

## Who's Behind the “Disinformation” Against the NSA?

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Since Matt Drudge is a recluse who doesn't respond to questions about his news judgment or political views, it's hard to know for sure why he put a photograph of Edward Snowden on his website above the words, “Free to chat without NSA tracking! At least for now.” Was he recognizing enemy agent Snowden's important role in Senator Rand Paul's (R-KY) victory in the Senate in closing down National Security Agency (NSA) terrorist surveillance authority?

Despite the implication behind this misleading headline on Drudge's influential website, people were always “free to chat.” That phrase contributes to the lingering misperception that the NSA is listening to ordinary Americans' telephone conversations and gathering private and personal data about their lives.

Our media, under the influence of left-wing groups like the ACLU and libertarian organizations such as the Cato Institute, certainly have no desire to clear things up.

On Monday, these so-called “privacy advocates” and “surveillance experts” held a press call for the media, responding to the expiration of the Patriot Act and its various provisions. They are now desperate to prevent the Senate from adopting amendments to fix the flawed House bill known as the USA Freedom Act.

It's fashionable to join this campaign and go with the flow, perpetuating false assumptions about what the NSA actually does.

But to his credit, Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), also a presidential candidate, [pointed out](#), “Internet search providers, Internet-based email accounts, credit card companies and membership discount cards used at the grocery store all collect far more personal information on Americans than the bulk metadata program” of the NSA.

As such, headlines like those on the Drudge Report are misleading to the point of paranoia and can only serve to make an enemy agent like Snowden, now living in Moscow and serving his Kremlin masters, into some kind of hero.

Yet, there can be no doubt that Snowden came out the big winner, thanks to Senator Paul.

If anything, this state of affairs should cause Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to rethink his support of Senator Paul's presidential run.

In [remarks](#) on the Senate floor, McConnell said, "We shouldn't be disarming unilaterally as our enemies grow more sophisticated and aggressive, and we certainly should not be doing so based on a campaign of demagoguery and disinformation launched in the wake of the unlawful actions of Edward Snowden."

Those terms "demagoguery" and "disinformation" were directed at the junior senator from Kentucky. McConnell seemed to be suggesting that Paul was playing Snowden's tune.

The term "disinformation" carries special weight, since it is an intelligence term that signifies a political influence campaign being waged by our enemies abroad, perhaps in Russia or China. Snowden, based in Moscow, has to be considered under the control of the Russian security services.

Was McConnell suggesting that Paul is acting on behalf of Russia or China?

As if this wasn't bad enough, Paul acted on the Senate floor like President Obama was behind the NSA program and was trying to maintain it in its present form. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Obama has abandoned the NSA, something his progressive base had been demanding ever since Snowden went to Russia.

McConnell noted that Obama was pushing the House-passed USA Freedom Act, which Democrats admit has serious flaws and loopholes. McConnell said, "The administration's inability to answer even the most basic questions about the alternate bulk-data system it would have to build under that legislation is, to say the least, troubling. And that's not just my view. That's the view of many in this body, including colleagues who'd been favorably predisposed to the House bill."

McConnell went on: "In particular, I know senators from both parties have been disturbed by the administration's continuing inability to guarantee whether the new system would work as well as the current one, or whether there would even be any data available to analyze. Because while the administration has let it be known that this non-existent system could only be built in time if telephone providers cooperate in building it, providers have made it abundantly clear that they will not commit to retaining the data for any period of time unless legally required to do so—and there is no such requirement in the House-passed bill."

McConnell quoted one provider as saying, "[We are] not prepared to commit to voluntarily retain documents for any particular period of time pursuant to the proposed USA Freedom Act if not otherwise required by law."

In other words, the USA Freedom Act effectively dismantles the terrorist surveillance powers of the NSA, while giving the impression of "reform." It's no wonder that Snowden-friendly media like the British Guardian are giving the measure favorable publicity.

It's troubling that Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), another GOP presidential candidate, was backing the USA Freedom Act as well.

But Senator Paul stands to the left of even the House bill.

In another piece of disinformation, an outfit called America's Liberty PAC released animated [video](#) showing Rand Paul vs. Barack Obama in a supposed showdown over the NSA, with the two of them depicted as the wrestlers "Rand Man," and Obama as the head of the "Washington spy machine."

Yet, Obama was mostly on the side of Rand Paul in this effort.

As noted, Obama had endorsed major changes in the NSA program that McConnell had described as unworkable. McConnell and those who wanted to maintain the system were Paul's real enemies.

Let's hope that Senator McConnell continues to set the record straight as the junior senator from Kentucky goes forward in the presidential campaign, attempting to portray himself as a friend of liberty and the Constitution against the odious Obama administration. Also odious is a presidential candidate who misrepresents the facts for political gain, and runs as a Republican when his position on the NSA makes him more comfortable in the Bernie Sanders wing of the Democratic Party.

It looks like Senator Paul is following in the footsteps of his father, who veered far-left on foreign policy matters and came to be associated with the "blame America first" mentality that the Democrats were once known for. Interestingly, America's Liberty PAC, a Super PAC founded by former Ron Paul political operatives, is backing Rand Paul for president and has [been endorsed](#) by him.

In another example of pure disinformation, [a video](#) on a conservative website hailed Senator Paul's actions under the headline, "Obama's NSA Snoops Have Just Been Dealt A HUGE Setback That Could Shake Up The 2016 Race."

Obama's NSA Snoops? This is the same kind of nonsense that Senator Paul was spewing. The NSA is a professional intelligence agency whose main mission is to support America's combat troops. It has also been assigned the job of maintaining a database of phone numbers possibly linked to foreign terrorist organizations. This information, after it is obtained legally, is provided to law enforcement agencies such as the FBI.

Largely because of the antics of Senator Paul, McConnell is now left with the option of bringing the House-passed bill to the Senate floor. "It's not ideal but, along with votes on some modest amendments that attempt to ensure the program can actually work as promised, it's now the only realistic way forward," he said.

To his credit, Senator Rubio has backed McConnell's effort to protect and preserve the NSA system. He noted, "Bulk metadata includes phone numbers, the time and duration of calls—

nothing else. No content of any phone calls is collected. The government is not listening to your phone calls or recording them unless you are a terrorist or talking to a terrorist outside the United States.”

These basic facts have gotten lost in the “demagoguery and disinformation,” as Senator McConnell called the attacks on the NSA.

Even worse, the effort had a money-grubbing aspect to it. Paul [posted a statement](#) celebrating the end of the NSA program and urging his supporters to, “Click here to contribute and celebrate this tremendous victory for the Constitution.”

Edward Snowden was certainly celebrating. He had contributed to one of Ron Paul’s presidential campaigns and is probably tempted to support his son. But “clicking to contribute” rubles from Moscow might be going too far, even for the Pauls.