

Sample critical thinking on nsa surveillance

[Society](#), [Terrorism](#)



The issue of national security is a very critical and sensitive issue in the U. S., because of past terrorist attacks. The government has a duty to protect its people and hence it puts in place measures that can prevent future attacks. The NSA " Information Assurance (AI)" is tasked with the responsibility of executing measures that prevent enemies of the U. S. from gaining access to sensitive information or classified security information (NSA). The " signals intelligence (SIGINT)" collects, analyses, processes, and dispatches foreign information signals for purposes of intelligence, counterintelligence, and support of military operations (NSA). The NSA's is crucial because timely and precise information on the intentions, activities, capabilities, and plans of foreign entities can affect the national security of the U. S. (National Archives). Legal and reasonable measures should be taken to ensure that the best intelligence information is acquired. The surveillance activities touch the human right that advocates for protection from unreasonable search, and the right to privacy; this necessitates the implementation of a Share with public policy that would increase the acceptability and accountability of surveillance activities to the citizens of the U. S. and to the rest of the world. There is discomfort among the American population on the idea that the NSA is carrying out surveillance on their day-to-day activities. There is a general perception that surveillance is carried out on wrong doers or individuals with the intention to commit a crime. This perception explains why the Fourth Amendment states that no individual should be subjected to an unreasonable search or seizure (" Privacy and Government"). A search for evidence on a criminal suspect requires a law enforcement officer to obtain a search warrant. Hence, the argument that a warrantless surveillance can

infringe on the right to not to be subjected to an unreasonable search, and on the right to privacy as indirectly provided for in the Fourth Amendment, and the Fourteenth Amendment among other laws. In the case of a warrantless search, an individual's consent is paramount. Furthermore, it is understandable to execute surveillance activities on the communications facilities of an enemy especially when there is high risk of an attack.

Logically speaking, it makes little sense to carry out surveillance activities on friendly nations and law-abiding citizens. The other point is that the surveillance activities are made without the willingness or knowledge of the people under surveillance, thus increasing public suspicion on what the intelligence agencies are doing with the collected information.

The margin between the citizens who are against surveillance because of the notion " it reduces civil liberties, and that the government has gone too far" and " the citizens who did not mind" has reduced significantly (LoGiurato).

The 2010 Quinnipiac University poll showed that the citizens against surveillance were 25% while those who did not mind were 63% (LoGiurato).

The 2013 Quinnipiac University poll showed that the citizens against surveillance rose to 45% while those who did not mind reduced to 40% compared to the 2010 poll (LoGiurato). This shows a general increase in the number of individuals who are against the current approach to surveillance.

Similarly, the " Stop Watching Us" coalition of several anti-surveillance groups such as Freedom Works and the American Civil Liberties Union carried out a demonstration expressing that they wanted the mass surveillance provision under the PATRIOT Act abolished (Serwer). An abolishment of the PATRIOT Act would end the tapping of communication

facilities without a warrant.

When the public is not well informed on intelligence surveillance activities and intention, this leads to various assumptions such as the use of the collected information for unfair gains. For instance, one assumption would be that the intelligence agencies sell the individual's private information to various local and international business organizations that want to gain advantage over rivals. This is possible through the collection of the various preferences and purchasing norms of a population as revealed in electronic communication and trading. On the other hand, enemies would suspect impending attacks, thereby prompting counter surveillance activities, as well as increasing military alert levels.

After the disclosures done by whistleblower Edward Snowden, the public opinion on the credibility of the NSA decreased significantly (Serwer). The Quinnipiac University poll revealed that 55% of the respondents viewed Snowden as a whistleblower who exposed crucial information to the public while 34% viewed him as a traitor who sold Americans' information to its enemies (LoGiurato). The scope of the activities of surveillance was not fully understood until Snowden's unauthorized disclosures. NSA's surveillance activities extend to foreign states some of which are allied to the U. S. in Europe and other parts of the world, without the consent of those nations. The surveillance activity on both friends and foes increases foes suspicion and reduces trust with allies. Suspicious surveillance activities broadcast a negative image of the U. S., which is a highly rated democratic nation, and threaten economic and political ties with foreign nations. Good diplomacy dictates that issues that entail citizen security be addressed in the form of

collaboration between the involved states and in light of the interests of both countries' citizens. This collaboration ensures that the countries have a clear understanding on the goals of surveillance, the nature of information to collect, and the duration that this exercise should take. Nevertheless, the most important point is the willingness of the states to engage mutually in a surveillance exercise.

A strong point that supports stealth surveillance is the argument that terrorism is stealth and that terrorist operations are challenging to monitor, hence the need for tapping into the public's communication networks as a measure of monitoring suspicious activities so that preventive measures can be implemented before terrorist events take place. Moreover, terrorists can be individuals of any nationality including citizens of America (" Preventing Terrorism Results"). This aspect of terrorism makes it difficult to identify terrorists and terrorist plans. This is a convincing point, but the information on the success of surveillance activities need to be disclosed to the public in support of the relevance and benefits of such activities. In addition, if surveillance has assisted in curbing crimes such as cyber attacks, human trafficking, gang activities, and drug trafficking among others, this would be a great asset to stealth surveillance. There is no evidence of such contributions because maybe evidence does not exist or it is kept secret from the public. There are speculations that surveillance reduces crime, but factual data will increase credibility and acceptance. Informing the public needs a solution that will present NSA surveillance as activities that are responsible and accountable to the American citizens. While the fight against terrorism is a worldwide concern, it is significant that NSA surveillance is

carried out in collaboration with foreign countries so that American and foreign interests can be addressed without compromising economic and political ties. Diplomatic surveillance activities would increase the security of the U. S., the foreign country, and it would help in stabilizing countries that are at war or that have civil unrest. In this case, surveillance information can be used for the basis of establishing a middle ground among the warring factions. Since charity begins at home, the surveillance measures must be fruitful locally before they are extended to foreign countries. International surveillance arrangement should be disclosed to the public because they aim at addressing American's interests.

The Share with public policy entails putting in place transparent surveillance measures that are accountable to the citizens of the United States of America. The implementation of this policy begins with the audit of the past surveillance activities and outcomes. This is relevant in the establishment of the necessity of surveillance activities. Surveillance activities have a higher chance of public acceptance, if there is a demonstration of integrity in carrying out tasks and if the activities bore fruit in the form of evidence of positive effects of surveillance in the interest of the public. This audit would form a foundation for the future of surveillance, the Share with public policy. The Share with public policy entails informing the public on the aims of carrying out a time limited surveillance exercise. When the period is over the surveillance results should be communicated to the public after a reasonable period. This will increase the acceptance and trust in the surveillance activities and also offers a platform for the periodical assessment surveillance activities. Citizens' consent is a major part of a warrantless

search. The Share with public policy will expect the public to be informed on the necessity of carrying out a time limited surveillance activity beforehand. The public is then expected to give feedback through their representatives on the support or the lack of support of the surveillance activities.

Surveillance activities are to proceed depending on the sentiment of the majority of the public.

One would argue that such disclosures would give terrorists an upper hand because they have prior knowledge of surveillance activities before they take place. First, this is not completely accurate because there are ways of legally investigating a suspect through the acquisition of a warrant from a magistrate so long as a suspect portrays suspicious characteristics or engages in suspicious activities. In addition, the Share with public policy does not require that the specifics of information to be collected be disclosed; it is the purpose and duration of the surveillance exercise that is disclosed to the public. The duration should be limited because people are not comfortable with the perpetual surveillance of their private communications without necessity or good reason. Once the risk is eliminated or put to manageable levels, public communication activities should continue as usual. Perpetual surveillance increases public suspicion and reduces public trust as mentioned earlier. Lastly, prevention is better than cure, the implementation of the Share with public policy presents an opportunity to study the relationship between announcing intention to carry out surveillance, and curbing the level of illegal activities. This is significant because of the increased illegal activities despite knowledge on NSA surveillance activities.

A community that is willing to support surveillance activities for their own welfare will also increase its contribution to the cause in terms of the provision of information, financial resources, and human resources.

Immediately the public understands that surveillance is for their own good, with proof to back the claims, and the demonstration of transparency and accountability; surveillance activities will advance in terms of innovation due to increased acceptability and cooperation. However, stealth surveillance is beneficial if administered on individuals who are known criminals as a measure to collect sufficient evidence and in identifying their accomplices so that the illegal network can be dismantled, and the suspects taken to court. Stealth surveillance is also beneficial in monitoring an enemy nation on the basis that reliable evidence exists that the enemy country poses a threat to the U. S. Otherwise; stealth surveillance should not be carried out on the allies of America or on law-abiding citizens who are going about regular duties of building the nation.

The implementation of the Share with public policy gives a new beginning to the approach of surveillance because it informs the public on the relevance of the exercise at the time of initiating surveillance, and it supports informing the public on the results within a reasonable time span. The Share with public policy will revive the trust in NSA's surveillance activities, and the public has the option of giving feedback to their representatives as a way of contributing to the exercise. The acceptance of surveillance activities locally will also increase the chances of collaborative surveillance exercises with foreign nations. The Share with public policy needs a thorough evaluation to

determine its potential level of success and acceptability before it is practically implemented.

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