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Trump's CIA Director Wants to Return to a Pre-Snowden World

By Kaveh Waddell

November 18, 2016

Mike Pompeo, the man that President-elect Donald Trump chose on Friday to lead the CIA when he becomes president, has long been a vocal supporter of expanding the government's surveillance powers.

As Congress worked to wind down the National Security Agency's bulk data-collection program last summer, rolling back one of the secret measures first authorized under President George W. Bush, Pompeo—a Republican representative from Kansas who sits on the House Intelligence Committee—was pushing back.

In an op-ed published in *The Wall Street Journal* this January, Pompeo argued forcefully against “blunting” the government's surveillance powers and called for “a fundamental upgrade to America's surveillance capabilities.” In the piece, he laid out a road map for expanding surveillance:

Congress should pass a law re-establishing collection of all metadata, and combining it with publicly available financial and lifestyle information into a comprehensive, searchable database. Legal and bureaucratic impediments to surveillance should be removed. That includes Presidential Policy Directive-28, which bestows privacy rights on foreigners and imposes burdensome requirements to justify data collection.

Pompeo co-wrote the piece with David Rivkin, Jr., who worked in the Justice Department and the White House Counsel's Office under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush.

In another op-ed published in *National Review* two weeks earlier, Pompeo assailed fellow Republicans for being soft on national security, accusing some of being "just as weak" as Democrats. "Those who today suggest that the USA FREEDOM Act, which gutted the National Security Agency's metadata program, enables the intelligence community to better prevent and investigate threats against the U.S. are lying," he wrote.

"To share Edward Snowden's vision of America as the problem is to come down on the side of President Obama's diminishing willingness to collect intelligence on jihadis," he continued, echoing previous criticisms of Snowden's disclosures. "No Republican candidate who does that is worthy of our vote."