Edward Snowden- Traitor or Hero?

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**Topic:** Edward Snowden- Traitor or Hero?

**Introduction**

In 2013, Edward Snowden, a former NSA contractor, leaked the United States’ most extensive global surveillance operations to the public. The public at the time was not aware of the secret monitoring program of people’s private communication by the U.S. government, which is a violation of privacy. The NSA collected emails, IP addresses, as well as telephone and numerous types of communication data. After revealing the grand scale government eavesdropping program, Edward Snowden was labeled by some as a traitor. At the same time, many considered him a hero, believing that his action was motivated by public interest.

**Arguments in Favor of Snowden’s Actions**

The people who consider Edward Snowden as a hero for his actions think that letting the public know about this breach of privacy greatly outweighs his crime of breaking his employment contract requirements. According to them, the information he leaked did not ruin the relationship of the United States with other nations; it only exposed the unlawful programs of the NSA that seriously interfere with the public’s privacy. The actions he took aimed to defend the people’s freedoms and the country’s constitution.

The XKeyscore program of the NSA records just about everything a user does on the internet. It also collects social media profiles, emails, browsing history of users, and NSA employees and contractors require no prior warrant or authorization to access this data. FASCIA is another surveillance program that the government used to violate public privacy. It allows and facilitates the recording of all citizen’s cell phone GPS location data and private activities. Snowden acted the way he did because he recognized the unconstitutionality of NSA’s surveillance programs, and how it put the public at risk. Invading the privacy of Americans and other foreign countries may help in the fight against terror, but it is not worth sacrificing the confidentiality freedom of the people because there better ways to fight terror than spying on all people.

**Arguments Criticizing Snowden’s Actions**

Americans who consider Snowden, a traitor, think that his actions are unpatriotic. They believe that all American citizens should demonstrate patriotism by protecting and defending the government for the country’s prosperity. Therefore, as an employee of the world’s most significant intelligence agency, he should have protected the program because it helped to ensure the safety of Americans from terrorism. The program was created after the tragic 9/11 attacks by Al Qaeda, to find and stop terror plots before they happened. However, the information that Snowden leaked did not reveal any secrets about the algorithms used by the NSA, or the identities of the individual those it is currently targeting. It did not also reveal any military plans by the government. Glenn Greenwald, the first journalist to break the story, stated in the “Morning Joe” today show that “Snowden spent months meticulously studying every document.” He did not carelessly reveal all secret of the agency, but only those that he knew violated public privacy.

Critics of Edward Snowden’s actions also argue that by leaking the NSA spy program, he has weakened the ability of the U.S government to avert terrorism plots on civilians. In reality, this argument is based on a fallacious point because, to this day, the NSA has not been able to prove how exactly the mass surveillance program of the public stops terrorist attacks. Americans want to be protected from acts of terror, but they also care about their privacy. Therefore, Snowden did a great service to the public by revealing the secret, and now, private tech companies have created applications that help people encrypt their data from spying.

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