

Government Lies About Spying Again and Again ... Here's What's REALLY Going On

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Government Officials Fail Honesty Standards of 12 Year Olds

Government leaders have been caught in lie after lie about spying ... but keep on spouting *new* lies:

- The heads of the intelligence services have repeatedly [been caught lying](#) about spying ... [again](#) and [again](#) and [again](#) and [again](#). Security expert Bruce Schneier [writes](#): "This is getting silly ... Now they're just looking shiftier and shiftier." It has gotten so bad that a leading groups concludes: "[US Government Fails Honesty Standards of 12 Year Olds](#)". And even liberal publications are forced to conclude that [Obama is intentionally lying about spying](#)
- Obama says he'll rein in spying ... but his [words and deeds](#) indicate that he *won't*. Indeed, Obama [appointed the fox](#) to [guard the chicken coop](#)
- While the Obama administration is spying on everyone in the country - it is at the same time the [most secretive](#) administration [ever](#) ([background](#)). That's despite Obama saying he's running [the most transparent administration ever](#)

The Government Is Spying On Everything

Despite dishonest proclamations to the contrary, the government is - in reality - spying on *everything*:

- The government is spying on essentially [everything we do](#). "[Spies ... can now, for the first time, monitor everything about us, and they can do so with a few clicks of a mouse and - to placate the lawyers - a drop-down menu of justifications](#)"
- It is [not just "metadata"](#) ... although that is enough to [destroy your privacy](#)
- The government has adopted a secret interpretation of the Patriot Act which allows it to [pretend that "everything" is relevant ... so it spies on everyone](#). For example, the NSA "oversight" court believes the [mere claim that terrorists use the phone system is enough to show that all phone records are relevant](#)
- NSA whistleblowers say that the NSA collects all of our conversations [word-for-word](#)

- It's not just your computer and your phone. It is well-documented that the government may be spying on us through [cars and buses, streetlights, at airports and on the street, via mobile scanners and drones, through our smart meters](#), and in many other ways

No Adult Supervision

The NSA has gone rogue ... with no oversight:

- There is *no real oversight* by [Congress, the courts](#), or [the executive branch](#) of government. And see [this](#) and [this](#).
- Indeed, most [Congress members had no idea what the NSA is doing](#). Even staunch defenders of the NSA - and [congress members on the intelligence oversight committees](#) - now say [they've been kept in the dark](#). The *chairman* of the Senate Judiciary Committee says that he's [learned more from reading newspapers than from attending classified NSA briefings](#)
- A Federal judge who was on the secret spying court for 3 years [says that it's a kangaroo court](#)
- Even the *current* judges on the secret spying court now admit that [they're out of the loop and powerless to exercise real oversight](#).
- When these judges raised concerns about NSA spying, the Justice Department completely [ignored them](#)

Spy Information Being Shared with Numerous Federal, State and Local Agencies ... and Private Contractors

Your private information isn't staying inside the NSA ... it's being spread all over the place:

- The information gained through spying is [shared with federal, state and local agencies](#), and they are using that information to prosecute [petty crimes such as drugs and taxes](#). The agencies are instructed to [intentionally "launder"](#) the information gained through spying, i.e. to pretend that they got the information in a more legitimate way ... and to [hide that from defense attorneys and judges](#)
- The Department of Health and Human Services will also have access to [vast quantities of sensitive federal data on Americans](#) as part of Obamacare (here's the underlying Government Accountability Office [report](#))
- The NSA not only shares our information with other *American* agencies, it also gives personal, sensitive unfiltered information on Americans to [Israel and other foreign nations](#)
- It's not just the NSA ... [Many other agencies, like the FBI and IRS - concerned only with domestic issues](#) - also spy on Americans. For example, the Drug Enforcement Administration has had direct access to AT&T phone records for [25](#)

[years](#)

- And it's not only governments. **Private contractors** can also view all of your data (and the government [isn't keeping track of which contractors see your data and which don't](#)). And because [background checks regarding some contractors are falsified](#), it is hard to know the types of people that might have your information. Indeed, private contractors are involved in spying on behalf of governments [world-wide](#)

Your Sensitive *Financial* Data Is Being Gathered

One of the types of personal information being spied on is your sensitive financial information:

- The Wall Street Journal reported that the NSA spies on Americans' [credit card transactions](#)
- Many other agencies are [doing the same](#). In fact, virtually **all** U.S. intelligence agencies - including the CIA and NSA - [are going to spy on Americans' finances](#)
- The [IRS](#) will also be spying on Americans' [shopping records, travel, social interactions, health records and files](#) from other government investigators

Spying Is Killing the Economy

Spying is hurting the economy:

- Mass surveillance by the NSA [directly harms internet companies, Silicon Valley, California ... and the entire U.S. economy](#)
- For example, Facebook lost [11 millions users](#) as of April mainly due to privacy concerns (and that was *before* the Snowden revelations). And see these reports from [Boingboing](#) and the [Guardian](#)
- It is not an exaggeration to say that the attack on privacy is [hamstringing our economy](#)

Mass Surveillance *Doesn't* Protect Us From Terrorism

The main justification for spying - that it's needed to protect us from terrorism - is false:

- [Top counter-terror experts say that the government's mass spying doesn't keep us safe](#)
- Indeed, they say that mass spying [actually hurts U.S. counter-terror efforts](#) (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- You're much more likely to be killed by [brain-eating amoeba, lightning or a toddler](#) than by terrorism. Even President Obama admits that [you're much less](#)

[likely to be killed by terrorists than a car accident](#). So the government has resorted to [lamer and lamer excuses](#) to try to justify mass surveillance

- [Spying](#) started [before 9/11](#) ... and [various excuses have been used to spy on Americans over the years](#). This shows that the argument that the “new post 9/11 world” created the need for mass surveillance is *false*
- In any event, counter-terror experts say we can [keep everyone safe without violating the Constitution](#) ... *more cheaply and efficiently* than the current system

Mass Surveillance Makes the Internet and Computers *Less Safe*

Spying makes us vulnerable to hackers:

- [IT](#) and [security](#) professionals say spying could mess up the safety of our internet and computer systems

- For example, the Electronic Frontier Foundation [notes](#):

“By weakening encryption, the NSA allows others to more easily break it. **By installing backdoors and other vulnerabilities in systems, the NSA exposes them to other malicious hackers**—whether they are foreign governments or criminals. As security expert [Bruce Schneier explained](#), ‘It’s sheer folly to believe that only the NSA can exploit the vulnerabilities they create.’”

- The NSA’s big data collection *itself* [creates an easy mark for hackers](#). Remember, the [Pentagon itself sees](#) the collection of “big data” as a “national security threat” ... but the NSA is the biggest data collector on the planet, and thus provides a tempting mother lode of information for foreign hackers

One of the *Real* Reasons the Government Conducts Mass Surveillance

If the spying doesn’t keep us safe, why are they doing it? One of the main reasons is money:

- The NSA spying program is unambiguously being used for *industrial espionage*, by spying on [large foreign corporations](#), and the biggest [financial payments systems](#) such as VISA and Swift. Indeed, in a slide leaked by Edward Snowden, [“economic” was one of the main justifications](#) for spying
- The top U.S. spy’s justifications for such financial spying is [not very reassuring](#):

“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.**”

- Top financial experts say that the NSA and other intelligence agencies are using the information to [profit from this inside information](#)
- Some people [make a lot of money](#) off of mass spying. But the government *isn't* using the spying program to stop the [worst types of lawlessness](#)

Bunker Mentality

The intelligence agencies have fallen into a bizarre bunker mentality:

- The chairs of the 9/11 Commission say that [NSA spying has gone way too far](#)
- As just one example of how far they're going, the feds are [considering prosecuting](#) the owner of a private email company - who shut down his business rather than turning over records to the NSA - for [refusing to fork over the information](#) and keep quiet. This is a little like trying to throw someone in jail because he's died and is no longer paying taxes
- A Harvard law school professor - and director of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University - [says](#):

"The NSA has mounted a **systematic campaign against the foundations of American power: constitutional checks and balances, technological leadership, and market entrepreneurship**. The NSA scandal is no longer about privacy, or a particular violation of constitutional or legislative obligations. ".

- A former U.S. *president* says that the spying program shows that we [no longer have a functioning democracy](#)

Unconstitutional and Illegal

Not only is mass surveillance unnecessary, counter-productive in fighting terrorism and out of control, it's also illegal:

- Experts say that [the spying program is illegal](#)
- Even spying on our metadata violates our constitutional right to [freedom of association](#)
- We're not talking about just a *little bit* illegal under American law. Top constitutional experts say that Obama and Bush are [worse than Nixon](#) ... and the [Stasi East Germans](#)
- Indeed, they say that this type of spying is *exactly* the kind of thing which [King George imposed on the American colonists ... which led to the Revolutionary War](#)

The Danger of Tyranny

Insiders say that the mass surveillance is creating a real danger of tyranny in America:

- The NSA treats the American people with *contempt*. For example, Spiegel [notes](#):

“The authors of the [NSA slides] draw a comparison with “1984,” ... revealing the agency’s current view of smartphones and their users. “Who knew in 1984 that this would be Big Brother ...” the authors ask, in reference to a photo of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs. And commenting on photos of enthusiastic Apple customers and iPhone users, the NSA writes: “... and **the zombies would be paying customers?**”

- Worse, the intelligence agencies often view normal, true-blue Americans as [potential terrorists](#) (and [see this](#))
- Not only is the government trying to hassle its [external critics](#) into silence, but is targeting every *American* – even [high-ranking officials](#) within the intelligence and security agencies themselves – who criticize draconian surveillance. For example, the chief privacy officer at the Department of Homeland Security said that [the government called the privacy office “terrorists”](#). This is not an isolated or melodramatic statement; rather, it is [how the homeland security and intelligence communities look at privacy](#)
- Governments and giant corporations are doing everything they can [to destroy anonymity](#)
- The spy agencies aren’t just passively gathering information, but are [actively using it](#) in mischievous ways. For example, the NSA and other intelligence agencies are [central in assassination programs](#) (and the former head of the NSA and the CIA recently [joked about assassinating Edward Snowden](#) ... egged on the by [chair of the House Intelligence Committee](#))
- A Congressman noted that – even if a mass surveillance program is *started* for good purposes – it will inevitably [turn into a witch hunt](#)
- There are so many non-sensical and obscure laws – [see for yourself](#) – that power-hungry folks can [always find evidence that everyone has broken some law or another](#). As Stalin’s notorious chief of secret police famously said: “Show me the man and I will find you the crime”
- Moreover, surveillance can be used to [frame you if someone in government happens to take a dislike to you](#)
- Government spying has [always focused on crushing dissent ... not on keeping us safe](#)
- An NSA whistleblower says that [the NSA is spying on – and blackmailing – top government officials and military officers](#) (and [see this](#))

- Indeed, the NSA was already spying on American Senators more than [40 years ago](#)
- High-level US government officials have [warned for 40 years that mass surveillance would lead to tyranny in America](#)

Whistleblowers Are Heroes

- Members of the [Executive, Legislative and Judicial](#) branches of government have all *praised* the debate on spying which Snowden's leaks started
- The top counter-terrorism Czar under Clinton and Bush says that [revealing NSA spying programs does not harm national security](#)
- While leaker Edward Snowden is treated as a traitor by the fatcats and elites, he is [considered a hero by the American public](#)
- Whistleblowers on illegal spying have [no "legal" way to get the information out](#)

The Good News ...

Fortunately, polls shows that Americans understand the reality of mass surveillance:

- The public [doesn't believe the NSA](#)
- And thinks that the government has [gone way too far](#) in the name of terrorism
- [Only 11%](#) of Americans trust Obama to actually do anything to rein in spying
- A top NSA whistleblower says that the only way to fix things is to [fire all of the corrupt government officials who let it happen](#). Others [agree](#)
- A huge majority of Americans wants the director of intelligence - Clapper - [prosecuted for perjury](#)(the chair of the 9/11 Commission [agrees](#))

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