

# Chief DHS Privacy Officer: Government Called Privacy Office “Terrorists”

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

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DHS Pretends It Still Has Privacy Officers ... When They've All Quit In Disgust

Wall Street Journal reporter [Jennifer Valentino tweets](#):

Former DHS Privacy Officer Mary Ellen Callahan: DHS Privacy Office was accused monthly of being “terrorists” by DHS, IC

“DHS” stands for the Department of Homeland Security; “IC” stands for the [intelligence community](#).

This is not an isolated or melodramatic statement. Rather, it is how the homeland security and intelligence communities look at privacy.

For example, former NSA and CIA boss Michael Hayden [compared privacy advocates to terrorists](#):

“If and when our government grabs Edward Snowden, and brings him back here to the United States for trial, what does this group do?” said retired [air force](#) general Michael Hayden, who from 1999 to 2009 ran the NSA and then the CIA, referring to “nihilists, anarchists, activists, Lulzsec, Anonymous, twentysomethings who haven’t talked to the opposite sex in five or six years”.

“They may want to come after the US government, but frankly, you know, the dot-mil stuff is about the hardest target in the United States,” Hayden said, using a shorthand for US military networks. “So if they can’t create great harm to dot-mil, who are they going after? Who for them are the World Trade Centers? The World Trade Centers, as they were for al-Qaida.”

Hayden provided his speculation during a speech on cybersecurity to a Washington group, the Bipartisan Policy Center, in which he confessed to being deliberately provocative.

Similarly, Slate [reported](#) last year:

If you’ve ever cared about privacy while using the Internet in public, you might be a terrorist. At least that’s the message from the FBI and Justice Department’s Communities Against Terrorism initiative. The project created flyers to help employees at several types of businesses—including [military surplus](#) stores, financial institutions, and even tattoo shops—recognize “warning signs” of terrorism or extremism. An admirable goal, perhaps, but the

execution is flawed—particularly for the flyers intended to help suss out terrorists using Internet cafes.

The flyers haven't been publicly available online, but Public Intelligence, a project promoting the right to access information, [collected 25 documents](#) that it found elsewhere on the Web. As Public Intelligence [puts it](#), "Do you like online privacy? You may be a terrorist."

Sadly, in its paranoid bunker mentality, the government considers [just about all Americans](#) to be terrorists.

Postscript (Irony Alert): University of Washington Law School professor [Ryan Calo](#) points out an [amusing irony](#) in this story:

Former DHS chief privacy officer says # of privacy officers at NSA, including the chief privacy officer, was zero.

(Calo was reporting on a statement made by former chief DHS Privacy Officer Mary Ellen Callahan at [a recent talk](#).)

Tech Dirt [explains](#):

[Mary Ellen Callahan](#) was the Chief Privacy Officer (and the Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer) at the Department of Homeland Security from 2009 until 2012 (though, don't tell DHS, since they still have [a page on their website about her](#) claiming she still has that role — even though she [left over a year ago](#)).

In other words, the DHS considers government privacy officers to be terrorists, doesn't have any ... and yet - in blatant propaganda - *pretends* it does.

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