

Father proposes deal for Snowden's voluntary return

By Tom Watkins, CNN

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(CNN) -- The father of Edward J. Snowden has offered federal authorities a deal that he says would likely lead the accused leaker to return voluntarily to the United States to face espionage charges.

The proposal was laid out in a letter, dated Thursday and obtained Friday by CNN's "Amanpour," addressed to Attorney General Eric Holder and written by Bruce Fein, a Washington-based lawyer for Snowden's father, Lonnie G. Snowden.

It demands that the former National Security Agency computer contractor who exposed details about U.S. surveillance programs remain free prior to trial; not be subject to a gag order; and be tried in a place of his choosing.

It further demands that, if any of those promises is broken, the prosecution would be dismissed.

Read the letter



Still looking for Edward Snowden



Where is Edward Snowden?

"With these written



Obama covers his bases on Snowden



U.S. threatens Ecuador over Snowden

representations and guarantee, Mr. Snowden is reasonably confident that his son could be persuaded to surrender voluntarily to the jurisdiction of the United States to face trial," Fein wrote.

The Justice Department has no immediate comment.

In comments Friday to NBC News' "Today," the elder Snowden said he had not spoken with his son since April.

"I love him, I would like to have the opportunity to communicate with him. I don't want to put him in peril, but I am concerned about those who surround him," he said.

Though the 30-year-old man may have betrayed his government, "I don't believe he has betrayed the people of the United States," he said.

He expressed concern that his son might have been manipulated by WikiLeaks. "Their focus isn't necessarily the Constitution of the United States," he said. "It's simply to release as much information as possible."

A day after authorities in Ecuador said they would not bow to U.S. pressure as they weigh Snowden's request for asylum, State Department spokesman Patrick Ventrell denied any "bullying" tactics had been used.

"The point is just that we are making a consistent point to any government that might take him as a final destination that this is somebody wanted on serious felony charges and we would like him returned to the United States," Ventrell told reporters Friday in response to a question from CNN's Jill Dougherty.

Obama: Pay no attention to that man we can't capture

He was referring to his warning Thursday that Ecuador's economic ties with the United States could be jeopardized.

"What would not be a good thing is them granting Mr. Snowden asylum," Ventrell had said. "That would have grave difficulties for a bilateral relationship."

Ventrell then cited trade agreements the United States has extended to Ecuador.

"They're unilateral trade provisions that provide a benefit to certain Ecuadorian products," Ventrell said. "Whether they're renewed or not is a prerogative of the U.S. Congress."

Asked about that remark, Ventrell said Friday, "I wouldn't call it a threat. I'd say that, you know, we are making the same points in public that we are making in private -- that this is somebody accused of serious crimes that we want returned."

The warning sparked a strong response on Thursday from Ecuador's president, Rafael Correa, at an event in Quevedo.

"It is outrageous to try to delegitimize a state for receiving a petition of asylum," said the left-leaning economist who is known for decrying what he and other Latin American leaders have called U.S. imperialism.

And on Friday, the Embassy of Ecuador announced that the country had suspended its support for the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act, which provided duty-free treatment for certain products.

U.S. asks Ecuador to reject any asylum request from Snowden

"As we have stated previously, any political or economic consequences of our decision regarding the asylum request are outweighed by our legal and humanitarian obligations," an embassy statement said.

Last year, Ecuador granted asylum to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who remains in the nation's embassy in Britain.

Ecuador's rationale appeared to have won support from former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. If another country wants to give haven to Snowden, "then that is their right as a sovereign nation," he told CNN's Suzanne Malveaux. "If the United States can acquire custody of him, I'm sure he will be brought to trial, and that's the way the law should be implemented."

Snowden's acts may have some positive impact, Carter said.

"He's obviously violated the laws of America, for which he's responsible, but I think the invasion of human rights and American privacy has gone too far," he said.

"I think that the secrecy that has been surrounding this invasion of privacy has been excessive, so I think that the bringing of it to the public notice has probably been, in the long term, beneficial."

Asked to elaborate, he said, "I think the American people deserve to know what their Congress is doing."

Snowden has been at Moscow's international airport since Sunday, when he arrived from Hong Kong.

Europe furious, 'shocked' by report of U.S. spying

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