

# Snowden's Father Praises Putin

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Lon Snowden talking to the press Wednesday about plans to see his son. **Gary Cameron**

WASHINGTON — The father of Edward Snowden, the fugitive former U.S. spy agency contractor, said in an interview that he believed Russian President Vladimir Putin would stand up to pressure from Washington as the two nations spar over Moscow's decision to grant his son asylum.

Lon Snowden's comments Wednesday came as U.S. President Barack Obama canceled a summit meeting with Putin planned for next month in retaliation for Russia giving refuge to Edward Snowden.

Snowden's father said in an extensive — and at times emotional — interview that he was confident Putin would not change his mind and send his son back to the United States to face espionage charges.

"President Vladimir Putin has stood firm. I respect strength and I respect courage," Snowden said. "He has stood firm against the face of intense pressure from our government, and I have

to believe that he will continue to stand firm."

"These games of 'Well, I'm not going to go to this meeting,' or 'I'm not going to go to that meeting,' ... I do not believe that President Vladimir Putin will cave to that," he said.

Snowden sharply criticized the Obama administration's handling of his son's case, which he said led to Edward having no choice but to seek asylum abroad. He hoped the diplomatic spat would not distract the American public from the larger debate about the government's secret surveillance tactics.

"This isn't about Russia. The fight isn't in Russia," he said. "The fight is right here. The fight is about these programs that undermine, infringe upon, violate our constitutional rights."

The younger Snowden was stuck at a Moscow airport for more than five weeks before Russia granted him a year's asylum on Aug. 1. His father hopes to visit Russia this month.

He has not spoken to his son since the former National Security Agency contractor left the United States for Hong Kong before news broke in June of the disclosures he made about U.S. surveillance programs.

"That's really by design. I would prefer not to speak to him until I'm able to travel and see him face to face. And I look forward to that opportunity," Lon Snowden said.

When he visits Russia, he will not take items with him or do anything that would be considered illegally aiding and abetting his son and said he did not know how Edward was surviving financially.

"I hope to better assess that situation. I certainly have to be careful because I understand that he's a fugitive, and I'm not going to do anything that could be construed as aid and abet."

The father describes his son as a "humble" man who would be uncomfortable in the media spotlight. So, Lon Snowden has become an active defender of his son, who has been charged with crimes under the U.S. Espionage Act and whose actions some critics liken to treason.

"Right now my primary concern is assessing my son's condition, making sure he has access to an attorney, and this [the United States] is where I want to be. Not in Moscow," Snowden said.

"My son and I are not going to have an extended hug and then we're going to live together in Russia. That's not going to happen."

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