

ODNI Review Group Comments
Lex. V.

Dear Review Group,

how in light of advancements in communications technologies, the United States can employ its technical collection capabilities in a manner that optimally protects our national security and advances our foreign policy while respecting our commitment to privacy and civil liberties, recognizing our need to maintain the public trust, and reducing the risk of unauthorized disclosure.

To start, I'd like to recognize and agree to our need for intelligence gathering. The methods of intelligence gathering however needs to respect human rights. By applying global dragnet-style surveillance, you undermine not only the position of your own citizens, but also the position of a very large part of the world.

The massive scale of this surveillance effort has severely undermined my trust in the US being a functioning democratic and free country. Within Europe we just got rid of the Stasi, and in all revelations about that time period we have learned about the terror people will live in as soon as they can no longer trust anything. We refuse to have to feel the same thing again, and we will not accept anybody gathering information using massive and non-targeted, dragnet-style methods.

Trust is the issue here. The internet is a wonderful instrument for the whole of mankind. It's the first instrument that allows us to, as human beings, communicate with each other without fear of reprisal, censorship and government/corporate intervention. This instrument is going to further the whole of humankind, if we let it and we use it properly. By subverting the internet into a massive surveillance network, you will undermine the very trust onto which this instrument has been built. By doing so, you are preventing the humankind of proceeding beyond its current barriers.

Ideally, you will work with all other world countries into establishing policies that, while allowing a certain amount of limited and targeted information retrieval supported by clearly defined legal and worldwide agreed upon boundaries, will preserve and enforce the internet as an instrument dedicated to the better of mankind and the world as a whole.