

# Police State Britain: UK Security Services Can Decide if Journalism is Terrorism

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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

Britain's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) operates like NSA. They work cooperatively. They're out-of-control rogue agencies.

They spy on their own populations. They do it globally. They conduct espionage. They collect enormous amounts of personal information. They do it illegally.

Obama wages war on freedom. He targets whistleblowers and investigative journalists exposing government wrongdoing. So does Britain. It equates doing so with terrorism.

London's Guardian is threatened. Its offices were raided. Hard drive stored information was destroyed. Its editor, Alan Rusbridger, was warned. Cease and desist or else.

He asked if steps would be taken "to close down the Guardian's reporting through a legal route - by going to court to force the surrender of the material on which we were working."

"The official confirmed that, in the absence of handover or destruction, this was indeed the government's intentions."

It was "one of the more bizarre moments in the Guardian's long history," he said. It was likely the most chilling.

Two GCHQ security experts oversaw the destruction of Guardian hard drives. They checked to be sure nothing but "mangled bits of metal" remained.

Whitehall was satisfied. Freedom in Britain sustained another body blow. It's fast disappearing like in America. Both nations are more police states than democracies.

They mock virtually all democratic principles. They govern lawlessly. They do it ruthlessly. Sweeping surveillance is official policy. So is suppressing information about government wrongdoing.

Journalists involved in exposing it are threatened. Guardian disclosures fall under parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee's remit.

It reinforces government claims about compromising national security. When good journalism is equated with doing it, freedom dies.

Guardian contributors are targeted for doing their job. Doing so amounts to state censorship. Warnings about prosecutions and imprisonments follow.

Free expression is the most important of all rights. Without it, all others at risk. On the

bogus pretext of fighting terrorism, America and Britain want none of their lawless activities exposed.

On August 18, UK authorities detained Glenn Greenwald's partner, David Miranda, at Heathrow Airport.

He was held incommunicado for nine hours. He was denied legal counsel. A counterterrorism law pretext was used to do so.

He was in transit from Berlin to Rio de Janeiro. He threatened no one. He violated no laws. It didn't matter.

His laptop, cell phone, camera, memory sticks, DVDs and game consoles were confiscated. It was done lawlessly. Police states operate this way.

London's [Observer](#) said Miranda was detained "for promoting 'political' causes." His detention shone "new light on the Metropolitan police's explanation for invoking terrorism powers - a decision critics have called draconian."

London's [Mirror](#) headlined "David Miranda detention shows UK is becoming a police state." Targeting him "shows just how determined the security services are to get the upper hand."

"Big Brother isn't just watching you. He knows which plane you're on, where you're traveling, and he's in close contact with Big Daddy across the water in Washington."

It "illustrates the general point that we are now living in a security state."

"Historically, the national interest has always been what's good for the government, not what's right for the people."

It's more than ever true today. State-of-the-art technology makes it easy. So do rogue politicians wanting unchallenged control.

Greenwald called detaining his partner "a failed attempt at intimidation." I'll have the opposite effect, he said. Virtually never are in transit passengers detained like Miranda.

Schedule 7 of Britain's Terrorism Act says "fewer than 3 people in every 10,000 are examined as they pass through UK borders." Over 97% of examinations last under an hour.

Individuals are questioned regarding possible involvement "in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism."

Miranda didn't enter Britain. He was en route to Rio. Targeting him was unrelated to terrorism. It was intimidation. It was harassment. Downing Street was directly involved.

It sent a message. Responsible journalism exposing government wrongdoing is threatened. Authorities want it entirely eliminated.

Miranda was released uncharged. Journalists, editors, human rights lawyers and civil libertarians expressed outrage over what happened. Doing so reflects police state harshness.

UK Metropolitan police lied saying:

“Holding and properly using intelligence gained from such stops is a key part of fighting crime, pursuing offenders and protecting the public.”

Police states justify lawlessness this way. Miranda was threatened. He was treated like a criminal.

He was told he faced prosecution if he didn't cooperate. He did nothing wrong. It didn't matter. It got worse.

On September 6, Britain's high court said government authorities could continue examining materials seized from him.

They could do it to determine if he violated Britain's Terrorism and Official Secrets Acts. UK courts lack independence like America's.

They support the worst of government practices. They rubber-stamp some of the most outrageous acts. They violate fundamental freedoms doing so.

On November 2, [Reuters](#) headlined “NSA Leaks Journalist Glenn Greenwald's Partner Accused of 'Terrorism,' 'Espionage.'”

After returning to Rio, Miranda filed suit. He wants lawlessly seized materials returned.

“At a London court hearing a document called a ‘Ports Circulation Sheet’ was read into the record.”

“It was prepared by Scotland Yard – in consultation with the MI5 counterintelligence agency.”

It said “(i)intelligence indicates that Miranda is likely to be involved in espionage activity which has the potential to act against the interests of UK national security.”

“We assess that Miranda is knowingly carrying material the release of which would endanger people's lives.”

“Additionally the disclosure, or threat of disclosure, is designed to influence a government and is made for the purpose of promoting a political or ideological cause. This therefore falls within the definition of terrorism.”

Miranda wasn't charged. At least not so far. He remains threatened. He may become as much at risk as Edward Snowden.

A hearing on Miranda's legal challenge is scheduled this week. During a preparatory session days earlier, “new details of how and why British authorities (targeted him) were made public”

Materials authorities seized allegedly included 58,000 NSA and GCHQ documents. In an email to Reuters, Greenwald said:

“For all the lecturing it doles out to the world about press freedoms, the UK offers virtually none. They are absolutely and explicitly equating terrorism with journalism.”

On October 31, German lawmaker Hans-Christian Stroebale met with Edward Snowden. He did so in Moscow. He released a [letter](#) he wrote. In part, it said:

“I have been invited to write to you regarding your investigation of mass surveillance.”

“I believe I witnessed systemic violations of law by my government that created a moral duty to act.”

“As a result of reporting these concerns, I have faced a severe and sustained campaign of persecution that forced me from my family and home.”

“Citizens around the world as well as high officials - including in the United States - have judged the revelation of an unaccountable system of pervasive surveillance to be a public service.”

“Though the outcome of my efforts has been demonstrably positive, my government continues to treat dissent as defection, and seeks to criminalize political speech with felony charges that provide no defense.”

“(S)peaking truth is not a crime.” He thanked supporters for their “efforts in upholding the international laws that protect us all.”

Not in America or Britain. In a document read into the public record, Britain’s MI5 said:

“Our main objectives against David Miranda are to understand the nature of any material he is carrying (so as to) mitigate the risks to national security that this material poses.”

A UK Washington spokesperson had no comment. Equating good journalism with terrorism shows Britain will stop at nothing to keep government wrongdoing secret.

Doing so shows how low Britain has sunk. Its stripped off facade reveals dark side tyranny.

Britain’s Terrorism Law provides wide latitude. Its terrorism definition includes a “use or threat designed to influence the government (or international governmental organization).”

It’s “made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, or ideological cause.”

It does so if it “endangers a person’s life, other than that of the person committing the action (and) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public.”

Most chilling is that UK security services, on their own, can decide if legitimate journalism is terrorism or its equivalent.

They can do so without publicly releasing materials allegedly able to compromise national security. They can pronounce guilt on their say alone. They can get courts to rubber-stamp their accusations.

It’s much the same in America. Government whistleblowers are threatened. They’re fraudulently charged under the long ago outdated Espionage Act.

It’s a WW I relic. It belongs in history’s dustbin. It’s unrelated to exposing government

wrongdoing. Revealing it is equated with aiding the enemy.

The so-called “enemy” apparently is “we the people.” Our fundamental constitutional rights are threatened. Upholding them is what courts are supposed to do.

Not in America. Not in Britain. Terrorism or acts relating to it are what both governments say they are.

On July 30, Bradley Manning was wrongfully convicted on 20 of 22 bogus charges. He never had a chance.

He was judged guilty by accusation. He got 35 years imprisonment for acting responsibly.

It’s by far the harshest ever punishment for leaking information everyone has a right to know.

Washington wants Edward Snowden prosecuted the same way. Russia granted him political asylum.

Whether he’ll stay free remains to be seen. He’s America’s public enemy number one. Safety is his main concern.

He’s got good reason to worry. He’s a wanted man. He knows how NSA operates. It’ll try monitoring him every way possible.

Whether he’ll stay free from its tracking remains to be seen. The same is true for everyone.

America and Britain are ruthless. They’re unforgiving. They want unchallenged power. They want no one compromising it.

They want government wrongdoing suppressed. UK Prime Minister David Cameron threatened Britain’s media with injunctions or so-called D (Defense Advisory) notices.

They’re official requests not to publish or broadcast information for reasons of national security.

London’s Guardian and Miranda remain in limbo. Criminal charges could follow. Responsible journalism is threatened.

It bears repeating. Equating it with terrorism shows how low Britain has sunk. The same holds for America. Police state justice prevails.

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