

Obama's All-out Global War Against an American Asylum Seeker

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President Barack Obama has met his unlikely match in a former Army Special Forces recruit-turned CIA technician-turned [National Security Agency](#) contractor. Obama has issued what amounts to an «all-points-bulletin» for Edward Snowden who, in May, left his job at NSA Hawaii as a contractor for Booz Allen Hamilton and departed Honolulu for Hong Kong with a treasure trove of classified documents pointing to NSA's massive electronic surveillance of Americans without a warrant and billions of people around the world.

Obama, who fancies himself as a cool-under-fire seasoned politician from the rough and tumble south side of Chicago clearly did not like being upstaged by a young privacy-minded intelligence specialist who grew up in North Carolina and the Maryland suburbs of Baltimore. After all, Obama inherited from George W. Bush the most intrusive surveillance powers ever amassed in a president of the United States and he was not about to have an impudent young man embarrassing the first African-American president.

In the case of U.S. Army Private First Class Bradley Manning, charged with releasing classified information to WikiLeaks, including over 250,000 State Department cables, Obama personalized his war against whistleblowers by making the following pre-trial statement: «We are a nation of laws. We don't let individuals make decisions about how the law operates. He[Bradley Manning] broke the law!» Once again, as he has shown with ordering drone murders of U.S. citizens abroad, Obama has shown he has no problem being judge, jury, and sometimes, executioner. By personalizing his attempt to snatch Snowden, Obama made his quest political, not criminal. That alone makes Snowden a political refugee worthy of being granted asylum by any reasonable measure of international law.

Obama, who has never mastered the intricacies of diplomacy, began making global demands that Snowden be returned immediately to the United States to face what Obama's supporters called «justice». In the official request to officials of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for Snowden to be extradited to the United States, the U.S. State Department was so hasty it provided a wrong middle name for Snowden, James instead of Joseph, and no passport number. Hong Kong said it could not process an erroneous and incomplete extradition request from Washington. The Obama administration, acting like a Third World tin horn dictatorship, responded by threatening to cancel Hong Kong's liberal mutual visa agreement with the United States and other unspecified sanctions.

The State Department immediately revoked Snowden's passport but he managed to travel to Moscow on a safe conduct document issued by the Ecuadorian consul in London, Fidel Narvaez, which was a decision that earned a strong rebuke from Ecuador's President Rafael Correa. The corporate media then reported that Correa rejected Snowden's asylum request

in Ecuador when no such decision had been made. What Correa said was what many other countries said. Snowden's asylum request in Ecuador could only be considered if he were physically present on Ecuadorian soil. Correa would not guarantee safe passage from Moscow to Ecuador.

When Snowden flew to Moscow with an obvious wink and a nod from China, the United States threatened the Chinese with retaliatory action, even though Snowden's revelations blew a giant hole in Washington's propaganda about America being constantly subjected to Chinese state-sponsored computer hacking. In fact, Snowden's revelations to the South China Morning Post provided evidence that NSA was targeting civilian networks and computers in China and Hong Kong, including those serving hospitals and universities. Hong Kong demanded an explanation from the United States. China was able to show Obama as a supreme hypocrite.

After Snowden arrived in Moscow, the interventionist neo-conservative U.S. ambassador in the Russian capital, Michael McFaul, began pressuring Russia to extradite Snowden to the United States despite the fact that there is no U.S-Russian extradition treaty. McFaul was not the only ambassador to go to war with a host government over Snowden. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, the man Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry assigned to bag Snowden and return him to the United States, began sending cables to U.S. diplomatic missions abroad that they were to stop at nothing to get Snowden.

When Iceland was warned not to grant Snowden asylum, the Icelandic Parliament tabled a bill that would have granted Snowden Icelandic citizenship. The bill was sponsored by six members from small minority parties — the Pirate Party, the Left-Green Movement, Bright Future, and the Social Democratic Alliance — but the Obama administration was able to wield enough influence with the center-right government to ensure the bill was dead-on-arrival.

When Snowden booked but failed to board an Aeroflot flight to Havana from Moscow, Obama put his administration on red alert. Because Ecuador had given asylum at its embassy in London to WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange, Washington believed Snowden may have been planning an escape to Quito. Vice President Joe Biden phoned Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa to pressure the country not to grant Snowden asylum. Ecuador, being threatened with America's cancellation of a preferential trade agreement, abrogated it anyway, accusing Obama of blackmail, and offered the amount lost to Ecuador with the loss of the trade pact, \$23 million, to fund human rights education for Americans.

When Bolivian President [Evo Morales](#) and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro traveled to Moscow to attend the 13-nation Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), Obama and the NSA again went on high alert in the event either one of the two leaders decided to spirit Snowden away from Russia in their presidential jets. From Moscow, Maduro said he would consider Snowden's asylum request.

NSA ordered «surge» surveillance of the communications of Maduro and Morales, especially Morales, who joked about giving asylum to the American whistleblower. In answer to a question about granting Snowden asylum, Morales responded, "Why not? .. His case has triggered international debate, and of course, Bolivia is ready to take in people who denounce things».

Wrongly believing that Morales had decided to fly Snowden from Moscow to La Paz aboard his Falcon presidential aircraft, the United States, through its ambassadors in Rome, Paris, Madrid, and Lisbon, convinced these nations to close their airspace to Morales's plane, a clear violation of accepted norms of international law and one that placed the Bolivian leader and his staff and crew in personal jeopardy. Morales and his party were forced to land in Vienna where they spent 14 hours.

Spain's Foreign Minister José Manuel García-Margallo reported that the Obama administration told the Spanish government that Snowden was on Morales's plane, which was false. That information was reportedly conveyed by the U.S. ambassador to Vienna, William Eacho, an Obama campaign fundraiser and investment banker from Bethesda, Maryland. Spain's ambassador to Vienna, Alberto Carnero Fernandez, attempted to board Morales's aircraft while on the ground in Vienna in order to search for Snowden.

The air piracy committed by the United States against Morales resulted in a firestorm in Latin America. Asylum requests by Snowden were granted by Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Bolivia. Uruguay's First Lady, Senator Lucia Topolansky, also said Uruguay would grant asylum and several Brazilian lawmakers pressed President Dilma Rousseff to grant Snowden asylum. Latin American countries roundly condemned Morales's forced landing in Vienna as the five European countries involved offered up nonsensical explanations for their actions. Regional Latin American organizations condemned the Obama administration and the five European countries, all of which are NSA «Third Party» signal intelligence-gathering collaborators, offered up excuses for their actions but no valid reasons... Not surprisingly, Italy and France were among the countries that also rejected Snowden's asylum request.

Other countries rejecting Snowden's asylum bid after massive pressure was exerted by the Obama administration included India, Germany, Poland, Finland, and Brazil. When a rumor surfaced that Zimbabwe might offer Snowden asylum, the Obama team, traveling with the president in Africa, let it be known that crippling sanctions imposed on President Robert Mugabe's government would be increased.

Snowden withdrew his asylum request to Russia after President Vladimir Putin said Snowden would have to first stop leaking classified information.

Obama has maintained a personal vendetta against all national security whistleblowers but in the case of Snowden, Obama has become a driven Captain Ahab in search of his prey. Obama will stop at nothing to capture Snowden as he showed with his actions against Morales's plane, reported Pentagon contingency plans to force the Moscow-to-Havana Aeroflot plane to land in Miami had Snowden been aboard, and threats of trade sanctions against various countries considering granting Snowden asylum.

Obama's post-pubescent looking Press Secretary Jay Carney arrogantly declared that Snowden «should not be allowed to proceed in any further international travel other than travel that would result in him returning to the United States».

Ironically, people around the world, regardless of ethnicity, began cheering for the quiet guy from the Baltimore suburbs against the bully from south Chicago. Obama's personalization of his war against a single American citizen has not only made Snowden a political refugee but an American folk hero.

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