

CDT Urges President to Confirm NSA Wiretapping of Internet Backbone

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We must move quickly to have a meaningful and transparent debate in Congress and the courts about whether a surveillance program that accesses the vast majority of domestic and international Internet communications is consistent with Americans' civil liberties and everyone's human rights.
Leslie Harris, President & CEO, CDT

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The Center for Democracy & Technology has issued the following statement in response to the latest confirmation, as [reported](#) [2] this morning by the Wall Street Journal, that the National Security Agency has wiretapping stations installed at key Internet exchange points throughout the country whereby it has access to most of America's Internet traffic. The Wall Street Journal's story follows a recent New York Times [report](#) [3] that the NSA is conducting keyword searches of masses of international Internet traffic based on its access to key Internet switches.

"The fact that the NSA is sitting on our domestic fiber network, vacuuming up masses of Internet communications from key telecommunications switches, has repeatedly been front page news since it was first reported nearly eight years ago," said CDT's Free Expression Director Kevin Bankston. "Yet because the Bush and Obama Administrations have insisted that the basic fact of the wiretapping network's existence is a secret, we have not been able to have a serious public discussion about whether it's legal or appropriate for our military to have easy access to most of America's Internet traffic."

"Two weeks ago, the President told the nation he was committed to providing meaningful transparency around the NSA's surveillance programs, " said Leslie Harris, CDT's President. "We call on the President to stand by that commitment and immediately disclose the simple fact that the NSA is tapped into the Internet's backbone. Then we must move quickly to have a meaningful and transparent debate in Congress and the courts about whether a surveillance program that accesses the vast majority of domestic and international Internet communications is consistent with Americans' civil liberties and everyone's human rights."

To speak with someone from CDT on this issue, contact Nasreen Hosein, 202.407.8837, nasreen@cdt.org [4].

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- [3] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/08/us/broader-sifting-of-data-abroad-is-seen-by-nsa.html?page_wanted=all&_r=0
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