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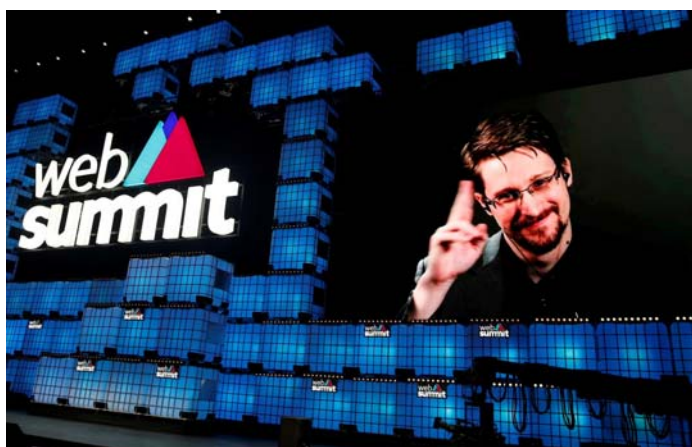
European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

[Raphael Satter](#)

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U.S. court - Mass surveillance program exposed by Snowden was illegal



FILE PHOTO: Edward Snowden gestures as he speaks via livestream at Web Summit in Lisbon, Portugal, November 4, 2019. REUTERS/Rafael Marchante

(Reuters) - Seven years after former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden blew the whistle on the mass surveillance of Americans' telephone records, an appeals court has found the program was unlawful - and that the U.S. intelligence leaders who publicly defended it were not telling the truth.

In a ruling handed down on Wednesday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit said the warrantless telephone dragnet that secretly collected millions of Americans' telephone records violated the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and may well have been unconstitutional.

Snowden, who fled to Russia in the aftermath of the 2013 disclosures and still faces U.S. espionage charges, said on Twitter that the ruling was a vindication of his decision to go public with evidence of the National Security Agency's domestic eavesdropping operation.