

Obama Says He'll "Reform" NSA Spying ... Should We Believe Him?

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Let's Look at the Track Record

President Obama just announced that he's making "reforms" to the NSA spying program.

Should we believe him?

Obama's claim this week that the government doesn't spy on Americans is [totally false](#). Not only is the NSA spying on Americans, but it's [sharing that information with a variety of other agencies](#) ... like the IRS and local law enforcement.

Obama made other easily-disprovable claims today ... in the same press conference in which he announced the "reforms". As NBC News [notes](#) - in a piece entitled "Snowden revelations force Obama's hand on surveillance program" - Obama said:

"You can come forward, come to the appropriate individuals and say, look, I've got a problem with what's going on here, I'm not sure whether it's being done properly," he said. "If, in fact, the allegations are true, then [Snowden] didn't do that. And that is a huge problem because a lot of what we do depends on terrorists networks not knowing that, in fact, we may be able to access their information."

The statement is false for *several* reasons.

First, the top counter-terrorism Czar under Clinton and Bush says that [revealing NSA spying programs does not harm national security](#). Many other counter-terrorism experts agree. TechDirt also points out that it makes no sense that whistleblower revelations about spying *hurt* our security ... while [U.S. official revelations that they're tapping the communications of Al Qaeda somehow doesn't](#).

Second, whistleblowers like Snowden have [no "legal" way to get the information out](#). Leaking the information is the *only* way to get it out.

Third, the entire spying program - and the government's claims on why it is "needed" - have been described as ["crazy pants" by top counter-terror experts](#).

Associated Press [reports](#) on other Obama whoppers from today's press conference:

The president acknowledged the domestic spying has troubled Americans and hurt the country's image abroad. But he called it a critical counterterrorism

tool.

"I am comfortable that the program currently is not being abused," Obama said. "I am comfortable that if the American people examined exactly what was taking place, how it was being used, what the safeguards were, that they would say, 'You know what? These folks are following the law.'"

Obama [says the spying] program ... already has plenty of [oversight].

In reality, top security experts say that [mass spying doesn't keep us safe](#) ... and that mass spying [actually hurts U.S. counter-terror efforts](#).

There is *no real oversight* by either [Congress](#) or [the courts](#). And see [this](#) and [this](#). Indeed, most [Congress members have no idea what the NSA is doing](#). And a Federal judge who was on the secret spying court for 3 years [says that it's a kangaroo court](#).

Experts say that [the spying program is illegal](#). (Indeed, they point out that it's *exactly* the kind of thing which [King George imposed on the American colonists ... which led to the Revolutionary War](#). A former U.S. *president* says that the spying program is so bad that it shows that we [no longer have a functioning democracy](#).)

Given the repeated, continuous lies by Obama and other [top administration officials](#) about spying, should we believe the government now that it claims it is "reforming" the spying program?

Senator Ron Wyden – a member of the Intelligence Committee – [pointed out](#):

Notably absent from President Obama's speech was any mention of closing the backdoor searches loophole that potentially allows for the warrantless searches of Americans' phone calls and emails under section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Indeed, [even Obama admitted](#) that he's not going to do anything to actually rein in spying:

To allay concerns, Obama endorsed modest oversight changes to a program he says already has plenty of it. None of them significantly changes the programs, and the president acknowledged they were intended to appease Americans, not to curtail the surveillance.

Once again – when bad government policy is revealed – the government just tries to [put lipstick on the pig](#).

Top NSA whistleblower William Binney – the 32-year high-level NSA cryptographer and former head of the NSA's global digital data gathering program – has explained that it is technically easy and cheap to rein in the spying program [so that it complies with the Constitution](#).

Binney told me that the only way to stop the mass surveillance on Americans is to *fire* the

corrupt government officials who let it happen.

He's right.

As we explained [5 years ago](#), the only way to stop the ransacking of our prosperity and our constitutional rights is to fire the guys who [keep fleecing us again and again](#).

Ralph Waldo Emerson's words over 100 years ago apply rather well to the government officials who have repeatedly lied about spying:

"Who you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying."

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