

# GLENN GREENWALD

ON SECURITY AND LIBERTY



## The Snowden video sequel and Brazil fallout

The worldwide debate over US surveillance which the NSA whistleblower was eager to provoke is clearly emerging



**Glenn Greenwald**

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Through her communications minister, Brazil's president, Dilma Rousseff, expressed "indignation" over revelations of NSA spying on Brazilians. Photograph: Ueslei Marcelino/Reuters

Whistleblowers are typically rendered incommunicado, either because they're in hiding, or advised by their lawyers to stay silent, or imprisoned. As a result, the public hears only *about* them, but never *from* them, which makes their demonization virtually inevitable. With that fact in mind, we published - almost a month ago - [a 10-minute video interview with Edward Snowden](#) to enable people to hear directly from him about what he did, why he did it, and what he hoped to achieve.

For the last two weeks, Snowden has been unable to speak publicly as he attempts to secure asylum. During that time, all sorts of accusations, innuendo, and other demonization campaigns have been directed at him by political officials and various members of the US media.

Today, we published below another video of new excerpts from the interview which Laura Poitras and I conducted with Snowden, this one 7-minutes long. It was filmed in Hong Kong on June 6. The video is taken from the extensive footage Poitras filmed as part of the documentary she has been making on the surveillance state. The new excerpts can be seen [here](#).

In these new excerpts, Snowden addresses directly many of the questions that have been raised and much of what has been said about him. Whatever one's views are on [NSA](#) surveillance and these disclosures, assessments should be formed based on all of the evidence, including Snowden's words, rather than exclusively on unverified government assertions.

In the Washington Post today, the greatest whistleblowing hero of the prior generation, Daniel Ellsberg, has [a truly superb Op-Ed](#) arguing that, in light of radical changes in the US since his leak, Snowden was absolutely right to leave the US. He also writes:

"Snowden believes that he has done nothing wrong. I agree wholeheartedly. More than 40 years after my unauthorized disclosure of the Pentagon Papers, such leaks remain the lifeblood of a free press and our republic. One lesson of the Pentagon Papers and Snowden's leaks is simple: secrecy corrupts, just as power corrupts."

I encourage everyone to read Ellsberg's entire argument, as few people have greater authority than he to speak about courageous whistleblowing. Relatedly, [NYU Journalism professor Jay Rosen](#) and [Charles Pierce](#) have both written about what they call "the Snowden effect": the tidal wave of revelations about US surveillance policy stemming not only from the documents he enabled us to report, but also the resulting unprecedented focus on the Surveillance State. Writes Pierce: "Whether he likes it or not, this is the 'national conversation' that the president said he wanted. Edward Snowden, world traveler, international man of luggage, made it impossible to avoid."

As for the revelations I [wrote about yesterday](#) regarding mass, indiscriminate NSA surveillance of millions of Brazilian citizens, the fallout in Brazil is substantial and growing. The New York Times this

morning has [a good summary](#) of the rising anger among the citizenry and political class over these revelations. The most influential television program in the country, Fantastico, did an excellent investigative segment last night really highlighting why this is such a significant scandal; it includes the country's Communications Minister conveying that President Dilma Rousseff reacted with "indignation" to the story and vowing criminal investigations (the segment can be seen [here](#)). Senators are scheduling formal investigative hearings and calling for international action.

In the first video we published, Snowden indicated that his primary motive was to shine light on the ubiquitous global surveillance apparatus being secretly constructed by the US and its allies in order to prompt a meaningful worldwide debate. It's hard to contest that substantial progress has been made in fulfilling this objective.



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