

The NSA Admits Spying on Members of the US Congress. “Using Information to Blackmail Congress”

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Global Research, January 05, 2014

[Washington's Blog](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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

The NSA Is Spying On Our Elected Representatives

After Senator Bernie Sanders asked the NSA whether it spied on members of congress, the NSA [responded](#):

NSA's authorities to collect signals intelligence data include procedures that protect the privacy of US persons. Such protections are built into and cut across the entire process. **Members of Congress have the same privacy protections as all US persons.** NSA is fully committed to transparency with Congress. Our interaction with Congress has been extensive both before and since the media disclosures began last June.

In other words: yes, we spy on members of Congress, just like all other Americans.

For contrast, here's what NSA *would have* said if it *wasn't* spying on Congress:

The Constitution provides for a separation of powers between the executive branch – which includes the NSA and its parent agency, the Department of Defense – on the one hand, and the legislative branch (i.e. Congress), on the other hand.

So the NSA is **constitutionally prohibited** from spying on members of Congress or their staff, and we go to **great lengths** to ensure that we faithfully discharge that constitutional duty.

So the answer is: **no**. We do **not** and **never would** spy on Congress.

Yeah, they didn't say that at all. Instead, NSA lumped Congress members in with the great unwashed masses of the American public who they spy on every day.

The Washington Post [writes](#):

The answer is telling. We already know that the NSA collects records on virtually every phone call made in the United States. That program was renewed for the 36th time on Friday. If members of Congress are treated no differently than other Americans, then the NSA likely keeps tabs on every call they make as well.

It's a relief to know that Congress doesn't get a special carve-out (they're just like us!). But the egalitarianism of it all will likely be of little comfort to Sanders."

The Bigger Question: What Is NSA *Doing* With the Info?

But the bigger question is what the NSA *does* with that information. Remember, the Guardian [reported](#) in September that not only might the NSA be collecting information on Congress, but that it was sharing *unfiltered* information with a foreign nation ... Israel:

The National Security Agency routinely shares raw intelligence data with Israel without first sifting it to remove information about US citizens, a top-secret document provided to the Guardian by whistleblower Edward Snowden reveals.

According to the agreement, the intelligence being shared **would not be filtered in advance** by NSA analysts to remove US communications. "NSA routinely sends ISNU [the Israeli Sigint National Unit] minimized and unminimized raw collection", it says.

A much stricter rule was set for US government communications found in the raw intelligence. The Israelis were required to "destroy upon recognition" any communication "that is either **to or from an official of the US government**". Such communications included those of "officials of the executive branch (including the White House, cabinet departments, and independent agencies), **the US House of Representatives and Senate (member and staff)** and the US federal court system (including, but not limited to, the supreme court)".

In reality, there is quite a bit of evidence that NSA is using information gained through spying to [blackmail Congress](#).

The original source of this article is [Washington's Blog](#)

Copyright © [Washington's Blog](#), [Washington's Blog](#), 2014

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Washington's Blog](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca