

ODNI Review Group Comments  
Jeff C.

The following is my public comment for the Review Group on Global Signals Intelligence Collection.

Communications technologies are getting more sophisticated at a rapidly increasing rate. The rapid advancement of technology and the Internet has exposed a wealth of uncharted territory in the laws and the Constitution of our government. Thus, our generation now must address the simultaneous problems of both defending our citizens from new threats, such as state-sponsored cyberwarfare, as well as upholding our expectation of privacy under the 4th amendment.

If we truly have a government of, by, and for the people, then the people must be made aware of the actions their government is taking on their behalf to solve these problems. However, it has been made clear that the current culture of the NSA and other government entities is one of both ultimate secrecy (refusal to expose FISA court decisions, aggregate numbers of NSLs) and abuse of power (<http://rt.com/usa/nsa-domestic-surveillance-abuse-684/>).

Furthermore, as an employee of a U.S.-based technology company, it's easy to see that the NSA's interest in the data collected by these companies has started causing users to reconsider trusting such companies with their data. Continued erosion of this trust ultimately hampers American job growth.

The U.S. government certainly should play a role in foiling terrorist plots. But it has been unable to produce evidence of foiled plots as a result of the NSA's "dragnet" surveillance. Increasing transparency is the first step towards regaining the lost trust that prompted the creation of this Review Group.

In summary, until American citizens are able to have an informed debate on the successes and failures of signals intelligence gathering, there is no evidence to suggest that the current methods for gathering intelligence are in the best interest of the citizens. I recommend taking immediate action to publicly describe these successes and failures, so that we may better assess how to move forward.