

# Leaked information in central intelligence agency

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



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Edward Snowden, an Ex-CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), computer specialist, and former contractor for National Security Agency leaked documents to journalists that were sensitive to national security. These leaked reveal NSA's surveillance operations as well as UK's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). They showed a degree at which the British and US intelligence agencies spied on citizens in addition to world leaders, the latest being Angela Merkel, German Chancellor. He is currently in Russia in temporary asylum but wanted by American authorities on charges of espionage ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)).

Snowden unearthed unconstitutional behavior in which the agency was snooping on peoples' information but his reporting did not follow the right channels. This can damage the reputation of the intelligence agencies. He broke the law as well by disclosing national security data that is vital in keeping US citizens safe. In response to queries from European parliament, he came in defense that people who follow such channels end up unsuccessful and these unlawful programs are never stopped (New York Times).

The First Amendment has protected against media freedom in addition to unconstitutional government controls. Press freedom relates to free expression, invasion of privacy, access to government information, libel and slander among other aspects. By leaking of such documents to the media, Snowden revealed illegal activities by security agencies. It was considered a heroic act by the media community. Note that Snowden was welcomed to join the Board of Freedom of the Press Foundation (FPF).

According to [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), Professor Archibald Cox, who is a widely known expert on constitutional law, argues that freedom of expression offers a suitable platform for people to present their grievances and have them addressed. This goes to the extent of changing the governing systems so as to provide better services to their citizens. The press, therefore, has an important role in exercising of their rights for the wellbeing of its citizens and to help shape the governing mechanisms for the common good.

It was within media right that Snowden, as a whistle blower, exposed the unconstitutional practices that the government agencies were using in contrary to the common good. Professor Archibald Cox terms this freedom of press as “ uninhibited publication” and it’s a right mechanism, whereby people are made aware of the conduct and measures of the government. He believed that self-governing people need access to full information in relation to government activities so as to be able to shape policy and induce the government responsibility and accountability ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)).

The Department of Justice, in relation to Espionage Act of 1917, charged Snowden for espionage, that is, release of information vital to national defense. This attracts a fine of \$10, 000 and a 20-year imprisonment sentence. Consequently, Snowden went to seek asylum in Russia. This however contradicts Professor Cox’s views on media criticisms on government activities.

### Conclusion

Leaked information concerning surveillance by government agencies is within the media right to criticize activities and policies by the government. Therefore, Professor Cox’s views on media freedom and criticisms are valid

and the press should embrace this freedom to give a new direction to the government to act within the expectations of its citizens.

Work cited

New York Times: Retrieved From: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/08/world/europe/snowden-says-he-reported-nsa-surveillance-concerns-before-leaks.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/08/world/europe/snowden-says-he-reported-nsa-surveillance-concerns-before-leaks.html?_r=0)