

US intelligence group to review privacy issues

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US intelligence director James Clapper testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, on April 11, 2013. Clapper introduced a review group Monday that will assess whether the right balance is being struck between national security and personal privacy.

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President Barack Obama on Friday pledged to overhaul US spy

programs amid a debate sparked by the leaks of former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, which revealed vast telephone and Internet [surveillance programs](#).

The group will assess whether the US "optimally protects our national security and advances our foreign policy while appropriately accounting for other policy considerations," the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) said in a statement.

This would include "the risk of unauthorized disclosure and our need to maintain the public trust," the statement said.

The body is required to brief the president on its findings within 60 days and provide a final report with recommendations no later than December 15, according to ODNI.

Obama on Friday promised a new era in intelligence with more supervision, transparency and safeguards in the NSA's collection of electronic information.

His administration has however maintained a hard line against the leaking of such information, and is seeking to prosecute Snowden on espionage charges.

After the disclosures Snowden fled to Hong Kong and then to Russia, where he has been granted one year's temporary asylum despite Washington's demands that he be returned.

On July 30 Army intelligence analyst Bradley Manning was convicted of espionage over his massive leak of US military intelligence reports and diplomatic cables to WikiLeaks.

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