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Snowden Says His Mission Has Been Accomplished

By The Moscow Times

December 24, 2013

Former U.S. security contractor Edward Snowden has accomplished his mission of sparking debate by revealing classified government documents about the programs he worked on, he said in his first sit-down interview with journalists since arriving in Russia.

"Remember, I didn't want to change society. I wanted to give society a chance to determine if it should change itself," Snowden told the Washington Post in an interview published on Tuesday.

Snowden leaked a cache of classified documents to journalists last summer that revealed the inner workings of U.S. government surveillance programs.

The revelations sparked domestic controversy and strained relations between the U.S. and its allies, including Germany after it was revealed the National Security Agency had bugged Chancellor Angela Merkel's phone for several years.

"I am not trying to bring down the NSA. I am working to improve the NSA," Snowden said.

In the interview Snowden said that he has no loyalty to any government except the United States, and no formal agreement with the Russian government beyond having been granted temporary asylum.

At a press conference last week, President Vladimir Putin said Russian security services had not worked with Snowden, adding the leaker had "made a noble but difficult choice for himself."

Snowden, who first fled to Hong Kong in May and later to Moscow where he remained confined within the walls of Sheremetyevo Airport for over a month, was granted temporarily asylum in Russia in July and is now residing at an undisclosed location.

Snowden said that while he is free to leave his residence, he mostly chooses to stay inside to read and survives off a diet of chips and instant noodles.

Last month his lawyer Anatoly Kucherena said Snowden had started a web development job at a major Russian company but did not specify which one.

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