



NSA Revelation: US, UK Intentionally Targeted WikiLeaks And Its Supporters

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By Katie Rucke
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Glenn Greenwald’s new publication, The Intercept, which was partially created in order to publish information the journalist obtained from National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, published another revealing [report](#) on Wednesday detailing how the U.S. and U.K. governments targeted WikiLeaks and other activist groups in their surveillance efforts.

According to the report co-authored by Greenwald and Ryan Gallagher, one classified [document](#) from Britain’s top spy agency found that Government Communications Headquarters used its surveillance system to monitor those who visited the WikiLeaks website.

The agency allegedly did this by tapping into the fiber-optic cables, which allowed GCHQ officials to collect the IP addresses of those who visited the website in real time, including those who ended up on the website via search engines such as Google.

Meaning, those who visited the WikiLeaks webpage were viewed as being equally dangerous to national security as those who are associates of suspected members of terrorist groups such as al-Qaida.

Greenwald and Gallagher reported that shortly after WikiLeaks was formed in 2008, the U.S. Army classified the organization as an enemy and “[plotted how it could be destroyed](#),” and designated WikiLeaks as “a ‘[malicious foreign actor](#)’ for the purpose of targeting.”

According to the documents, the U.S. intelligence community viewed WikiLeaks, and other activist organizations, as a threat since they could reveal things the governments had covered up

for years, and improperly designated the organization as a threat in order to target its operations with “extensive electronic surveillance” methods.

“WikiLeaks strongly condemns the reckless and unlawful behavior of the National Security Agency,” said WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange in a statement, and called for the Obama administration to “appoint a special prosecutor to investigate the extent of the NSA’s criminal activity against the media including WikiLeaks and its extended network.”

Assange further stated that the revelations that the NSA planned to target these groups is appalling. He is concerned that European nations were pressured into abusing their own legal systems as well.

“The NSA and its U.K. accomplices show no respect for the rule of law,” Assange said. “But there is a cost to conducting illicit actions against a media organization. We have already filed criminal cases against the FBI and U.S. military in multiple European jurisdictions. ...

“No entity, including the NSA, should be permitted to act against journalists with impunity. We have instructed our General Counsel Judge Baltasar Garzón to prepare the appropriate response. The investigations into attempts to interfere with the work of WikiLeaks will go wherever they need to go,” he said.

“Make no mistake: those responsible will be held to account and brought to justice.”

The NSA declined to provide a comment for the Intercept report, but released a statement saying that the agency “provides numerous opportunities and forums for their analysts to explore hypothetical or actual circumstances to gain appropriate advice on the exercise of their authorities within the Constitution and the law, and to share that advice appropriately.”

Even if the NSA fails to see where it went too far, Julian Sanchez, a research fellow who specializes in surveillance issues at the Cato Institute, [said](#) that this revelation should be enlightening for Americans who believed the U.S. government was not monitoring its citizens.

“All the reassurances Americans heard that the broad authorities of the FISA Amendments Act could only be used to ‘target’ foreigners seem a bit more hollow,” Sanchez [said](#), “when you realize that the ‘foreign target’ can be an entire Web site or online forum used by thousands if not millions of Americans.”