



## Leahy: NSA Is the Greatest Threat

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The New York Times reports that Obama and his top advisors have concluded that they have no workable alternative to the bulk collection of huge quantities of metadata, including records of all telephone calls made inside the United States. This puts the regime at distinct odds with the Democratic chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who told MSNBC's Andrea Mitchell yesterday that the National Security Agency itself is the greatest threat.

"Can you imagine," asked Sen. Patrick Leahy, "what it would be like if the local police department said, 'We're just going to break into your house, steal everything out of your files and out of your records, because someday we may need it'? Everybody would be in an uproar. But they could do the same thing electronically...."

Leahy also rejected the argument that the surveillance makes Americans safer, saying that the regime has been unable to demonstrate specific terrorist attacks that were prevented by it. "Could it make us safer if we have a person follow every single American, every single minute of the day? Possibly. But do we want that? No. I mean we'll always face threats to this country, but the greatest threat should not be from our own government prying into every single one of our secrets with no accountability whatsoever."

Complementing Leahy, constitutional law professor Jonathan Turley, writing on his website Monday, November 4th, warned against the Orwellian world that labels whistleblowing as acts of espionage and terrorism. Now, "the Pentagon Papers could be treated as the same act as the 9/11 bombings.... Given that the government can label each and every one of us as terrorists, keeping our heads down so as to avoid scrutiny or harassment does *not* work.... The casual and easy transition from a journalist/whistle-blower case to a terrorism case demonstrates the slippery slope that the West is now on. These officials did not appear to have the slightest hesitation in converting the case into a terrorism case. Indeed, they created a type of legal shape-shifting charge where they could claim either espionage or terrorism effectively admitting that such classifications are now entirely arbitrary." Turley was specifically citing the case of David Miranda, Glenn Greenwald's partner, who was charged with terrorism in Britain while traveling with copies of documents provided by Edward Snowden.