



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on May 13, 2014

“We Kill People Based on Metadata,” Admits Former CIA/NSA Boss

Essentially confessing to mass murder and multiple other crimes, retired Gen. Michael Hayden, the former boss of both the NSA and the CIA, [admitted](#) that the Obama administration has been murdering people around the world based solely on the so-called metadata collected by U.S. intelligence agencies. The controversial insider’s remarks confirmed growing fears and warnings by critics of the out-of-control federal government that, despite efforts to downplay its unconstitutional spying and assassination programs, Americans have much to be concerned about.



Hayden, a retired general and operative for the [globalist Council on Foreign Relations](#), led the National Security Agency starting under the Clinton administration until 2005 — the same NSA that whistleblower Edward Snowden had recently exposed lawlessly spying on Americans in violation of federal law and the U.S. Constitution. Before taking over in 2006 at the Central Intelligence Agency — the outfit that has carried out much of the federal mass-murder via drone program — Hayden oversaw the massive expansion of NSA’s targeting of Americans.

While credible analysts and critics widely suspect federal officials are still hiding the truth, proponents of the illegal NSA espionage schemes tried to downplay its actions as the “mere” collection of metadata, rather than the actual content of calls and e-mails. Thanks to Hayden’s remarks last month at [Johns Hopkins University’s Foreign Affairs Symposium](#), though, Americans can begin to understand the enormity of the danger — even in the unlikely event that authorities are telling the truth about how far the assaults on constitutionally protected privacy rights actually extend.

“We kill people based on metadata,” Hayden admitted. The startling confession, which has sparked headlines around the world, came after Hayden agreed with another participant at the symposium that metadata can reveal “everything” about a surveillance target. The other participant, Georgetown University Law Center professor David Cole, had quoted NSA General Counsel Stewart Baker as saying, “Metadata absolutely tells you everything about somebody’s life. If you have enough metadata, you don’t really need content.”

Hayden agreed, calling the description on the usefulness of metadata “absolutely correct.” Elements of the NSA’s Orwellian, Fourth Amendment-shredding espionage regime targeting hundreds of millions of Americans officially came to light after former contractor Snowden leaked documents about it. The revelations sparked a massive public outcry, which officials tried to downplay by claiming that the only information being collected on Americans without warrants or even probable cause was metadata. That collected data, though, includes details such as who is communicating, when, where, for how long, with whom, and more.



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Of course, it is now public knowledge that the Obama administration has murdered thousands of people around the world including women, children, and [even an American teenager](#), using its drones and missiles. In fact, the White House even claims to believe it has the [legal authority to murder its victims](#) despite never charging or prosecuting them for a crime — much less securing a conviction in a court of law. Immediately following the shocking admission and a brief pause, though, Hayden tried to suggest that the mass-murder program relying on metadata does not apply domestically.

“But that’s not what we do with this metadata,” the former CIA and NSA boss said after pausing for a moment, perhaps realizing the gravity of the admission he had just made. “It’s really important to understand the program in its entirety, not the potentiality of the program, but how the program is actually conducted.” In other words, after admitting that the federal government murders people based on metadata — can you imagine if Putin admitted doing that? — Hayden quickly tried to claim that the information collected on Americans is not used for that purpose. At least not yet.

It was not clear whether such data played a role in Obama’s selection of the multiple Americans, including a [16-year-old boy in Yemen looking for his father](#), murdered by drone thus far. At the event, the ex-CIA and -NSA boss then continued trying to soothe public fears over the awesome powers usurped by the federal government.

According to Hayden’s version, the NSA has been obtaining phone records from companies since October of 2001. Much of the unconstitutional snooping regime has been justified under the misnamed “Patriot” Act. The NSA then “puts them in a lockbox” that is supposedly “under very strict limitations” in terms of access. Hayden then gave a hypothetical example of how a phone number connected to a supposed “terrorist” could be checked with lawlessly collected metadata to supposedly advance “national security.”

“What it cannot do are all those things that ... allows someone to create your social network, your social interactions, your patterns of behavior,” Hayden continued after dropping the bombshell confession. “One could make the argument that could be useful, [or] that could be illegal, but it’s not done. In this debate, it’s important to distinguish what might be done with what is being done.” With NSA bosses having been exposed lying even to lawmakers under oath, however, analysts say taking them at their word would be foolish at best.

Of course, the cat Hayden let out of the bag on metadata being used to select murder targets was not entirely a surprise to analysts who have been closely following developments in the growing cloud of scandal surrounding the NSA. In February, journalists Glen Greenwald and Jeremy Scahill, citing Snowden’s leaks and comments by U.S. officials, had reported essentially the same thing: that metadata collected by the NSA is used to pick targets for extermination. Numerous innocent people have “absolutely” been killed under the program, according to a former drone operator quoted in their Intercept report.

In reality, since no trials were ever conducted and all people are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty, critics say all of the victims thus far have been innocent — at least as far as the law is concerned. Estimates suggest thousands of people from Pakistan and Yemen to Afghanistan and Somalia — many of them simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, known as “collateral damage” — have been murdered by drones so far. Obama personally approves each assassination, the Nobel Peace Prize recipient confessed publicly.

Despite officials hiding behind the half-baked veneer of the terror war, the details and admissions



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offered by Hayden should be extremely alarming to everyday Americans. Indeed, in recent years, the federal government has produced official documents claiming that [essentially anyone with an opinion it disagrees with may be a potential "terrorist."](#) That includes pro-life activists, liberty lovers, constitutionalists, libertarians, conservatives, Christians, environmentalists, states' rights proponents, advocates for national sovereignty, veterans, Orthodox Jews, and more.

While the NSA lawlessly gathers the data, the CIA has been leading much of the assassination program. As *The New American* [reported](#) in 2011, the agency's mass-murder-via-drone program accelerated quickly under the Obama administration as victims from Africa to Asia were executed by missiles dropped from the sky. Even Americans are fair game, the administration claims. The developments were so extreme that a former senior intelligence official told the *Washington Post* that the [CIA had been turned into "one hell of a killing machine."](#) Critics said that in addition to a brazen violation of the U.S. Constitution, the global murder programs may constitute war crimes as well.

In his [May 10 report about the symposium](#) and Hayden's admission there, Georgetown University's Cole noted that lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have come together to rein in some of the worst NSA abuses uncovered thus far. The effort, which would put a few tepid restrictions on the NSA's ability to continue violating Americans' rights, is known as the "USA Freedom Act." However, he added in the *New York Review of Books*, much more needs to be done to properly deal with the issue. "The biggest mistake any of us could make would be to conclude that this bill solves the problem," Cole said.

Photo of Michael Hayden: [National Security Law Journal](#)

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