

Obama Blocks Edward Snowden's Asylum: Stranded in Moscow Airport

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Global Research, July 13, 2013

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

On July 12, [Russia Today](#) (RT) headlined "US 'blocks my asylum:' Snowden human rights activists to airport meeting," saying:

Snowden remains stuck. He's in limbo. He's at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport. He's in its transit area. A source told Interfax he'll meet with human rights organizations late Friday.

Airport spokeswoman Anna Zakharenkova said she "can confirm that such a meeting will take place."

Snowden invited a UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Transparency International and Poland's Krido Legal. Moscow officials weren't asked to come.

Russia's human rights commissioner Vladimir Lukin said he's willing to meet with Snowden. "I want to hear him out and then think what should be done," he said.

"I think international organizations should take up this question. Snowden now is clearly in the situation of being a refugee from his country."

He "wishes to express his thoughts on the US campaign for his capture that has put other passengers heading to Latin America at risk as a result."

Snowden's letter to human rights groups said:

"I have been extremely fortunate to enjoy and accept many offers of support and asylum from brave countries around the world. These nations have my gratitude."

"Unfortunately, in recent weeks we have witnessed an unlawful campaign by officials in the US government to deny my right to seek and enjoy this asylum under Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

"The scale of threatening behavior is without precedent: never before in history have states conspired to force to the ground a sovereign President's plane to effect a search for a political refugee."

"This dangerous escalation represents a threat not just to the dignity of Latin America or my own personal security, but to the basic right shared by every living person to live free from persecution."

UNHCR, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Transparency International

confirmed receipt of Snowden's letter.

AI Russia head Sergei Nikitin said:

"Yes, I have received a brief email. It said that he would like to meet with a representative of a human rights organisation - there was not much information there. I'm planning to go."

UNHCR's Galina Negrustuyeva said she's undecided. HRW's Tanya Lokshina was dismissive. She's uncertain about the authenticity of his email. She called it "very awkward, very strange."

Snowden confirmed Friday's meeting. It's closed to the press. He'll say more later. He'll do so publicly. He's got plenty on his mind to relate. Millions worldwide await his comments.

Human rights lawyer Anatoly Kucherena told RT:

"The way that US authorities are treating the situation is cynical. How can one take away a person's passport and deprive him of citizenship?"

"This isolation, the impossibility to leave, could be equaled with arrest. I understand his plight as a professional lawyer, as a professional attorney."

Following Snowden's meeting with human rights groups, [Russia Today](#) headlined "Snowden wants asylum in Russia, ready to meet condition not to damage US."

He's concerned about flying to Latin America safely. He believes his job is done. He asked human rights representatives "to petition the US and European states not to interfere with his asylum process."

He asked Vladimir Putin to intervene on his behalf. According to Duma MP Vyacheslav Nokonov, he "does not intend to harm the US in the future."

He told human rights representatives "(n)o actions (he took) or plan are meant to harm the US." He "want(s) the US to succeed," he said.

He doesn't rule out heading to Latin America. Travel dangers prevent him from doing so now.

According to human rights lawyer Anatoly Kucherena, his Russian asylum request is written. Kucherena said he'll provide legal support.

Snowden met with representatives from 13 Russian and international human rights organizations. He called temporary status in airport limbo fine. He knows he can't stay there forever.

For now, he feels Russia's his safest choice. Whether others will be later remain to be seen.

Moscow's DUMA speaker Sergei Naryshkin said Snowden deserves asylum in Russia. [Itar Tass](#) quoted him saying:

“I assume that there are great risks” he’ll face capital punishment. “We do not have the right to let that happen.” Russia prohibits it.

An official and implicit moratorium exists. No one’s been executed since 1996. Doing so inflicts cruel and unusual punishment. America executes prisons assembly line style.

Russia Today’s given Snowden favorable coverage for weeks. Doing so shows official support.

Separately, RT [headlined](#) “Millions in US tax dollars go to Big Data for wiretap capabilities.”

US telecom and Internet giants profit handsomely. They do so from spying lawlessly on customers.

Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA) said AT & T charges NSA a \$325 “activation fee.” It does so for each separate wiretap. A daily \$10 charge to maintain adds more to bottom line profits.

Verizon charges \$775 for the first month per wiretap – \$500 monthly fees follow.

Telecom officials claim they’re not involved for profit. Human rights groups think otherwise.

According to RT, the “average wiretap” costs US taxpayers “\$50,000.” Telecom and Internet giants cash in handsomely. They’ve been doing it for years.

In 2009, former New York criminal prosecutor John Prather filed suit. He charged several telecom companies with charging exorbitant fees.

“They were monstrously more than what the telecoms could ever hope to charge for similar services in an open, competitive market, and the costs charged to the governments by telecoms did not represent reasonable prices as defined in the code of federal regulations,” he said.

On July 11, London’s [Guardian](#) headlined “How Microsoft handed NSA access to encrypted messages,” saying:

Microsoft “collaborated closely with US intelligence services to allow users’ communications to be intercepted.” It helped NSA “circumvent the company’s own encryption.”

Top secret documents Snowden provided the Guardian confirm it. They show:

“Microsoft helped the NSA to circumvent its encryption to address concerns that the agency would be unable to intercept web chats on the new Outlook.com portal.”

“The agency already had pre-encryption stage access to email on Outlook.com, including Hotmail.”

“The company worked with the FBI this year to allow the NSA easier access via Prism to its cloud storage service SkyDrive, which now has more than 250 million users worldwide.”

“Microsoft also worked with the FBI’s Data Intercept Unit to ‘understand’ potential issues with a feature in Outlook.com that allows users to create email aliases.”

“In July last year, nine months after Microsoft bought Skype, the NSA boasted that a new capability had tripled the amount of Skype video calls being collected through Prism.”

“Material collected through Prism is routinely shared with the FBI and CIA, with one NSA document describing the program as a team sport.”

America’s a total surveillance society. It’s longstanding. It persists lawlessly. It’s out-of-control. It threatens personal freedoms. It shows police state contempt for what’s right.

Free societies don’t do these things. In America, it’s standard practice. Corporate giants cooperate complicitly. They profit handsomely. Who said crime doesn’t pay?

Nine or more major online companies cooperate with lawless NSA spying. Google, Microsoft, Yahoo, Facebook, Apple, Skype, YouTube and others are involved.

They do so through NSA’s Prism. It gives the agency access to search histories, emails, file transfers and live chats. It’s gotten directly from US provider servers. Doing so facilitates mass surveillance.

Google denied involvement, saying:

It “cares deeply about the security of our users’ data. We disclose user data to government in accordance with the law, and we review all such requests carefully.”

“From time to time, people allege that we have created a government ‘back door’ into our systems, but Google does not have a back door for the government to access private user data.”

Google’s closely allied with Bilderberg movers and shakers. CEO Eric Schmidt’s a regular conference attendee. He believes privacy is quaint and out-of-date. He’s got big plans. He wants Google transformed into “the ultimate Big Brother.”

A Microsoft statement said:

“When we upgrade or update products we aren’t absolved from the need to comply with existing or future lawful demands.”

Officials claim they provide customer data “only in response to government demands and we only ever comply with orders for requests about specific accounts or identifiers.”

According to the Guardian, “internal NSA newsletters, marked top secret, suggest the co-operation between the intelligence community and the companies is deep and ongoing.”

Snowden’s new revelations “come from the NSA’s Special Source Operations (SSO) division.” He calls them the agency’s “crown jewels.”

They’re “responsible for all programs aimed at US communications systems through corporate partnerships such as Prism.”

Last July, Microsoft Outlook.com initiated encrypted chats. NSA “became concerned. Within five months, Microsoft and the FBI” solved the problem. Doing so lets NSA circumvent encryption.

In February, Microsoft launched Outlook.com portal. NSA “already had pre-encryption access to Outlook email.”

Microsoft/NSA/FBI cooperation is longstanding. It’s been ongoing “for many months.” Access “means that analysts will no longer have to make a special request to SSO for this – a process step that many analysts may not have known about.”

“(T)his new capability will result in a much more complete and timely collection response.”

“This success is the result of the FBI working for many months with Microsoft to get this tasking and collection solution established.”

“The FBI Data Intercept Technology Unit (DITU) team is working with Microsoft to understand an additional feature in Outlook.com which allows users to create email aliases, which may affect our tasking processes.”

Since 2011, NSA worked closely with Microsoft. It gained easy access to Skype. Personal audio and video communications can be monitored. Skype has about 663 million global users.

NSA shares information accessed with the FBI and CIA. America has 16 known intelligence agencies. On request, they all likely get what NSA collects.

Microsoft touts its “clear principles” and guidelines. It claims respect for lawful norms and standards. It “take(s its) commitments to (its) customers” seriously, it says. Snowden documents prove otherwise.

NSA claims it complies with “legally mandated requirements.” Longstanding lawless spying shows an out-of-control rogue agency.

A Final Comment

On July 11, The [New York Times](#) headlined “US Is Pressing Latin Americans to Reject Snowden,” saying:

Efforts reflect “full-court press” bullying. Vice President Biden threatened Ecuador’s Rafael Correa. US embassies delivered Washington’s message. It did so throughout the region.

It was clear, unequivocal and menacing. Snowden showing up will have “lasting consequences.” According to an unnamed senior State Department official:

“There is not a country in the hemisphere whose government does not understand our position at this point.” Aiding Snowden “would put relations in a very bad place for a long time to come.”

This type bullying makes more enemies than friends. America’s influence peaked years ago. It’s waning.

It’s long past time world leaders challenged what’s intolerable to condone. Doing so would neutralize tactics no one should tolerate.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Elias Jaua spoke forthrightly. “The State Department and the government of the United States should know that Venezuela learned a long time ago and

defeated pressures from any part of the world.”

Venezuela offered Snowden asylum. It awaits his reply. US bullying complicates his plans. He remains in limbo.

He’s unjustly called a traitor. America’s long arm threatens him. It does so wherever he goes. He sacrificed financial security and personal freedom.

He’ll live each day like his last. He deserves global support for many more.

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