- "Russian media quoted sources as saying the revocation of his U.S. passport is what's really keeping him from moving on -- preventing him from buying a plane ticket or even leaving the airport and setting foot on Russian soil." Fox (<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/06/26/snowden-stuck-in-moscow-us-russia-wrangle-over-leaker-status/>)
- "Upon his arrival, Snowden did not leave Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport. One explanation could be that he wasn't allowed; a U.S. official said Snowden's passport had been revoked, and special permission from Russian authorities would have been needed." Fox (<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/06/23/obama-administration-confirms-talking-to-hong-kong-about-snowden/>)
- "...had his U.S. passport revoked before he boarded a flight for Russia" AP (<http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/307253-report-snowdens-us-passport-revoked>)

- "Snowden left Hong Kong, where he faced an extradition request from U.S. authorities for Moscow early Sunday morning and is seeking political asylum in Ecuador. It is unclear how Snowden was able to travel to Russia if his passport had been revoked. A U.S. official told the AP that a country could overlook the former contractor's revoked passport if an airline or senior official in a country ordered that Snowden be allowed to travel." Hill (<http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/307253-report-snowdens-us-passport-revoked#ixzz2qJuQjwGE>)
- "The United States, by cancelling his passport, has left him for the moment marooned in Russia," Assange said. Politico (<http://www.politico.com/blogs/politico-live/2013/06/assange-canceling-snowden-passport-a-disgrace-167392.html>)
- "Hong Kong officials said that Snowden left the country "on his own accord for a third country through a lawful and normal channel." "As the HKSAR Government has yet to have sufficient information to process the request for provisional warrant of arrest, there is no legal basis to restrict Mr. Snowden from leaving Hong Kong," Hong Kong government officials said in a statement. Snowden's U.S. passport was revoked on Saturday, and Hong Kong authorities were then notified -- **but the U.S. notification may have occurred after Snowden already had departed the city**. The Obama administration was left "scrambling" for answers for how the fugitive former NSA contractor was able to jet to Moscow....despite carrying a passport that can no longer be used" ABC (<http://abcnews.go.com/International/nsa-leaker-edward-snowden-seeks-asylum-ecuador/story?id=19466318>)
- "Despite U.S. officials' insistence that Snowden's passport was revoked Saturday, the Hong Kong government said Sunday that he left "on his own accord for a third country." Aeroflot told the Associated Press that Snowden registered for the flight on Sunday using his U.S. passport. Ecuadoran diplomats were at Sheremetyevo International Airport, where Snowden landed aboard an Aeroflot flight about 5:05 p.m. (9:05 a.m. EDT). It was not clear whether they were meeting with Snowden or with others who accompanied him. Snowden did not have a Russian visa, according to several sources, so he was confined to a transit area within the airport. WaPo ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/snowden-departs-hong-kong-for-a-third-country-government-says/2013/06/23/08e9eff2-dbde-11e2-a9f2-42ee3912ae0e\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/snowden-departs-hong-kong-for-a-third-country-government-says/2013/06/23/08e9eff2-dbde-11e2-a9f2-42ee3912ae0e_story.html))
- Gellman: "...But Snowden knows his presence here is easy ammunition for critics. He did not choose refuge in Moscow as a final destination. He said that once the U.S. government voided his passport as he tried to change planes en route to Latin America, he had no other choice." WaPo ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/edward-snowden-after-months-of-nsa-revelations-says-his-missions-accomplished/2013/12/23/49fc36de-6c1c-11e3-a523-fe73f0ff6b8d\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/edward-snowden-after-months-of-nsa-revelations-says-his-missions-accomplished/2013/12/23/49fc36de-6c1c-11e3-a523-fe73f0ff6b8d_story.html))

- "I was traveling with him on our way to Latin America when the United States revoked his passport, stranding him in Russia." — Sarah Harrison, the WikiLeaks advisor who met Snowden in Hong Kong and accompanied him to Moscow on June 23.
- Snowden "was transiting through Russia on his way to somewhere else, and got trapped

there by US actions." — Primary Snowden source Glenn Greenwald.

- "He was literally changing planes in the Moscow airport when the United States revoked his passport." — Primary Snowden source Barton Gellman.
- "The United States, by canceling his passport, has left him for the moment marooned in Russia." — WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.
- The U.S. went "so far as to force down the Presidential Plane of Evo Morales to prevent me from traveling to Latin America!" — Edward Snowden, in his recent open letter to Brazil. source (<http://www.businessinsider.com/how-snowden-got-stranded-in-russia-2014-1#ixzz2qJygYXTc>)

Given that "Snowden's U.S. passport was revoked on Saturday, and Hong Kong authorities were then notified" it's actually impossible that "U.S. notification may have occurred after Snowden already had departed the city." Aeroflot flight 213 is scheduled to depart at 10:50 AM Hong Kong time each day (or later). There is only one Aeroflot flight from Hong Kong to Moscow each day. 11 AM Sunday is necessarily after Saturday. Not that this particular point really matters but you evidently think it does given your boldfacing. Recall here what was going on before any of this (<http://themoscownews.com/news/20130904/191898252/Putin-talks-Syria-gay-rights-in-interview.html>):

Snowden, [Putin] said, was given a choice about coming to Russia **before** he flew in from Hong Kong on June 23.

"I'll tell you something I've never said before, hinted at, but never said directly. Mr. Snowden first appeared in Hong Kong and met with our diplomatic representatives [there]," Putin said, adding that he was told about Snowden at that time.

"I asked: 'What does he want?' He's fighting for human rights, for the right to spread information, he is fighting against human rights violations in this area and against violations of the law in the United States.... **I said**, 'So what? If he wants to remain with us, **he can stay**, but then he must stop all activity destroying Russian-American relations.' He was told that.

Note Putin said in this September 4 interview that he was "told about Snowden" by his diplomats in Hong Kong and decided that "he can stay," but there is no need to arrange a transit visa ([http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/russia.html#entry\\_requirements](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/russia.html#entry_requirements)) or other advance permission with Russian diplomats in Hong Kong if one truly intends to just transit: "Russian law does not require you to have a transit visa if you are transiting through one international airport in Russia, whereby you will not leave the customs zone, and will depart within 24 hours to an onward international destination." What would have created a need for special permission, however, would have been an intention to **not** continue onward within 24 hours! Of course Aeroflot would allow Snowden to register for the flight on Sunday using his U.S. passport if Moscow and Beijing have given special dispensation.

By the way, a blog written by a politician and activist on HuffPo making claims about "crossing an international border" hardly overrides what "a leading authority on international refugee law whose work is regularly cited by the most senior courts of the common law world" ([http://www1.jur.uva.nl/pdf/J\\_Hathaway.pdf](http://www1.jur.uva.nl/pdf/J_Hathaway.pdf)) has to say about the matter (see previous section). Ditto for Wikileaks and Greenwald. Greenwald has already exposed himself as an unreliable source by declaring on August 28 (<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/aug/28/ongoing-nsa-work>) that the *Kommersant*

story that first reported Snowden's contact with Russian diplomats "was fabricated" and then Putin goes on TV on September 4 to confirm the contact. More generally with respect to "Primary Snowden source[s]", we know from the TIME year-end article that "several people who communicate regularly with Snowden" (that is, primary Snowden sources) know Kucherena has "a knack for misleading the press" (given that it was "according to" these people that most of what Kucherena says "is fiction") yet have conspicuously failed to correct the record when Kucherena's false claims have been spread in the media. These "primary" people have consistently exhibited more interest in Snowden advocacy than in accuracy (although Greenwald calls it "adversarial journalism" against Snowden's enemies in the U.S. government as opposed to pro-Snowden reporting).--Brian Dell (talk) 20:50, 14 January 2014 (UTC)

- Just a note to think about. You know that Hong Kong is 12 hours ahead of us? Do you know what time they were notified and what time this notification finally reached customs at the airport? I'd say there is no way to know one way or the other.TMCK (talk) 23:08, 14 January 2014 (UTC)

I am aware of that and that's why I noted that "Sunday" is not 2 AM Sunday in Hong Kong but more like noon. Even allowing for time zones he still left Sunday. But as I said I think this is rather beside the point. On June 24 a State Department spokesman said (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2013/06/211081.htm#SNOWDEN>) that "though the Privacy Act prohibits me from talking about Mr. Snowden's passport specifically, I can say that the Hong Kong authorities were well aware of our interest in Mr. Snowden and had plenty of time to prohibited his travel." "Plenty of time" is plenty of time. Note what else the spokesman said there: "We do revoke passports at the request of law enforcement authorities. We do so expeditiously when the request is received. When the Department of State revokes a passport, that information is shared through databases accessible by law enforcement and various border agencies around the world, including INTERPOL, to prevent persons from traveling on revoked passports." Note that "shared through databases" suggests reaching "border agencies around the world" with electronic speed. Now when did "law enforcement" make the triggering move here? ABC News said "A State Department Operations Center alert said Snowden's U.S passport was revoked Saturday after the Justice Department finally unsealed charges on FRIDAY"

In my view, the U.S. government was trying to work with Hong Kong authorities to get them to turn over Snowden without forcing Hong Kong's hand. WaPo then breaks the story ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-charges-snowden-with-espionage/2013/06/21/507497d8-dab1-11e2-a016-92547bf094cc\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-charges-snowden-with-espionage/2013/06/21/507497d8-dab1-11e2-a016-92547bf094cc_story.html)) that there are sealed charges against Snowden on Friday, June 21. "After The Washington Post reported the charges, senior administration officials said late Friday ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-charges-snowden-with-espionage/2013/06/21/507497d8-dab1-11e2-a016-92547bf094cc\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-charges-snowden-with-espionage/2013/06/21/507497d8-dab1-11e2-a016-92547bf094cc_story.html)) that the Justice Department was barraged with calls from lawmakers and reporters and decided to unseal the criminal complaint." So the charges were unsealed Friday (later on Friday "officials" explained why) and State "expeditiously" moved to revoke Snowden's passport. Hong Kong/Beijing promptly realize that with the charges public, Privacy Act notwithstanding people will know the passport has been revoked as well and the "insufficient information" argument will become too unbelievable, so the green light to move on that Snowden/Wikileaks/Kremlin having been anticipating is given.--Brian Dell (talk) 03:58, 15 January 2014 (UTC)



- Media seems to say that they don't know either. We have first-hand accounts, and comments from unnamed government insiders. I suppose the best approach would be to lay it all out for the reader without presenting any conclusion. **petrarchan47tc** 23:21, 14 January 2014 (UTC)
- That's exactly the point I tried to make. **TMCK** (talk) 23:33, 14 January 2014 (UTC)  
So, you would see a "Passport revocation" (or similar) section dealing with these questions to be reasonable? **petrarchan47tc** 23:54, 14 January 2014 (UTC)

I thought more about such being incorporated into the existing text passage(s?) where the revocation is mentioned. **TMCK** (talk) 01:15, 15 January 2014 (UTC)  
Sounds perfect. **petrarchan47tc** 01:26, 15 January 2014 (UTC)

The highlighted text above has received no objection, yet it has been here, highlighted, since 13 January. Today I added it but it was removed with the edit summary eluding to a White House spokesperson's statement that contradicts the text. I would ask that editors argue on the talk page rather than by removing cited information, and that the WH statement be *added* to the article rather than used as an excuse to remove content. **petrarchan47tc** 23:48, 21 January 2014 (UTC)

“The highlighted text above has received no objection” is, in fact, the most false statement I have ever encountered on a Wikipedia Talk page. Here is your highlighted text, from above:

*“but the U.S. notification may have occurred after Snowden already had departed the city.”*

Here is my January 14 reply, from above:

*“it's actually impossible that 'U.S. notification may have occurred after Snowden already had departed the city'.... Not that this particular point really matters but you evidently think it does given your boldfacing.”*

“It's impossible” is “no objection”? Are you kidding me? You then go on to edit war over this, instead of replying *to me* here on the Talk page. In an edit summary I refer you back to my January 15 comments where I call attention to what the official State Department spokesman said on June 24, and here you say I was "eluding" (sic) to a WHITE HOUSE statement! Can we agree, first of all, on the importance of reading what other editors have written?--**Brian Dell** (talk) 01:40, 22 January 2014 (UTC)

Let's review the substance here:

Note that the ABC News story (<http://abcnews.go.com/International/nsa-leaker-edward-snowden-seeks-asylum-ecuador/story?id=19466318&singlePage=true>) here says “whether the U.S. embassy was able to tell Hong Kong in time before Snowden fled, or whether the Chinese officials simply were eager to wash their hands of him and let him go, remains unclear”. ABC News doesn't know for sure, but acknowledges as the second possibility that notice was timely and that the Chinese simply ignored the notice. Subsequent to the ABC News story we have that daily press briefing (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2013/06/211081.htm#SNOWDEN>) at the State Department that I've noted earlier. There spokesman Patrick Ventrell states that “we’re just not buying that this was a technical decision by a Hong Kong immigration official. This was a deliberate choice”. Ventrell then says he will “walk you through all the broader frame of what we do with passports here at the State Department” and when he does so, he notes that notification would not involve going through the “U.S. embassy” (ABC News probably should have said State Department or “consulate” as there is no U.S. embassy in Hong Kong) as it is more automatic,

being “shared through databases accessible by law enforcement and various border agencies around the world, including INTERPOL, to prevent persons from traveling on revoked passports.” Ventrell then says that there was “plenty of time to prohibited his travel.... this is not a technical sort of immigration paperwork kind of matter taken at the Hong Kong level.” If that isn't enough, Ventrell then directly addresses the question of media reporting that assigns any blame for Snowden's being in Russia on the U.S.:

“– there’s been a little bit of confusion. And I just want to be very clear here. There was some media reporting that somehow the State Department had dropped the ball or we didn’t proceed as we needed to on this case, and I just want to outright reject that, that we have very much done our duty and done what’s necessary in expediting any processes that we have an involvement on. And certainly in terms of our diplomatic communication and the channel that we provide to some of these governments has been very active. So I just want to reject some of that reporting. Obviously, because of the Privacy Act, there’s some restrictions on how much I can say, but it has been frustrating to some of us to watch some news reporting implying something in that direction which is simply not true.”

So the State Department is quite clear here (Ventrell earlier said that what "the Privacy Act prohibits me from talking about [is] Mr. Snowden’s passport specifically"), and since the State Department is the entity that revoked Snowden's passport and knows when that happened, who is in a position to say State should not be relied on concerning this point?

The ABC News story should be paired with what State said rather than have the ABC News story alone, but I believe it is still misleading to have ABC paired against State because it is far from clear ABC intends to contradict State. The ABC story was written without the benefit of access to the later press briefing at State. It is quite possible that at the time ABC just assumed that if Snowden got away the U.S. must have moved too slowly. Most important, however, is ABC's acknowledgement that it is possible “Chinese officials simply were eager to wash their hands of him and let him go”

Yes, you can set it up as a “he said, she said” with a cite to ABC for “he said” and a cite to State for “she said” but there is a good argument for calling such an opposition WP:SYNTH. It's putting the material together in such a way as to try to suggest, yet again, that it's the U.S. government's fault that Snowden is in Russia as opposed to the "fault" of Snowden and/or Russia and/or China. The truth is more like "he said possibly A, maybe B, she said absolutely not anything but B (and she's in a better position to know)." ABC's report is too hedged to have a black/white contrast with State here, and is certainly too tenuous to support the added weight of being highlighted in the lede.--Brian Dell (talk) 03:25, 22 January 2014 (UTC)

Brian, I do find that you can be fair and not impossible to work with. Thank you. I apologize that I missed your objection. If it contains WP:SYNTH, however, it won't fly. I have to ask that you try to give shorter summaries here that are heavy on WP:RS, instead of long blocks of text. The passport situation seems not to be clear to anyone. But I think it's time to leave this up to the community. Would you feel keen to start an RfC about what can be said from the sources? You have my blessing to go ahead and file. **petrarchan47tc** 04:00, 22 January 2014 (UTC)

- It appears Snowden has helped us out. He made comments today explaining his side of the story. I'll add that to the body. Maybe we don't need an RfC. **petrarchan47tc**

05:42, 22 January 2014 (UTC)

I object to changing "however, Putin acknowledged" to "media reported that Putin stated". See WP:WEASEL. There are no grounds to water this down by moving from a direct statement to an indirect statement. To quote ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/putin-warns-us-not-to-strike-syria-dismisses-case-against-assad-as-rumors/2013/09/04/dbcf3396-154f-11e3-961c-f22d3aaf19ab\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/putin-warns-us-not-to-strike-syria-dismisses-case-against-assad-as-rumors/2013/09/04/dbcf3396-154f-11e3-961c-f22d3aaf19ab_story.html)) the *Washington Post*, "Putin CONFIRMED that Russian officials had been in touch with him while he was still in Hong Kong." That means keeping the link to what was confirmed (the *Kommersant* story), not trying to sever that link. THIS is a true "he said" versus "she said" situation. See also USA Today (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/09/04/putin-syria-interview/2766973/>), which says the same thing: "Putin also gave the first OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION that Snowden had been in touch with Russian officials in Hong Kong before flying to Moscow on June 23". Please note the video there on the USA Today website. You can see Putin there being interviewed by AP International Editor John Daniszewski. There are no grounds here for injecting a "reportedly" or something like that here. That Putin acknowledged Snowden met with Russian officials in Hong Kong is as solid as you can get.--Brian Dell (talk) 06:50, 22 January 2014 (UTC)

The question is what would be the question to pose to RfC. The unsealing of the charges on Friday, June 21 set two things in motion at the same time: the revocation of Snowden's passport and Snowden's departure from Hong Kong. I don't believe Snowden won the race here but even if he did, what difference would that make? The U.S. clearly did not want him to travel onward from Hong Kong to anywhere, such that Snowden's claim that "the State Department decided they wanted me in Moscow" doesn't hold water no matter what angle you approach from. A former federal prosecutor has noted (<http://www.therecord.com/news-story/3852745-snowden-in-russia-reportedly-seeking-asylum-in-ecuador/>) that "the decision to unseal the criminal charges Friday, possibly prompt[ed] Snowden to flee." And indeed, that's what happened, according to this BBC story (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-23036162>), although the BBC suggests Snowden was pushed as opposed to having jumped:

...Mr Ho said he had a meeting with officials last Friday [June 21], which yielded no answers.

Somewhere around that time, a message was delivered to Mr Snowden through one of his supporters, purportedly by a person who claimed government status. Mr Ho said that person urged Mr Snowden to leave, and assured him that he would not be arrested if he left his safe house. ...

By this time, the US had made public the charges against Mr Snowden. He was feeling the heat.

Mr Ho said Mr Snowden at first intended to leave Hong Kong for Moscow on Saturday night. For some reason, perhaps because Mr Ho had made no progress with the Hong Kong official, he hesitated.

But by Sunday, Mr Snowden was ready to leave.... Mr Ho now believes the message delivered to Mr Snowden asking him to leave came from the Beijing government.

Does anyone really disagree that the Chinese made a political decision to let, or tell, Snowden go after reading this Washington Post article ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/legal-political-maneuvering-let-snowden-flee/2013/06/23/5643e0b6-dc36-11e2-bd83-e99e43c336ed\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/legal-political-maneuvering-let-snowden-flee/2013/06/23/5643e0b6-dc36-11e2-bd83-e99e43c336ed_story.html)) in full?

Note also that (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/28/edward-snowden-ecuador-julian-assange>) "*Assange appears to have had a strong role in obtaining the travel document for Snowden, dated 22 June...*" Why would Assange work out a travel document for Snowden dated Saturday, June 22? Because Snowden's passport was revoked that day and Assange knew it! Note that Assange lies to the New York Times (<http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/23/tracking-snowden/>), saying the document was issued Monday, June 17, but the document itself was later leaked (<http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/27/confusion-over-n-s-a-leakers-special-travel-document/>) with an issue date of June 22. Assange said he was "uncertain" whether Snowden could travel from Moscow to Ecuador with the document ("Different airlines have different rules, so it's a technical matter whether they will accept the document" said Assange) but this of course just generates an "airline rules" excuse for Snowden stopping, for good, in Moscow. If "He left Hong Kong with that document", as Assange says, of what importance is the status of his passport? "Doc was for HK exit" tweeted Wikileaks (<https://twitter.com/wikileaks/status/408698708293742592>), not necessarily to get him to Ecuador. Note that Assange told *Rolling Stone* (<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/snowden-and-greenwald-the-men-who-leaked-the-secrets-20131204>): "*While Venezuela and Ecuador could protect him in the short term, over the long term there could be a change in government. In Russia, he's safe, he's well-regarded, and that is not likely to change. That was my advice to Snowden, that he would be physically safest in Russia.*"

Snowden was ready to skedaddle that very evening, June 22, were it not for the fact that the carrier for that Saturday night flight, which leaves after midnight, is Cathay Pacific (Snowden's Aeroflot ticket must have been bought quite late, he wasn't even planning to go until after the developments of Friday, June 21, was going to fly on Cathay Pacific very early on Sunday the 23rd, and then ends up going on the Aeroflot flight near mid-day on the Sunday.) In the case of Aeroflot, we read in that first link that "*The minute Aeroflot got the information that a certain person by the name of Snowden is about to buy a ticket, this information would be immediately transferred to the quote-unquote competent authorities. It would be a political decision to give him a ticket or deny him a ticket.*"--Brian Dell (talk) 06:28, 23 January 2014 (UTC)

TL:DR. I really can't deal with these long blocks of text - since you asked if I was willing to read it, I thought I'd better be very clear - no. Very short summaries, and reliable sources supporting what you say, *will* be read. **petrarchan47**tc 21:53, 24 January 2014 (UTC)

It is a long block of text because it is a long argument, extracting quotes from several different sources. If you were inclined to ever give my editing the benefit of the doubt, something shorter would suffice. If you wouldn't insist on edit warring with me, I would not have to write anything on this Talk page at all! I'll add that if it were black and white which sources were reliable and which are not there wouldn't be much disagreement here would there? I don't believe Wikileaks and Russian sources are generally reliable when it comes to Snowden but I haven't attempted blanket removal of claims cited to them because the question of reliability is nuanced and should be assessed on a case-by-case basis if there is a dispute. Whoever disagrees with me deserves my attention in this way.--Brian Dell (talk) 02:16, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

## "seat reserved to fly on June 24 through Cuba"

I think "he had a seat reserved to fly on June 24" is too definitive. Note the following from the Guardian's June 23 timeline (<http://www.theguardian.com/global/2013/jun/23/edward-snowden-leaves-hong-kong-moscow-live>):

10.18am BST

The New York Times has managed to speak to an Aeroflot reservations agent who said Snowden's ticket to Moscow was one-way and *didn't include any onward travel*. Snowden was travelling with one other person, called Harrison, the agent said.

Snowden had already been in the air for half a dozen hours at 10:18 BST, such that we are not talking about a situation whereby Snowden still had time to add on an onward leg before leaving Hong Kong. So how did Reuters come to report that Snowden had booked a seat for an onward flight the next day?

10.37am BST

Interfax, *the Russian news agency*, is saying Snowden is set to fly on to Cuba. It's citing Aeroflot sources as saying there is a ticket in the American's name for a Moscow to Cuba flight, Reuters reports.

This brings me to the Reuters cite this bio is currently using for "he had a seat reserved to fly on June 24". That Reuters story is more than two months later and is primarily about Fidel Castro declaring that Cuba was not involved in Snowden failing to board an onward flight to Havana. The having the onward reservation was incidental to Reuters' August story and so for that little bit Reuters just dropped its earlier June elaboration that its source was a Russian news agency. In other words, this August 28 Reuters story does not indicate that Russian news agencies don't remain the ultimate source for all claims that Snowden had an onward ticket.

11.06am BST

It's possible Cuba could also be a staging point, according to Russian news agencies.

While both Interfax and Itar-Tass are now saying Snowden is booked on a Monday flight from Moscow to Havana, the latter is also citing an unnamed source as saying the American will then go on from Havana to Caracas in Venezuela.

Note that the additional information in the NYT snippet was that Harrison was on board, something subsequently confirmed, whereas ITAR-TASS says Snowden was moving on to Venezuela, something that not only hasn't been confirmed but conflicts with reports Snowden was Ecuador bound. Now it's true that the claim Snowden's ticket to Moscow didn't include any onward travel isn't on the New York Times website any more. But the ready explanation for this is that when other media outlets subsequently started saying there was an onward booking, the NYT took the conservative route of not standing in contradiction to other reports on the particular point when the NYT couldn't independently corroborate its own Aeroflot source. But the NYT DOES say this: "*Russian news services reported that Mr. Snowden would take a Monday afternoon flight to Cuba, prompting a late rush for tickets from the horde of journalists gathered at the airport. But others dismissed it as a ruse to put the news media and others off Mr. Snowden's trail.*" That the NYT should wish to raise the possibility that the onward ticket to Cuba is a mere "ruse" is significant. I believe that Wikipedia should follow the NYT's example here

and, at a minimum, say that the onward reservation is *according to Russian media*.--Brian Dell (talk) 23:55, 22 January 2014 (UTC)

If you are mainly saying "let's attribute this to Russian media as the NYT did", then I agree 100%. If I've missed nay other points, let me know succinctly. **petrarchan47tc** 21:49, 24 January 2014 (UTC)

Yes, that's what I'm saying. But if I JUST said that, somebody would complain when I replaced Reuters, saying I replaced material cited to a generally reliable source (which would be true). I wouldn't have had to say anything at all had @Binksternet not reverted me here with the complaint that my source preferences were politically biased ([https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward\\_Snowden&diff=591974815&oldid=591952959](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward_Snowden&diff=591974815&oldid=591952959)). So I have explained why I think the NYT is the BETTER source to use here. Now if you would just concede that analyzing competing sources on a Talk page like this does not constitute WP:original research....--Brian Dell (talk) 02:38, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

## **Tweaking marginal stuff from leaked media reports on Snowden is probably playing into hands of Intelligence handlers**

A couple of competitive Wiki editors are swapping edits on Snowden's passport revocation and related public tidbits. Russian and other intelligence agencies involved behind the scenes in all this do not face the same constraints on public sourcing as Wikipedia. Snowden's undisclosed location in snowy Russia is known to media and various intelligence and law enforcement officials but is not published. It will become public someday and should be a case study for an after action repot of how far off Wikipedia edie are. Meantime, there is no need to sweat the small stuff of what is public and what Ms. Harrison and her friends want us to believe.Patroit22 (talk) 03:56, 23 January 2014 (UTC)

This (<http://20committee.com/2013/11/05/russian-intelligence-is-behind-the-snowden-show-german-intelligence/>) should be down your alley. Perhaps you can use it to somehow generate a specific edit recommendation. Absent a specific edit recommendation, however, "This is not a forum for general discussion... Please limit discussion to improvement of this article"--Brian Dell (talk) 06:18, 23 January 2014 (UTC);

**Brian. I made a pertinent suggested edit to limit what appears to be edit wars over marginal public media reports that fit the classical spy management use of fellow travelers. All to deep for discussion here and nerve published in main stream media. Enuf said.Patroit22 (talk) 03 49, 24 January 2014 (UTC)**

**"...thinks it's a parasite from the local water..."**

Is this not getting WP:UNDUE, detailing some anonymous person's assassination fantasy? The State Department position on these threats is that they have “no place in our discussion of these issues.” Wikipedia evidently disagrees, as there is currently a huge place given over to going on about these threats. Kuchereana and Snowden certainly want to make hay out of these threats, with Snowden elevating these people to "officials" (a term Webster applies to those who have "a position of authority")

despite the official "totally inappropriate" from the State Dept spokesman, and Wikipedia is becoming tendentious if it is continually turning over its platform to extended self-serving statements. "Doing the right thing means having no regrets." This is encyclopedic?

I might add here that it's an assumption that all of the words attributed to Snowden in that Q&A were handpicked by Mr Snowden himself. Snowden once wrote a 1000 word essay that Glenn Greenwald knew was indeed entirely by Snowden and Greenwald thought it "Ted Kaczynski-ish" and would not go over well with the public. We've now got someone who writes like he could rival Greenwald in sophistication. I'm reminded of that purported Snowden statement of dubious authenticity ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/01/edward-snowden-wikileaks-statement\\_n\\_3530837.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/01/edward-snowden-wikileaks-statement_n_3530837.html)) issued last summer that was "written in fluent Assangese".--Brian Dell (talk) 00:22, 24 January 2014 (UTC)

I could add "no one knows whether Snowden was actually the person physically typing in the responses" to the article and cite that to NBC News (<http://www.nbcnews.com/technology/its-easy-snowden-mask-his-location-during-online-chats-2D11980615>), but I should hope we could agree that the better approach is to minimize our use of material attributed to Snowden without confirmation it is in fact Snowden's words to when it's necessary/appropriate to note a point of fact is disputed. "Doing the right thing means having no regrets" etc is really just polemics and removing that does not leave the reader less informed about the facts or possible facts.--Brian Dell (talk) 21:35, 24 January 2014 (UTC)

I think it's not undue, actually it is a subdued version of what is being reported in media, which is that some wanted to put "a bullet in his head". If media wasn't going into detail about the assassination ideas, we wouldn't have the right to here either. But Kucherina's statement required context, and as you can see I did not go into detail initially. However, the reader needs to understand what Kucherina is complaining about regarding "real threats". **petrarchan47tc** 21:43, 24 January 2014 (UTC)

Note: I did end up trimming the section whilst leaving enough details for context.  
**petrarchan47tc** 23:00, 24 January 2014 (UTC)

I understand that someone wants to put "a bullet in his head." But given that there may be hundreds of millions of people around the world with an opinion on Snowden, it's hardly news that a few people were found with extreme opinions. So why did Buzzfeed report this? How about because Buzzfeed wanted to do a story advising readers that while "the New York Times has called for clemency.... In intelligence community circles, Snowden is considered a nothing short of a traitor in wartime" and these "chilling" fantasies are given as examples? Where's your evidence that the threat is "real"? It's not in Buzzfeed, which also reported that "There is no indication that the United States has sought to take vengeance on Snowden... And the intelligence operators who spoke to BuzzFeed on the condition of anonymity did not say they expected anyone to act on their desire for revenge." The official State Department spokesperson then went on the record to note that there is absolutely zero chance a hit would ever be approved, never mind threatened, by someone actually in charge. Kucherena jumps on the Buzzfeed story to say his client needs more Kremlin-supplied security, private security won't do. Well of course he does. He isn't going to miss an opportunity to play up how much his client is being persecuted by a wrathful U.S. government seeking to maintain its power. It also serves the notion that Snowden

wouldn't be safe outside the embrace of Mother Russia and must accordingly remain there. Disseminating anti-American propaganda is his job. But that doesn't mean we have to nod along with him. He really should be ignored as an unreliable source, or at a minimum the doubts about his credibility given to the reader, but I recall you arguing at length for deletion of any reference to the TIME story calling him "misleading" and that suppression continues to reign as I decided to not edit war over it. I might add that *freesnowden.is* has not been established as a reliable source either. You cite to this website, but note that the domain is registered to Assange and hosted on Wikileaks servers (<http://www.nbcnews.com/technology/its-easy-snowden-mask-his-location-during-online-chats-2D11980615>). Its reliability is therefore no higher than that of Wikileaks.--Brian Dell (talk) 23:58, 24 January 2014 (UTC)

This reads more like a rant than a talk page discussion. This statement, "It also serves the notion that Snowden wouldn't be safe outside the embrace of Mother Russia", makes me question whether you are capable of maintaining a neutral POV. Probably best to save phrases such as "the embrace of Mother Russia" for personal opinion rather than talk page space. Gandydancer (talk) 00:31, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

Do you have anything to say about the article has opposed to me? See the top of this page: "Please limit discussion to improvement of this article." Of course I don't have a "neutral" POV. To quote from policy: "Problems arise when editors see their own bias as neutral". I'm a national security conservative, which in turn means that I'm going to be consistently on the short side of consensus given the libertarian majority on Wikipedia unless my position is so strong that people ideologically opposed to my point of view feel compelled to concede it. For many of those inclined to dispute my editing, unless a weight equivalent to the Library of Congress is dumped on them they'll continue to insist I have failed to present enough evidence and argument for them to stop edit warring.--Brian Dell (talk) 01:30, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

@Gandydancer I'll make another observation here about this particular statement of mine you find so objectionable. In an *Associated Press* wire we find (<http://news.yahoo.com/lawyer-snowden-place-live-russia-112855767.html>) "He said Kucherena's statements about concerns for Snowden's safety do not hold water." Who is "he"? Andrei Soldatov, a Russian investigative journalist and security analyst who frequently (<http://www.indexoncensorship.org/tag/andrei-soldatov/>) contributes to *Index on Censorship*. Soldatov is then quoted "We are all perfectly aware that Snowden, who has just received asylum, does not face any danger in Russia... This is a just a pretext." Since @Petrarchan47 refuses to accept that Kucherena has been using the latest threats as a pretext, my questioning that is directly relevant to the editing dispute.--Brian Dell (talk) 21:56, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

Please stop POV pushing and OR-ranting. I am not arguing that this is big news, the media is doing that. It was widely reported that Snowden is seeking extra security, and why. That is what this paragraph is about. As I have said, I



only added the details from *Buzzfeed* so that his lawyer's statement made sense. This isn't a paragraph about an article. If there was no fallout from the article, it wouldn't have been mentioned here. If you wish to pull quotations from the *Buzzfeed* piece, that would be a separate section - but it would also be undue unless the bits highlighted were discussed elsewhere. That is how I see it, anyway. Others may feel to weigh in. [I am officially 100% EXHAUSTED by Bdell555.] **petrarchan47**tc 00:21, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

My pushing back against your POV pushing is of course perceived as POV pushing to you. There is ranting here all right, but it is you ranting about being "100% EXHAUSTED". I have to write huge reams of text here to support all of my editing because you refuse to concede anything at all to my editing judgment unless you are buried in a mountain of evidence forcing you to concede the wisdom of my edits. I am exhausted by the unremitting and continual intransigence of yourself and your allies here but given your inclination to appreciate where those who don't agree with you are coming from, would it have ever occurred to you that all sides are exhausted here? You recently went to a notice board about another article, inviting others to weigh in and the response you got over there was "Brian Dell seems to be making the better argument". I have been continually referring to sources and providing arguments for why some sources are more reliable than others and why certain edits should be undertaken to render the article more neutral. You have to do due diligence to do a good job at that, due diligence you dismiss as original research instead of bothering to engage with it on a point by point basis. It's your dismissal of the importance of taking care that led to errors like your false statement that "The highlighted text above has received no objection" and your misattributing what the State Department said to the White House, just to take two examples.

With respect to the technical argument you seem to be trying to make for reverting me, your preferred version doesn't include "put a bullet in his head" despite the fact that the primary source for Kucherena's remarks is Russian news agencies and there ([http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014\\_01\\_21/Snowden-may-be-provided-with-govt-protection-services-in-Russia-lawyer-3539/](http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014_01_21/Snowden-may-be-provided-with-govt-protection-services-in-Russia-lawyer-3539/)) we see Kucherena say "It's gone as far as some officers, who earlier served in special forces, saying they are ready to kill Edward." Now which threat came from someone who served in the Special Forces? Why, that would be the "I would love to put a bullet in his head" guy. I could add here that this same guy speaks of "having to do it in uniform", a qualifier that doesn't exactly add support to the contention the guy is a "real" risk to disobey orders and go rogue.--Brian Dell (talk) 01:15, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

Yes Brian, you are exhausting. You said it yourself: "I have to write huge reams of text here to support all of my editing". There is a name for that, please see WP:TE, and please stop it.

Gandydancer (talk) 01:36, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

Wikipedia:Tendentious editing applies to article editing, not Talk page editing (except for formatting issues). There is also a name for what *you* are doing, which is repeatedly reverting another editor without discussing the edits at issue on the Talk page. It's called WP:Edit warring.--Brian Dell (talk) 02:02, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

That "Mother Russia" comment cements my impression that Bdell555 is not here to represent the topic neutrally. The attitude I'm seeing is classic WP:BATTLEFIELD, including edit summaries that sound like a line-in-the-sand challenge: "You want to hear from me less? Then stop fighting my editing at every turn. If you are going to insist on an edit war, I am [g]oing to discuss until the warring stops." Let's have shorter discussions of sourcing and wording, please. Binksternet (talk) 02:34, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

I now see that when you reverted my replacing a Reuters cite with a NYT cite, you didn't even look at the content that you were reverting, you just saw that I had mentioned the Guardian and FOX in my last two edit summaries (which was to a different part of the article) and on that basis alone you rolled back all three of my edits to the last version by Petrarchan47. So in other words I wasted my time defending that change on this Talk page because you might not have had any objection at all had you realized what you were doing! My mistake for assuming you had a good faith objection to the edit itself as opposed to the editor, I suppose. This is what I mean by "hearing from me less": this Talk page could have been shorter had you directed your attention to the article.--Brian Dell (talk) 03:18, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

Bdell555, looking at the last 24 hours you've already broke 3RR. So much for edit warring.TMCK (talk) 02:41, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

Can you provide the diffs that prove this? I address this sort of attitude towards 3RR on my Userpage. Please do take your complaint about me to a noticeboard so we can get more people involved here. Currently, the new entrants to this thread are unwilling or unable to take a look at the EDITS here as opposed to the

EDITOR.--Brian Dell (talk) 03:31, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

This "you are exhausting" talk is destructive, non constructive, and is contrary to the spirit of the project. Anyone who is too "exhausted" to address the good-faith concerns of their fellow editors ought to take a good long wikibreak, and consider focusing their efforts on less controversial subjects. That goes for all of you. Yes, including you, Petrarchan. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 22:34, 25 January 2014 (UTC)

Mr. F, if you consider these contributions to be concerns worth your time, I implore you to respond to them and to help me. (And thank you for the advice, though I already have a doctor ;) **petrarchan47tc** 20:13, 26 January 2014 (UTC)

WP:VOLUNTEER --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 08:45, 27 January 2014 (UTC)

Let me be more specific, I implore you to point out what exactly good faith concerns you see? I can't sift through it, and it is tiring. You have apparently sifted through these concerns, and maybe could show me what I'm missing with regard to article improvement. Thanks, **petrarchan47tc** 20:26, 27 January 2014 (UTC)

Fleischman, we can do without your advice. Why go around trying to stir up trouble? Gandydancer (talk) 22:38, 27 January 2014 (UTC)

Stay civil, assume good faith, and lay off the personal attacks. I haven't done any "sifting" and no one has presented any evidence of bad faith by anyone. If you two can't take my very simple suggestion to refrain from the "I am completely exhausted by you" and the "I can't sift through so-and-so's comments because they are tiring" comments, then you truly do need to take a break. Is that such an unreasonable suggestion? --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 17:37, 29 January 2014 (UTC)

## Upcoming interview

For those who are interested:

On 26 January 2014, Snowden will be giving a 30-minute pre-recorded interview (<http://www.daserste.de/specials/ueber-uns/snowden-exklusiv-das-interview-100.html>) on German TV. As far as I know, this will probably be his first television interview and it's going to be a rather long one, so there may be new information that could be included in this article. -A1candidate (talk) 22:48, 24 January 2014 (UTC)

Ich habe in vielen jahren nicht Deutsch studium... **petrarchan47tc** 23:04, 24 January 2014 (UTC)

- Interview preview - NSA engaged in economic spying, claims Snowden (<http://www.dw.de/interview-preview-nsa-engaged-in-economic-spying-claims-snowden/a-17387469>) Deutsche Welle; 26.01.2014; permalink (<http://dw.de/p/1AxH3>)
- Interview in English ([http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1aefb0\\_snowden-interview-in-english\\_news](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1aefb0_snowden-interview-in-english_news))
- Transcript ([http://www.ndr.de/ratgeber/netzwelt/snowden277\\_page-1.html](http://www.ndr.de/ratgeber/netzwelt/snowden277_page-1.html))

## The Snowden-Interview in English

- From NDR - Norddeutscher Rundfunk, a public radio and television broadcaster in northern Germany: [https://archive.org/details/snowden\\_interview\\_en](https://archive.org/details/snowden_interview_en)

## Restoring talk page section & the definition of TL:DR

*Too long: Didn't read* referred to entries, not sections, on this talk page. It is not OK to remove an entire section using this excuse, especially when it serves to hide a concerted effort to POV push. (It is concerning that this effort to smear 'whistleblowers' extends to other articles as well ([https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Russ\\_Tice&diff=591513279&oldid=591314769](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Russ_Tice&diff=591513279&oldid=591314769)), and that even after going to the BLP noticeboard, I receive no help in restoring a neutral biography to the Pedia.) **petrarchan47**tc 19:56, 26 January 2014 (UTC)

The original section is still there. Brian's last rv. only removed his last resp. which is ok. **TMCK** (talk) 20:12, 26 January 2014 (UTC)

You know, you're right... (and maybe I do need a break). **petrarchan47**tc 20:14, 26 January 2014 (UTC)

Actually s/he did remove the entire section--I restored it. **Gandydancer** (talk) 23:08, 26 January 2014 (UTC)

Were I to say more here than just that I never take removing another's comments lightly I'd be adding yet more talk to talk *about the Talk page*.--**Brian Dell** (talk) 04:57, 27 January 2014 (UTC)

.....Magnificent Clean-keeper-Can you explain to Wiki novices like me what this means? Brian and petrachant47 seem to be making edit after edit on points that do little to making the entry a neutral biography and there seems to be an attempt to delete rather short talk sections while the whole talk page drones on and on with their bickering. Thanks for any explanation. **Patroit22** (talk) 22:11, 26 January 2014 (UTC)

Nothing unusual. It's called wiki-editing :) **TMCK** (talk) 00:59, 27 January 2014 (UTC)  
Let's look at an example of what we have to do here at Wikipedia by looking at today's news. It's been reported that Snowden said "If there's information at [the German multinational] Siemens that's beneficial to U.S. national interests — even if it doesn't have anything to do with national security — then [U.S. intelligence]'ll take that information nevertheless." Now do we just add that to this biography of Snowden? An NSA spokesman has e-mailed the Washington Post to say ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-spy-agencies-mounted-231-offensive-cyber-operations-in-2011-documents-show/2013/08/30/d090a6ae-119e-11e3-b4cb-fd7ce041d814\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-spy-agencies-mounted-231-offensive-cyber-operations-in-2011-documents-show/2013/08/30/d090a6ae-119e-11e3-b4cb-fd7ce041d814_story.html)) that "The [Defense] department [which the NSA is a part of] does \*\*\*not\*\*\* engage in economic espionage in any domain, including cyber." The BBC has named a former White House official who insisted last October (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-24461679>) that "the US does not engage in industrial espionage... If it was for industrial purposes, it would be basically a violation of US policy." Should Wikipedia just repeat Snowden's claim and note that U.S. officials dispute it? That's usually the simplest and safest approach but that sometimes isn't the best because 1) it treats both claims as equally credible and 2) to some

extent the two sides may be talking past each other: have they both defined "industrial espionage" in the same way such that it's a true he said/she said? Our mandate is to allow readers to make the most informed decision possible about whom to believe, *which may be both*, subject to not spending too much of the article space on the matter.

With respect to (1), to date I have been more sceptical of the factual accuracy of statements attributed to Snowden than Petrarchan47. Here, when I see Snowden state in the same interview (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/26/us-security-snowden-germany-idUSBREA0POSW20140126>), "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 me die in the shower" I find it remarkable how "neatly and suspiciously" (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/10595021/Edward-Snowden-Did-the-American-whistleblower-act-alone.html>) Snowden's statements serve Russia's purposes. See my controversial "Mother Russia" comment above.

With respect to (2), I would note that nuance and precision matters because in other countries many companies are government-directed, blurring the line between state and private institutions. And as US DNI Clapper has said, "We collect this information for many important reasons: for one, it could provide the United States and our allies early warning of international financial crises which could negatively impact the global economy. It also could provide insight into other countries' economic policy or behavior which could affect global markets. [But] What we do not do, as we have said many times, is use our foreign intelligence capabilities to steal the trade secrets of foreign companies on behalf of – or give intelligence we collect to – US companies to enhance their international competitiveness or increase their bottom line." If the definition is providing U.S. private business with government intelligence data for commercial gain, I would argue that the U.S. does not do it, for various reasons ([https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol37no2/html/v37i2a02p\\_0001.htm](https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol37no2/html/v37i2a02p_0001.htm)). Does Snowden's claim clearly assert that the U.S. *does* do this?

So, given this background, what do you think Wikipedia should do with Snowden's comment here?--Brian Dell (talk) 04:45, 27 January 2014 (UTC)

Wikipedia should do what it always do. Write about both sides, and let the reader determine how credible each statement is. If we make a decision about the credibility of one or the other statement, we have to invoke the WP:Verifiability policy, and any material challenged or likely to be challenged must be attributed to a reliable source.

ECHELON#Examples of industrial espionage is to me enough to challenge any statement from NSA which claim that they do not commit acts of industrial espionage. Belorn (talk) 10:46, 27 January 2014 (UTC)

We don't "always" just "write about both sides" if one side is a WP:FRINGE view. WP:Verifiability is indeed an issue here, but primarily with respect to some of the remarks that have been attributed to Snowden. Is *freesnowden.is* a reliable source? Is there anything to back up Snowden's allegations of industrial espionage (if he's that's clearly what he's alleged) beyond the fact he alleged it? I don't find those examples you call attention to very convincing. U.S. intelligence exposes Saudi and Brazilian officials taking bribes, and this leads to missed contacts for the foreign bribe payer. Exposing Airbus' and Alcatel's corruption is hardly equivalent to stealing their technology and handing it over to their private U.S. competitors. The bottom line is that Wikipedia should not be pushing the POV that what the U.S. has been doing is

the moral equivalent of what the Chinese/Russian/French have been doing unless reliable sources support that contention.--Brian Dell (talk) 17:15, 27 January 2014 (UTC)

## Caprarescu accuses CIA and SRI of staging the case of Edward Snowden

I propose to add the following text as the last paragraph of chapter "Reaction" before section "Debate":

Bogdan Alexandru Caprarescu published a document called "The Secret Organized Crime" in which he accuses an international criminal organization composed of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI), and presumably other secret services of many crimes including the staging of the case of Edward Snowden. In the same document Caprarescu witnesses that CIA and SRI read the thoughts of people and control the bodies of people.<sup>[5][6]</sup> — Preceding unsigned comment added by Bogdan.caprarescu (talk • contribs) 12:06, January 29, 2014

I appreciate your bringing this to a talk page, rather than just inserting it, but we're not going to include your conspiracy theories in any of the articles you've been trying to edit. It's self-published, self-promotion, soapboxing, not supported in reliable sources, among other issues. – Muboshgu (talk) 17:12, 29 January 2014 (UTC)

(edit conflict) **X Not done** Welcome to Wikipedia! Unfortunately the content you're proposing violates several of Wikipedia's policies and cannot be added. Most importantly, material must be verifiable using published reliable sources such as newspapers or other media with editorial review. The sources you cite aren't reliable because they appear to be self-published. In addition, based on your username you appear to be engaged in self-promotion, which is not allowed. --Dr. Fleischman (talk) 17:16, 29 January 2014 (UTC)

## Typo

Typo in sentence (reference number 371): Glasgow should be Glasgow? Scratchmarc (talk) 21:01, 29 January 2014 (UTC)scratchmarc

Fixed, thanks. --NeilN *talk to me* 21:05, 29 January 2014 (UTC)

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