

NOBEL PRIZE: THE SURVEILLANCE FIGHT REMAINS AHEAD OF US

This morning, the Nobel Prize awarded the Peace Prize to Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai.

In a piece published earlier this morning at Salon, I pointed out that so long as countries like Norway participate in the NSA's dragnet, Edward Snowden will never get a Nobel Prize.

No European country but Russia has offered Snowden asylum, so it's unlikely the Norwegians will do something just as likely to piss off the U.S. Numerous European countries, after all, play **willing partners** in America's global dragnet. Europe – including Norway – are the spies Snowden warned us against.

But I also made a more important point.

Like Obama – who got a Nobel Prize well before he had delivered on his promises – the world community has not yet really acted on Edward Snowden's invitation to reform.

Snowden has completed a courageous act, leaking a mother lode of documents revealing just how exposed we are to the NSA's glare. He has continued to speak out, to the extent he is able from Russia.

But the response remains very much in flux. Across the world, it's quite possible Snowden's leaks provide more repressive government the excuse to crack down. Certainly America's Five Eyes spying partners (in addition to the UK, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada) are doing so: all but Canada have passed or are passing expansive laws legalizing still more surveillance. Citizens – in

Five Eyes countries and outside – have not yet seized the opportunity created by Snowden to roll back the dragnet. Even in the U.S., the only reform on offer, Patrick Leahy’s USA Freedom Act, worsens some aspects of spying while achieving the important goal of removing all Americans’ phone records from the government.

Snowden did a courageous thing by leaking the NSA’s secrets, and continues to engage, as possible, in constructive fashion. If the world responded well to those disclosures, it might lead to a more just world, one much safer for dissent and human relationships. But we – the rest of the world – have not yet delivered on that promise yet, and may not. So a prize for Snowden – no matter how important his actions – may yet reward the mere *hope* of change, not real progress towards it.

The world’s relative inaction in response to Snowden’s warnings does not at all detract from Snowden’s courage. But it does mean it is far too early to conclude that we’ve used this opportunity Snowden gave us to reverse a dangerous dragnet.