

# US, Australia don't spy on each other: ex-intelligence chief

June 26, 2013

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Admiral Dennis Blair wants Edward Snowden jailed. Photo: AFP

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The US does not use its internet surveillance to spy on Australia, and fugitive American intelligence leaker Edward Snowden is a "delusional young man" who ought to be behind bars, President Barack Obama's former director of national intelligence says.

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Admiral Dennis Blair, who is also a former commander-in-chief of US forces in the Pacific, said Australia and the US worked closely on security matters and had no need for surveillance on each other's activities.

“*(Snowden) is a delusional young man who ought to be jailed*”

"We do not spy on each other. We just ask," Admiral Blair, who resigned from his intelligence director's role in May 2010, said.

The Snowden affair "is not something that should affect our relationship at all," the retired admiral said.

Mr Snowden, a former security contractor, is understood to be in transit at an airport in Moscow, with US officials demanding he be extradited to America to face espionage charges.

Australian intelligence officials are worried that his revelations of US surveillance activities will expose Australia's own intelligence-gathering efforts in Asia and strain relations with countries in the region.

Admiral Blair dismissed views Mr Snowden was acting as a whistleblower in disclosing the extent of US surveillance operations over the internet.

Mr Snowden "is a delusional young man who ought to be jailed," he said.

By "splashing" secret activities all over the world, the fugitive "has made our enemies' job easier". Those enemies were not just strategic rivals but also al Qaeda and other terrorist groups and international criminal gangs, he said.

Admiral Blair said US surveillance activities were conducted under legislated supervision in contrast to surveillance of the internet in Russia and China, where it was done by "authoritarian regimes to maintain their control".

Each breach of security meant that terrorists or other targets "know one more thing not to do and we have to work that much harder to learn what they are up to", he said.

Admiral Blair noted that up until a decade ago, criminals didn't realise authorities were able to monitor their mobile phones and other communication – until those processes were revealed. "It's a cat and mouse game," he said.

Admiral Blair is in Australia to be a keynote speaker on *The Future Global Security Agenda* at the [National Business Leaders Forum](#) on Sustainable Development on Thursday in Canberra.



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