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Chinese media on Snowden: Washington 'ate the dirt' this time

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Two men read an edition of the South China Morning Post carrying the story of former US spy Edward Snowden (C) on its front page in Hong Kong on June 13, 2013. (AFP Photo / Philippe Lopez)

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Chinese media has described the Kremlin as the “winner” and the White House as the “loser” in the Snowden case, following Barack Obama’s cancellation of a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow this autumn.

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An unsigned editorial piece in China’s English-language newspaper

Global Times said that *“Moscow displayed its national characteristics of decisiveness and boldness”* and has kept Washington *“at bay.”* The article suggested that Moscow’s traits are of vital importance in an international climate of US dominance.

“Washington ate the dirt this time,” the article stated.

It goes on to compliment Russia, adding that the US seems to have accepted the fact that Moscow granted asylum to ex-NSA contractor Edward Snowden. *“Russia has impressed the world, which views the Kremlin as the ‘winner’ and the White House as the ‘loser,’”* it said.

On Tuesday, the White House released a statement saying that Obama would not be attending a scheduled meeting with President Vladimir Putin in September. The administration mentioned Snowden in the statement, while also saying that enough progress hasn’t been made on issues such as missile defense, arms control, trade and commercial relations, global security issues, and human rights in the past 12 months.

“We are disappointed by the US administration’s decision to cancel the visit of President Obama to Moscow” Russian presidential aide Yury Ushakov said. *“It is clear that the decision is related to the situation around the former intelligence agency employee Snowden – something that was created not by us.”*

But Ma Feng, professor of international politics at Shandong University, wrote in the People’s Daily that Obama’s rebuke is likely to have very little impact on the situation between the two countries.

“The US needs Russia’s support and help on a series of major international and regional affairs and it will not harm its greater interests because of Snowden...Russia-US relations cannot fundamentally improve. But they are...less likely to deteriorate quickly,” he said.

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Obama called off Putin
talks, decision is
‘Snowden-related’ 161



Obama cancels Moscow
meeting with Putin over
Snowden 293



Snowden Wikipedia page
edited from a Senate
computer to say ‘traitor’
33



‘Russia is not a colony, US
has no legal basis to claim
Snowden’ – lawyer 120



Greenwald: Snowden has
enough information to
cause US govt ‘worst
damage in history’ 802



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The Global Times said on Thursday that “*better results*” seem to have been generated than if China had agreed to offer refuge to Snowden. Instead, the article states that Sino-US relations have remained largely unaffected. The whistleblower was in Hong Kong before flying to Moscow in June.

Moscow’s willingness to take a “*decisive and bold*” line with the US, and its “*experience*” in doing so seems to have suited the country perfectly, the article said.

While complimenting Russia for its temporary accommodation of the whistleblower, the newspaper mentioned that China could not have put itself in the same position when Snowden was in Hong Kong.

It went on to underline how numerous people online have been wondering why China hadn’t acted in the same way as Russia when it had the chance – suggesting that it had displayed “*hesitation and weakness.*” In response to such accusations, the article defended why the country made the decision it did.

“The situation between China and the US is different from that of Russia and the US. The US has many more opportunities and means for retaliation against China,” it stated.

However, the US said in June that it was disappointed that Chinese authorities had not sent Snowden back to the US to face the country’s “*justice.*”



Deputy Secretary of State William Burns said that it “undermined our effort to build the trust needed to manage difficult issues.”


“If Snowden were extradited, it would be a face-losing outcome for both the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and China's central government,” the Global Times stated. “China is not willing to engage in a head-on confrontation with the US, but has the ability to unite with those who can restrict the US’ abuses of power” said the piece.

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Regardless of the Chinese hidden agenda, I agree with the gist of the article - Russia is the clear winner and is dealing an even and strong and bold message with its recent decisions directly back to Halliburton's chief figurehead, Obama.

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