

House members to hear from critics of NSA spying program

By Josh Peterson – July 29th, 2013

Critics of the National Security Agency's domestic spying program will appear before Congress on Wednesday in a hearing that should offer a sharp contrast with testimonies from the heads of the U.S. Intelligence community.

In a bipartisan hearing called by Florida Democratic Rep. Alan Grayson, journalist Glenn Greenwald will testify about his reporting on the NSA's domestic spying — disclosed to him by former defense contractor Edward Snowden. Greenwald will appear via video remote from his home in Brazil.

Michelle Richardson, Legislative Counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union Washington Legislative Office, and Julian Sanchez, a research fellow at the Cato Institute, will also testify at the hearing. Sanchez, a prominent privacy theorist, specializes on the intersection of technology, privacy, civil liberties and new media.

Grayson told the Guardian that his plan is to bring in critics of the program as an alternative viewpoint to the testimonies offered to Congress by NSA Director Gen. Keith Alexander and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper.

“We have barely heard anything in Congress from critics of the program,” said Grayson.

The Senate will hold a simultaneous hearing during which Alexander is expected to testify, along with other senior officials of the U.S. Intelligence community.

Grayson has also been working to make it possible for U.S. soldiers fighting in the Middle East to be able to read The Guardian, according to a July 18 report by Crooks And Liars.

The Pentagon blocked access to the publication July 1 “theater-wide” in the Middle East and South Asia in order to prevent the unauthorized dissemination of classified information disclosed by Snowden.