

WORKING THREAD: HPSCI'S FULL UNBELIEVABLY SHITTY SNOWDEN REPORT

In September, I did a post asking why the House Intelligence Committee report on Edward Snowden was so unbelievably shitty. My post was just based off a summary released by the Committee. HPSCI has now released the full report.

This will be a working thread.

Summary: The summary, with all its obvious errors, remains unchanged. So see my earlier post for the problems with that.

PDF 6: The report starts with a claim that Snowden's leaks were the "most massive and damaging in history." But the claim was made in 2014. Since then we've had two more damaging leaks, the OPM leak and the Shadow Brokers leak.

PDF 6: In my earlier post, I wrote about how the deference given to the ongoing criminal investigation into Snowden seemed very similar to – but was far less defensible than – the approach Stephen Preston used when he was General Counsel at CIA. He was General Counsel at DOD when this report started, suggesting he adopted the same approach. Worse, we now know from emails released this year that the exec had actually moved on by May 2014, meaning the claim was not sustainable when made in August 2014.

PDF 7: On the education paragraph, see this post.

PDF 7: Rather than asking the military why Snowden was discharged, the committee asked NSA's security official. As Bart Gellman notes, his official Army record backs Snowden, not the security official. Then they say (in the footnote) that they "found no evidence that Snowden was involved in a training accident."

PDF 9: This page cites from a CIA IG report on Snowden's complaints about the treatment of TISOs overseas. It actually shows him trying to complain through channels.

PDF 10: Note that HPSCI claimed a paragraph based on information classified confidential was classified secret.

PDF 11: I'm curious why they redacted footnote 43.

PDF 11: Report notes a new derogatory report was submitted after Snowden left Geneva but also after his next employer hired him. It doesn't seem too serious. Report notes that the alert function for Scattered Castles got updated after that.

PDF 12: The reports that he went to Thailand and China are second-hand, based off what an NSA lawyer said his former co-workers said. Both support an awareness that Snowden was making his privacy concerns known, including this quote (which is likely out of context and may refer to an individual program):

... Snowden expressing his view that the U.S. government had overreached on surveillance and that it was illegitimate for the government to obtain data on individuals' personal computers.

PDF 13: Why would HPSCI (or NSA, for that matter) depend on the comments of co-workers to learn what Snowden did during a leave of absence? Also note, this is classified Secret, which means it must have some security function.

PDF 13: Note they had an interview with a lawyer and a security official on the same day.

PDF 13: His co-workers claimed Snowden frequently showed up late. That would mean he'd be home for the entirety of the East Coast day.

PDF 13: Snowden expressed concern that SOPA/PIPA would lead to online censorship, but his co-

worker was dismissive bc he hadn't read the bill.

PDF 14: The claim that Snowden went to a hackers conference in China is sourced to a co-worker who didn't like Snowden much.

PDF 14: Note in the patch discussion, they hide the kind of person that the interviewee for this information is.

PDF 14: Snowden did something after being called out for bringing in a manager.

PDF 15: The report claims that Snowden started downloading docs in July 2012. Snowden has said that was part of transferring docs. But it also coincides with the period when he was trouble shooting a 702 template, so they may think this is how he got the FISA data.

PDF 15: Snowden had access to wget on NSA's networks for the same reason Chelsea Manning did, IIRC: because the networks were unreliable. Snowden said he did this to move files from MD to HI. There's a redacted paragraph that it sourced to a "HPSCI recollection summary paper," which seems odd and unreliable.

PDF 15: The methods Snowden used paper is classified REL to USA, FVEY, presumably because Snowden was grabbing GCHQ documents.

PDF 16: Here's the funny quote about Snowden violating privacy. Note the first redacted sentence here is not sourced to an NSA document, but instead to a NSA Legislative Affairs document.

PDF 18: The end of this betrays NSA's efforts to make light of glaring security holes: the CD-ROM/USB port on Snowden's computer, and the ability for him to download data w/o a buddy (they currently require a buddy).

PDF 19: The complaints about Snowden's "resumé inflation" are a valid point. But what does it say that no one at NSA checks these things.

PDF 20: After Snowden moved to Booz, he went

back to his old computer to be able to download the files he had new access to. I had been wondering about that.

PDF 20: All the details about Snowden's flight are taken from public reports, not FBI or CIA reports or even NSA's timeline, which must cover it. Did NSA's timeline, which is dated . That is bizarre.

PDF 21: Note the classification mark for 132, which seems to conclude that Snowden's motivation was to inform the public.

PDF 21: The report says Snowden left some encrypted hard drives behind, sourced to a 2/4/14 briefing not cited elsewhere. Working from memory I think this is the Flynn one.

PDF 21: The description of what others had said about Snowden's interest in privacy conflicts with what NSA said internally.

PDF 22: I will return to the description of the 702 training.

PDF 22: Note they source the training issue to someone unnamed. This appears to be the same person who described the patch issue (PDF 14), with an interview on October 28. That means it couldn't have been the training person, and surely didn't have first-hand knowledge.

PDF 23: The report cites the emails (without describing who they were addressed to) and the I Con the Record report on the email. Which means I've reviewed this issue more closely than HPSCI.

PDF 23: The section on whether Snowden was a whistleblower doesn't cite his CIA IG contact.

PDF 25: Some of the foreign influence section obviously says there was none (see the Keith Alexander comment). Plus, this doesn't cite other public comments saying there is no evidence of any foreign tie.

PDF 26: FN 166 is the bad briefing. Note that

1/5 of the documents Snowden took were blank.

PDF 29: This section describes the damage assessment. I find it very significant the NCSC has stopped reviewing T3 and T2 documents, which must suggest, in part, that they trust the security of the documents and/or have confirmed via some means that there aren't more out there.

PDF 34: Yet another complaint about not fixing the removable media problem.

PDF 34: A description of the Secure the Net initiative, with four measures outstanding, and taking over a year to get to buddy system with SysAdmins.

PDF 35-36: There's a list of things HPSCI ordered the IC to do after Snowden.