



Statement to the NSA/CSS workforce
25 June 2013

On Sunday I had the honor and privilege of representing NSA on ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos." It was an important opportunity to speak to the nation and to continue to set the record straight regarding NSA's execution of its foreign intelligence mission.

NSA's primary responsibility is to defend the nation. After 9/11, we acknowledged our failure as an intelligence community to "connect the dots." To address this shortfall and protect the nation from future terrorist attacks like 9/11, we made several changes to our intelligence efforts and added a number of capabilities. Two of these capabilities are the programs in the news. They were approved by the Administration, Congress, and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. With these exceptional authorities came significant oversight from all three branches of the government.

On 21 June we provided over 50 cases to both the House and Senate Intelligence Committees that show the specific contribution of these programs to our understanding and, in many cases, disruption of terrorist plots in the United States and over 20 countries throughout the world. These results were achieved consistent with our responsibilities under the law. A report issued by the Senate Judiciary in June 2012 emphasized that the government has implemented its intelligence authorities in a responsible manner: "Through four years of oversight, the committee has not identified a single case in which a government official engaged in willful effort to circumvent or violate the law." More than 50 disruptions with zero willful failures in the protection of civil liberties - that's an incredible record and is a testament to NSA's staunch commitment to protecting and upholding the privacy and civil liberties of the American people even as we keep our nation safe. This has been accomplished by the extraordinary people at NSA, the real heroes, working alongside our partners within the Intelligence Community.

The ongoing national dialogue is not about your performance. The NSA/CSS work force has executed its national security responsibilities with equal and full respect for civil liberties and privacy. The issue is one that is partly fueled by the sensational nature of the leaks and the way their timing has been carefully orchestrated to inflame and embarrass. The challenge of these leaks is exacerbated by a lack of public understanding of the safeguards in place and little awareness of the outcomes that our authorities yield. Leadership, from the President and others in the Executive Branch to the Congress, is now engaged in a public dialogue to make sure the American public gets the rest of the story while not disclosing details that would further endanger our national security. From my perspective, this issue should not be viewed and debated as a "political issue" but rather as a "national security issue." Please do not let this distract you from your work or cause you to worry that your work is not valuable, valued, and honorable. It is all three.

Let me say again how proud I am to lead this exceptional workforce, uniformed and civilian, civil service and contract personnel. Your dedication is unsurpassed, your patriotism unquestioned, and your skills are the envy of the world. Together with your colleagues in US Cyber Command, you embody the true meaning of noble intent through your national service. In a 1962 speech to the Corps of Cadets on "duty, honor and country," one of this nation's military heroes, General Douglas MacArthur, said these words teach us "not to substitute words for action; not to seek the path of comfort, but to face the stress and spur of difficulty and challenge; to learn to stand up in the storm." You have done all that and more. "Duty, Honor, Country" could easily be your motto, for you live these words every day. When I think of people acting with noble intent, I think of the men and women of NSA/CSS and all that you are.

We will move forward from this and by dint of solid strategy, hard work, and partnership will continue to protect the nation from harm. Along the way, we will remain committed to the defense of the Nation and all that it stands for - security and liberty. The Deputy Director, the Senior Leadership Team and I will continue to work this hard and take the heat. **We need you to focus on our primary mission of defending our nation and our allies.** Thank you for all you do to support our mission every day of the year.

KEITH B. ALEXANDER
General, U.S. Army