



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on November 4, 2013

Snowden Slams U.S. NSA and British GCHQ for Uncontrolled Surveillance

In an open letter published on November 3 by the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*, whistleblower [Edward Snowden accused](#) the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) and its British counterpart (GCHQ) of being among the “worst offenders” engaged in uncontrolled mass surveillance.

In his letter, entitled “A Manifesto for the Truth,” Snowden wrote: “The world has learned a lot in a short amount of time about irresponsibly operated security agencies and, at times, criminal surveillance programs. Sometimes the agencies try to avoid controls.”



Snowden, a former infrastructure analyst for the consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton at an NSA facility in Hawaii, continued:

While the NSA and GCHQ (the British national security agency) appear to be the worst offenders — at least according to the documents that are currently public — we cannot forget that mass surveillance is a global problem and needs a global solution.

The letter, which Snowden transmitted to *Der Spiegel* over a secure network, was published in German and translated into English by [CNN](#).

[Der Spiegel](#) published an article on October 28 headlined “Embassy Espionage: The NSA’s Secret Spy Hub in Berlin,” that alleged the following:

Research by SPIEGEL reporters in Berlin and Washington, talks with intelligence officials and the evaluation of internal documents of the US National Security Agency and other information, most of which comes from the archive of former NSA contractor Edward Snowden, lead to the conclusion that the US diplomatic mission in the German capital has not merely been promoting German-American friendship. On the contrary, it is a nest of espionage. From the roof of the embassy, a special unit of the CIA and NSA can apparently monitor a large part of cellphone communication in the government quarter. And there is evidence that agents based at Pariser Platz recently targeted the cellphone that [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel uses the most.

“Spying between friends, that’s just not done,” Merkel said at a European Union summit in Brussels on October 24. “Now trust has to be rebuilt.”

CNN noted that Snowden’s allegations have prompted some European countries to call for investigations and has also resulted in congressional hearings in the United States. In his letter, Snowden commented on what he sees as the effects of his revelations. “The debate they wanted to avoid is now taking place in countries around the world,” he wrote. “And instead of causing damage, the use of this new public knowledge is causing society to push for political reforms, oversight and new



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laws.”

Although Snowden named the United States and Britain as the “worst offenders” when it comes to uncontrolled surveillance, [he noted](#) that they are not the sole offenders, since “mass surveillance is a global problem and needs a global solution.”

Snowden first made contact with Glenn Greenwald of the British newspaper *The Guardian* in late 2012. Snowden communicated to Greenwald using encrypted e-mail to send his information exposing the NSA’s surveillance programs. In May 2013, Snowden left Hawaii for Hong Kong, where he remained while *The Guardian* published his information. The newspaper made his identity known in June 2013, at his request.

Hans-Christian Ströbele, a member of the German parliament, along with two German journalists, met with Snowden in Moscow on October 31 for almost three hours.

The [New York Times](#) reported that Ströbele went to Moscow to discuss whether Snowden would be willing — or even be permitted — to testify before a German parliamentary inquiry into the alleged Merkel eavesdropping. However, before Snowden could travel to Germany, major obstacles would have to be surmounted, including a guarantee that Germany would not extradite the whistleblower to the United States, where he is wanted for having leaked the secret NSA files.

Snowden wrote an appeal to U.S. officials in a letter brought back by Ströbele, asking them to stop treating him like a traitor and also asking for clemency. The *Times* quoted from his letter, in which he asserted that his leaks about U.S. intelligence activity at home and abroad, which he described as “systematic violations of law by my government that created a moral duty to act,” have had positive effects.

Yet, he wrote, “my government continues to treat dissent as defection, and seeks to criminalize political speech with felony charges that provide no defense.” “However,” he continued, “speaking the truth is not a crime. I am confident that with the support of the international community, the government of the United States will abandon this harmful behavior.”

[RIA Novosti](#), the Russian news agency, cited a report from Russia’s *Kommersant* daily newspaper that said White House sources believe Snowden’s latest actions violate the terms of his asylum agreement stating that he must do nothing detrimental to U.S. interests. However, Vladimir Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted by the *Kommersant*: “No one will let him break the Russian president’s condition that he must not harm the US. But he is on Russian soil, having legally obtained temporary asylum, and therefore is free to meet with whomever he pleases.”

The Russian newspaper also reported that Snowden’s lawyer, Anatoly Kucherena, dismissed the possibility of his client traveling to Germany to testify before parliament because Snowden cannot leave Russian territory under the terms of his asylum status. However, the German government is prepared to send a delegation to Moscow in order to question Snowden over the allegations that the NSA spied on Merkel.

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