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January 3, 2014

General Keith Alexander, USA
Director, National Security Agency
Chief, Central Security Service
9800 Savage Road
Fort Meade, MD 20755-6000

Dear General Alexander:

I am deeply concerned about recent revelations that the National Security Agency (NSA) and other intelligence agencies are collecting enormous amounts of information about phone calls that Americans make, emails that we send, and websites that we visit. In my view, these actions are clearly unconstitutional. As U.S. District Court Judge Richard Leon wrote recently, the NSA programs are "almost Orwellian."

Equally disturbing was to learn that the NSA has been involved in listening in on the phone calls made by government leaders of countries such as Brazil, Germany, France, Mexico and other U.S. allies. This particular revelation has caused serious foreign policy setbacks for the United States, weakened our ability to work cooperatively with our allies, and caused an increase in anti-American sentiment throughout the world.

Indeed, we must be vigilant and aggressive in protecting the American people from the very real danger of terrorist attacks. I believe, however, that we can do that effectively without undermining the constitutional rights that make us a free country.

I am writing today to ask you one very simple question. Has the NSA spied, or is the NSA currently spying, on members of Congress or other American elected officials? "Spying" would include gathering metadata on calls made from official or personal phones, content from websites visited or emails sent, or collecting any other data from a third party not made available to the general public in the regular course of business.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this very important matter. I look forward to working with you on this issue in the near future.

Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator