

U.S. Vows to Continue Pursuing Edward Snowden Despite Backing NSA Reforms



Washington, June 2 (RHC)-- The Barack Obama administration has rejected the possibility of dropping charges against NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, despite supporting a bill to overhaul the bulk phone spying program he exposed.

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest urged the Senate to pass the USA FREEDOM Act, which would store phone data in the hands of phone companies rather than the NSA. But Earnest refused to consider a shift in the administration's stance on Snowden, who has asylum in Russia.

During a news conference from the White House, Earnest said: "The fact is that Mr. Snowden committed very serious crimes, and the U.S. government and the Department of Justice believe that he should face them."

The bulk surveillance program expired at 12:01 a.m. Monday, after Kentucky Senator Rand Paul blocked efforts to extend it. The Senate is now considering the House-passed USA FREEDOM Act, which would reform bulk spying and reauthorize two other expired provisions of the PATRIOT Act.

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