

CIA planned rendition operation to kidnap Edward Snowden

By Thomas Gaist
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The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) prepared to kidnap Edward Snowden, the whistleblower who exposed illegal and unconstitutional mass spying by the National Security Agency (NSA), documents obtained by the Danish media outlet Denfri show.

US intelligence maintained an aircraft and paramilitary team on standby in Copenhagen, awaiting orders to seize Snowden in the event that he crossed into a number of European countries, the documents show. They were obtained by Denfri through a Freedom of Information Act suit in August 2015.

The existence of the CIA plane was first reported in 2014 by *The Register*, which identified the aircraft as a Gulfstream V, registered under the number N977GA. The plane had previously been used to transport CIA captives to the agency's "black site" torture centers across Europe, which were built up as part of an expanding global network of secret CIA prisons since 9/11.

The latest documents appear to have decisively corroborated this account, showing that Danish police and government officers approved the positioning of the CIA plane in Copenhagen for unspecified "state purposes." In one of the leaked government letters, US Federal Bureau of Investigation representatives also sought cooperation from the Norwegian government, demanding that they immediately notify US agencies in the event that Snowden travelled to Norway, Finland, Sweden or Denmark.

The Danish decision to host the plane was part of broader cooperation by Copenhagen with Washington's extra-legal kidnapping and rendition network. The Danish state has sought to preserve total secrecy in relation to the stationing of the CIA plane on its soil.

"Denmark's relationship with the USA would be

damaged if the information [content redacted from the documents] becomes public knowledge," Denmark's interior ministry told Denfri.

The confirmation that Washington planned for a direct raid to seize Snowden and forcibly return him to US custody does not come as a surprise.

Snowden has become a public enemy of the first order in the eyes of the US ruling class since he began releasing troves of data on spy programs run by the NSA and other US government agencies in the summer of 2013. According to May 2014 comments from then-NSA Director Keith Alexander, Snowden downloaded more than 1 million secret US government documents.

For the "crime" of exposing the vast and criminal surveillance enterprises run the by US government, Snowden has been subjected to innumerable death threats and slanders by the American media and political establishment.

Snowden embodies a new generation of educated and technologically-trained workers and youth who are increasingly hostile to the existing social order. That is why he has been hounded and turned away by governments around the world, and now lives in de facto exile in Moscow, where he received a temporary visa only after being forced to live for weeks in Moscow's international air terminal, after the US cancellation of his passport frustrated his effort to travel to Ecuador, where he was seeking asylum.

There is now firm evidence that the US ruling elite sought to make good on its threats against Snowden, in the form of a snatch-and-grab operation, likely aimed at transferring the whistleblower to a covert torture base somewhere in Europe.

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