



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on May 29, 2014

Kerry Says “Traitor” Snowden Should Come Home and “Face the Music”

Calling Edward Snowden a “traitor” and a “coward,” Secretary of State John Kerry (shown) said Wednesday the man who leaked classified documents revealing the National Security Agency’s data collection of Americans’ phone calls and e-mails should “man up” and return from Russia to face charges of espionage and theft of government documents.



“Edward Snowden is a coward, he is a traitor and he has betrayed his country,” Kerry said in an interview on MSNBC’s *The Daily Rundown*. “And if he wants to come home tomorrow to face the music, he can do so.” Kerry’s comments came after Snowden said in an interview with NBC that he is trapped in Russia because the U.S. State Department revoked his passport.

“I don’t think there’s ever been any question that I’d like to go home,” Snowden said in a segment of the interview broadcast Wednesday night. “Now, whether amnesty or clemency ever becomes a possibility is not for me to say. That’s a debate for the public and the government to decide. But, if I could go anywhere in the world, that place would be home.” Kerry denied Snowden is trapped in Moscow.

“Well, for a supposedly smart guy that’s a pretty dumb answer, frankly” Kerry told NBC. “If Mr. Snowden wants to come back to the United States today, we’ll have him on a flight today.”

Snowden, an intelligence analyst employed by NSA contractor Booz Allen Hamilton, fled his Hawaii home last June after turning the classified documents over to journalist Glenn Greenwald, then with the London newspaper *The Guardian*. The British paper published the news of the NSA’s secret daily collection of billions of telephone call records and e-mail messages. Last month, the *Guardian* and the *Washington Post* were awarded the Pulitzer prize for their coverage of the story.

Snowden flew first to Hong Kong, then to Moscow in July before his passport was revoked. “The reality is I never intended to end up in Russia,” Snowden said in his NBC interview. “I had a flight booked to Cuba onwards to Latin America and I was stopped because the United States government decided to revoke my passport and trap me in Moscow Airport.” In August, the Russian government granted Snowden a one-year asylum. U.S. officials have voiced concerns over the possibility that Snowden may have shared some of the classified information with either Chinese or Russian officials, something Snowden has denied. But Kerry said the theft of documents has made it harder for the U.S. to discover and thwart terrorist plots against the United States.

“If this man is a patriot, he should stay in the United States and make his case,” he said. “Patriots don’t go to Russia, they don’t seek asylum in Cuba, they don’t seek asylum in Venezuela, they fight their



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cause here.”

Ben Wizner, a legal advisor to Snowden, said the Espionage Act makes it impossible for a defendant to argue that the disclosure of information contained in the documents was necessary to warn the public of an abuse of government power.

“The laws under which Snowden is charged don’t distinguish between sharing information with the press in the public interest, and selling secrets to a foreign enemy,” Wizner told the *Guardian*. “The laws would not provide him any opportunity to say that the information never should have been withheld from the public in the first place. And the fact that the disclosures have led to the highest journalism rewards, have led to historic reforms in the US and around the world — all of that would be irrelevant in a prosecution under the espionage laws in the United States.”

The reforms, in the United States at least, have done little to allay concerns over invasions of privacy by a massive collection of data revealing calls made and received by millions of Americans each day. In January, President Obama announced the “metadata” would no longer be stored by the NSA but would be kept by the telecommunications companies and made available to the government upon issuance of a warrant by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. Last week the House passed, 303-121, the USA Freedom Act that had been offered as a measure to protect privacy rights while preserving government access to records of persons under reasonable suspicion of plotting terrorist attacks. But some who voted against the bill said last minute changes had rendered the measure moot. Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.) was one of the original sponsors.

“The bill was so weakened in behind-the-scenes negotiations over the last week that the government still can order — without probable cause — a telephone company to turn over all call records for ‘area code 616’ or for ‘phone calls made east of the Mississippi,’” said Amash, whose effort to ban the surveillance program last year was narrowly defeated in the House. “The bill green-lights the government’s massive data collection activities that sweep up Americans’ records in violation of the Fourth Amendment,” he said.

The Fourth Amendment ban on “unreasonable searches and seizures” forbids random searches, requiring that warrants are issued only “upon probable cause” and that they describe in particular “the place to be searched and the person or things to be seized.”

Photo of Secretary of State John Kerry: AP Images



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