

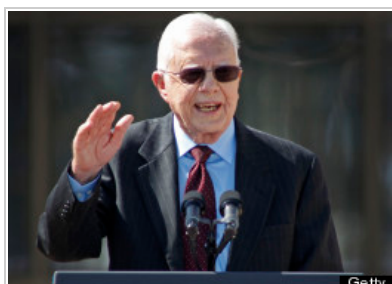
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Jimmy Carter Defends Edward Snowden, Says NSA Spying Has Compromised Nation's Democracy

The Huffington Post | By Nick Wing

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Former president Jimmy Carter speaks at dedication ceremonies for the new George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas, Texas, Thursday, April 25, 2013. (Paul Moseley/Fort Worth Star-Telegram/MCT via Getty Images)

Former President Jimmy Carter announced support for NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden this week, saying that his uncovering of the agency's massive surveillance programs had proven "beneficial."

Speaking at a closed-door event in Atlanta covered by [German newspaper Der Spiegel](#), Carter also criticized the NSA's domestic spying as damaging to the core of the nation's principles.

"America does not have a functioning democracy at this point in time," Carter said, [according to a translation by Inquisitr](#).

No American outlets covered Carter's speech, given at an Atlantic Bridge meeting, which has reportedly led to some skepticism over Der Spiegel's quotes. But Carter's stance would be in line with remarks he's made on Snowden and the issue of civil liberties in the past.

In June, while Snowden was scrambling to send out asylum requests from an airport in Russia, Carter appeared to back the former NSA contractor's efforts to remain out of U.S. custody.

"He's obviously violated the laws of America, for which he's responsible, but I think the invasion of human rights and American privacy has gone too far," he [told CNN](#), saying that nations were within their right to offer asylum to Snowden. "I think that the secrecy that has been surrounding this invasion of privacy has been excessive, so I think that the bringing of it to the public notice has probably been, in the long term, beneficial."

Snowden has been hard-pressed to find support among U.S. politicians. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have declared Snowden a traitor who deserves to be prosecuted for his leaks. The White House has also been persistent in its attempts to bring him into custody. Last week, the administration [criticized Russia](#) for facilitating a meeting between Snowden and human rights activists. Snowden has since [applied for temporary asylum](#) in the nation, following complications surrounding transit to the Latin American nations that he'd been considering.