

Obama Administration's Worldwide Threat Assessment Centers on... Snowden

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Judging by the emphasis in the opening statement delivered to the Senate Intelligence Committee yesterday by Obama's intelligence chief, one could easily assume that Edward Snowden is the greatest threat to the security of the United States today.

James Clapper, appointed as Director of National Intelligence by Obama in 2010, skimmed over the threat of terrorism in one long paragraph, and then launched into a rant that went on for fourteen paragraphs (as published on the DNI website) denouncing the "profound damage" allegedly caused by Snowden's disclosures. Clapper claimed that Snowden carried out "the most massive and most damaging theft of intelligence information in our history," and went on to catalogue what he described as the loss of critical intelligence sources, putting lives at risk, and lowering morale in the NSA and the intelligence community as they have been "pilloried" in public commentary.

That this was nothing but a propaganda offensive designed for public consumption and the news media, is evidenced by the fact that in the unclassified 27-page printed "Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community" -- the subject of yesterday's hearing -- Snowden is never mentioned. In the first part of the report on global threats, the first threat listed is "Cyber," followed by "Counterintelligence," which has but one short paragraph devoted to "Insider Threat/Unauthorized Disclosures;" this references disclosures to "state adversaries, nonstate activists, or other entities...." Terrorism comes third on the list.

Regarding "Cyber" threats, Russia and China are named first among those with a potential for offensive cyber attacks against the United States.

Sitting next to Clapper was Saudi agent-of-influence, and now-CIA Director, John Brennan. Likely reflecting Brennan's perfidy, Saudi Arabia was never once mentioned, either, in the hearing, or in the published unclassified Threat Assessment which does discuss global terrorism at some length. (Perhaps there's a classified 28 pages in there somewhere?) There are a number of references to "Sunni extremists" and to Al-Qaeda, and to the conflict raging in Syria, but nothing on the Saudis. On the contrary, the report contains a warning, that "the unhappiness of some Arab Gulf States with U.S. policies on Iran, Syria, and Egypt might lead these countries to reduce cooperation with the United States on regional issues and act unilaterally in ways that run counter to U.S. interests."

Edward Snowden's positive influence was demonstrated, in the questioning of Clapper,

Brennan, and FBI Director James Comey, by Senators Ron Wyden (D.-Ore.) and Mark Udall (D.-Colo.), about domestic spying on U.S. citizens.

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