WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Original citation:
Aldrich, Richard J. and Moran, Christopher R.. (2014) One section from article : "An INS special forum : implications of the Snowden leaks". Intelligence and National Security, 29 (6). pp. 793-810.

Permanent WRAP URL:
http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/78351

Copyright and reuse:
The Warwick Research Archive Portal (WRAP) makes this work by researchers of the University of Warwick available open access under the following conditions. Copyright © and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable the material made available in WRAP has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

Publisher's statement:
"This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in Intelligence and National Security Published on 8 August 2014, available online: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2014.946242 "

A note on versions:
The version presented here may differ from the published version or, version of record, if you wish to cite this item you are advised to consult the publisher's version. Please see the 'permanent WRAP url' above for details on accessing the published version and note that access may require a subscription.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: wrap@warwick.ac.uk

warwick.ac.uk/lib-publications

The main significance of Edward Snowden relates more to the decline of secrecy than the decline of privacy. The UK and US governments are increasingly concerned by large-scale and unauthorized releases of classified documents facilitated by disaffected officials who are often described as 'whistle-blowers'. Governments invest considerable resources in protecting secrets and, in the United States, the annual cost of classification is estimated at US$11 billion. Yet we know little about elite attitudes toward secrecy and its opponents. We need to reflect on this notable lacuna at a time when legislators are urgently reviewing these issues which increasingly connect science and security.

In June 2013, Snowden leaked remarkable details of several highly classified US/UK mass surveillance programs to the press, sparking an international furor. He was vilified and applauded in equal measure. Officials in London and Washington regard these latest disclosures as the most serious breach in government security for several decades. The media have framed this episode around surveillance and civil liberties, focusing upon 'the end of privacy'. Certainly, there has been a degree of moral panic, with governments allegedly able to monitor every aspect of our digital lives. However, it is our contention that the nature of privacy has in fact changed little over the last decade and instead these developments denote a 'crisis of secrecy'. The real issue is not government looking at us, but us looking at government.

Information and Communications Technology is central to this process. Ten official whistle-blowers have come to public attention in the last decade, beginning with the GCHQ (the British counterpart of the NSA) employee Katherine Gun in 2003. However, since 2010, websites such as WikiLeaks have deployed anonymizing software to allow officials to release very large collections of documents, in collaboration with several mainstream newspapers. In November 2010, the website leaked more than 250,000 US diplomatic cables, exposing the frank views of officials on a wide range of current international issues. As Heather Brooke, the journalist who exposed the UK parliamentary expenses scandal, observed in the wake of this event: 'The data deluge is coming'.

Scholars now need to interrogate the nature of state secrecy in the United States and the United Kingdom in the early twenty-first century. We need to discover how disaffected government employees and contractors are using new technology to challenge secrecy, and how officials are responding to the present crisis of secrecy. We need to ask whether we are on the brink of what David Brin described as 'The Transparent Society', in which it will be increasingly difficult for governments to safeguard classified information. In the 1970s, Daniel Ellsberg required 24-hour access to photocopiers in order to leak the 'Pentagon Papers', but now disgruntled officials can release entire archives of secret material with a pen drive.

Perhaps the most substantial challenge that a government now confronts is a cultural one around new forms of oversight and accountability. Internet activists and digital whistle-blowers claim that their purpose is a new form of horizontal regulation secured through the democratization of information. In the 'twitter age', the use of blogs and social networks are allowing journalists to mount lengthy investigations that rival those of elected bodies. Deep investigation of government security activity may be passing from formally constituted commissions and committees toward a version of global civil society, characterized by NGOs, civil rights lawyers, journalists, and regional bodies such as the Council of Europe. There are attendant regulatory questions for parliaments and assemblies. Both the United States and Europe are investigating the entire question of 'Whistle-blower Protection', raising important normative issues around where the line should be drawn between the public right to know and the right of civil servants to offer confidential advice to ministers. Snowden has placed officials in Whitehall and Washington on notice, and new conventions around what remains of secrecy will need to be put in place.