These emails show conversations between senior NSA and U.S. intelligence officials about the destruction of hard drives at the Guardian newspaper in Britain. The drives contained files leaked by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden.

The day before the hard drive destruction took place at the Guardian's offices in London, a top NSA executive had updated then-NSA director Gen. Keith Alexander and his staff on the situation.

In a redacted email under the subject line "Guardian data being destroyed," current NSA deputy director Richard Ledgett said, "Good news, at least on this front."

The U.S. Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, was given an update hours after the Guardian's data were destroyed.

"Damage assessment" points
A heavily censored memo contains damage assessment about the Snowden files. The points were redacted in part under the federal Espionage Act.
FOIA Case: 74434B
1 July 2014

JACK GILLUM
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
1100 13TH ST NW STE 700
WASHINGTON DC 20005

Dear Mr. Gillum:

This is a final response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request of 21 August 2013 for “Access to and copies of all emails and documents advising or discussing with U.S. or United Kingdom government officials the destruction or apprehension of computer hard drives and other electronic materials at The Guardian newspaper’s offices in 2013.” A copy of your request is enclosed. Your request has been processed under the FOIA and the documents you requested are enclosed. Certain information, however, has been deleted from the enclosures.

Some of the withheld information has been found to be currently and properly classified in accordance with Executive Order 13526. The information meets the criteria for classification as set forth in Subparagraphs (b), (c), (d) and (g) of Section 1.4 and remains classified TOP SECRET and SECRET as provided in Section 1.2 of Executive Order 13526. The information is classified because its disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave and serious damage to the national security. Because the information is currently and properly classified, it is exempt from disclosure pursuant to the first exemption of the FOIA (5 U.S.C. Section 552(b)(1)).

In addition, this Agency is authorized by various statutes to protect certain information concerning its activities. We have determined that such information exists in these documents. Accordingly, those portions are exempt from disclosure pursuant to the third exemption of the FOIA which provides for the withholding of information specifically protected from disclosure by statute. The specific statutes applicable in this case are Title 18 U.S. Code 798; Title 50 U.S. Code 3024(i); and Section 6, Public Law 86-36 (50 U.S. Code 3605).
In addition, some of the information has been deleted from the enclosures pursuant to the fifth exemption of the FOIA. This exemption applies to inter-agency or intra-agency memoranda or letters which would not be available by law to a party in litigation with the agency, protecting information that is normally privileged in the civil discovery context, such as information that is part of a predecisional deliberative process.

Personal information regarding individuals has also been deleted from the enclosures in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552 (b)(6). This exemption protects from disclosure information that would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. In balancing the public interest for the information you request against the privacy interests involved, we have determined that the privacy interests sufficiently satisfy the requirements for the application of the (b)(6) exemption.

The Initial Denial Authority for NSA information is the Associate Director for Policy and Records, David J. Sherman. Since these deletions may be construed as a partial denial of your request, you are hereby advised of this Agency’s appeal procedures. Any person denied access to information may file an appeal to the NSA/CSS Freedom of Information Act Appeal Authority. The appeal must be postmarked no later than 60 calendar days from the date of the initial denial letter. The appeal shall be in writing addressed to the NSA/CSS FOIA Appeal Authority (DJ4), National Security Agency, 9800 Savage Road STE 6248, Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6248. The appeal shall reference the initial denial of access and shall contain, in sufficient detail and particularity, the grounds upon which the requester believes release of the information is required. The NSA/CSS Appeal Authority will endeavor to respond to the appeal within 20 working days after receipt, absent any unusual circumstances.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

PAMELA N. PHILLIPS
Chief
FOIA/PA Office

Encls: a/s
From: Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Sent: Sunday, July 21, 2013 1:19 PM
To: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA USA
Cc: DL medialeaks_staff (ALIAS) K1; Inglis John C NSA-D USA USA; Fleisch Frances J NSA-D USA USA; Brooks Elizabeth R NSA-D USA USA; Shea Teresa H NSA-S USA USA; Enson Leoine K NSA-Q USA USA; NSA-S2D USA USA; NSA-F32 USA USA; DL sco (ALIAS) K1; DL NSOCSSMM

Subject: RE: (U) RE: Guardian data being destroyed

Classification: SECRET/NOFORN

Rick,

Thanks,

GEN A

From: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA USA
Sent: Sunday, July 21, 2013 11:27 AM
To: Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Cc: DL medialeaks_staff (ALIAS) K1; Inglis John C NSA-D USA USA; Fleisch Frances J NSA-D USA USA; Brooks Elizabeth R NSA-D USA USA; Shea Teresa H NSA-S USA USA; Enson Leoine K NSA-Q USA USA; NSA-S2D USA USA; NSA-F32 USA USA; DL sco (ALIAS) K1; DL NSOCSSMM

Subject: RE: (U) RE: Guardian data being destroyed

Classification: SECRET/NOFORN

Sir,

V/

Rick

Rick Ledgett
Media Leaks Task Force

From: Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Sent: Saturday, July 20, 2013 6:46 PM
To: NSA-DC USA USA
Cc: DL medialeaks_staff (ALIAS) K1; Inglis John C NSA-D USA USA; Fleisch Frances J NSA-D USA USA; Brooks Elizabeth R NSA-D USA USA; Shea Teresa H NSA-S USA USA; NSA-S2D USA USA; NSA-F32 USA USA; NSA-F32 USA USA; Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA USA

Subject: RE: (U) RE: Guardian data being destroyed

Classification: SECRET/NOFORN
From: Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Sent: Monday, July 29, 2013 2:45 AM
To: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA USA
Cc: Inglis John C NSA-D USA USA; Fleisch Frances J NSA-D USA USA; Brooks Elizabeth R NSA-D USA USA; Shea Teresa H NSA-S USA USA; Enso Leinol K NSA-Q USA USA; NSA-S2D USA USA; NSA-S32 USA USA; NSA-F32 USA USA; Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA USA
Subject: Guardian data being destroyed

Classification: SECRET/NOMIC

Good evening Sir,

Have a good day.

Thanks
GENA

From: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA USA
Sent: Monday, July 29, 2013 2:45 AM
To: Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Cc: Inglis John C NSA-D USA USA; Fleisch Frances J NSA-D USA USA; Brooks Elizabeth R NSA-D USA USA; Shea Teresa H NSA-S USA USA; Enso Leinol K NSA-Q USA USA; NSA-S2D USA USA; NSA-S32 USA USA; NSA-F32 USA USA; Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA USA
Subject: Guardian data being destroyed

Importance: High
Sir,

Good news, at least on this front.

v/r,

Rick

Rick Ledgett
Media Leaks Task Force

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Friday, July 19, 2013 10:16 AM
To: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA CIV
Subject: RE: (U) Event Lead

Classification: [Redacted]

Rick,

No doubt this has been another very hectic week for you.

From: rhledg [Redacted]
Sent: 16 July 2013 15:28
To: [Redacted]
Cc: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA CIV
Subject: (U) Event Lead

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
Virt.

Rick

Rick Ledgett
Media Leaks Task Force

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED/FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Derived From: NSA/CSSM 1-52
Dated: 20070108
Declassify On: 20380701

Classification: SECRET//NOFORN

Classified By: rhledge
Derived From: NSA/CSSM 1-52
Dated: 20070108
Declassify On: 20380701
Talking Points for CI Implications (Worst Case Scenario)

Significant impact to:

Moderate impact to:
Soule Trumbull D NSA-DC USA CIV

From: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-DC USA CIV
Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2013 10:09 AM
To: Inglis John C NSA-D USA CIV; Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Cc: Fleisch Frances J NSA-D USA CIV; NSD USA CIV; Soule Trumbull D NSA-DC USA CIV
Subject: 

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Rick Ledgett
Macia Leaks Task Force

From: Inglis John C NSA-D USA CIV
Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2013 9:33 AM
To: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-DC USA CIV; Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Cc: Fleisch Frances J NSA-D USA CIV; NSD USA CIV; Soule Trumbull D NSA-DC USA CIV
Subject: Re:

Classification: TOP SECRET//COMINT//RED//NOFORN

Rick,

The DA summary is excellent (no ISS). Thanks,

Chris

From: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-DC USA CIV
Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2013 9:33 AM
To: Inglis John C NSA-D USA CIV; Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Cc: Fleisch Frances J NSA-D USA CIV; NSD USA CIV; Soule Trumbull D NSA-DC USA CIV
Subject: 

Classification: TOP SECRET//S//ORCON//NCFORN

Chris,

FISA list: [ ] is addressing.

Damage assessment points. New version attached; let me know if this is closer to the mark.

Approved for Release by NSA on 07-01-2014, FOIA Case # 74434
Cl summary, Will forward by 1030

v/r,

Rick

Rick Ledgett
Media Leaks Task Force

From: Inglis John C NSA-D USA CIV
Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2013 8:29 AM
To: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA CIV; Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Cc: Fleisch Frances J NSA-D USA CIV; Soule Trumbull D NSA-DC USA CIV
Subject: ACTION:

Classification: SECRET/REL TO USA, FVLY

Rick

Trying to prep for the WH session and could use the following:

Thanks

Chris

From: Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA CIV
Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2013 8:07 AM
To: Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA; clappej@dnli.c.gov
Cc: [redacted]; Inglis John C NSA-D USA CIV; Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA CIV; Fleisch Frances J NSA-D USA CIV; (CIO (FBI)) (CD)(FBI)
Subject: 
Importance: High

Classification: SECRET/REL TO USA, FVLY
v/r,

Rick

Rick Ledgett
Media Leaks Task Force

From: Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Sent: Sunday, July 21-2013 1:20 PM
To: clapeyton
Cc: Inglis John C NSA-D USA CIV; Ledgett Richard H Jr NSA-D USA CIV
Subject: RE: (U) Guardian data being destroyed

Classification: SECRET/REL TO USA, AUS, CAN, GBR, NZL

Jim,

Best,
Keith

From: clapeyton
Sent: Saturday, July 20, 2013 2:30 PM
To: Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA
Cc: Alexander Keith B GEN NSA-D USA USA;
Subject: Re: (U) Guardian data being destroyed

Classification: SECRET/REL TO USA, AUS, CAN, GBR, NZL

Classified By: ODNI
Derived From: NSA/CSSM 1-52 dated 20070106
Reason: 1.4 (c)
Declassify On: 20380720

Thanks, Keith... appreciate the conversation today...

Jim
Jim,
Here is the report I got.
Best,
Keith

From:     
Sent:  Friday, July 19, 2013 10:16 AM
To:  Ledgett, Richard H Jr NSA-D USA CIV
Subject:  RE: (U) Event Lead

Classification: 

Rick,

No doubt this has been another very hectic week for you.
My secure number here is 988-5011s.

V/r,

(b)(1)

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

(b)(3)-P.L. 88-36

Rick Ledge
Media Leaks Task Force

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED;/FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Derived From: NSA/CSSM 1-52
Dated: 20070108
Declassify On: 20380701

Classification: SECRET/REL TO USA, AUS, CAN, GBR, NZL

Derived From: NSA/CSSM 1-52
Dated: 20070108
Declassify On: 20380701

Classification: SECRET/REL TO USA, AUS, CAN, GBR, NZL

Derived From: NSA/CSSM 1-52
Dated: 20070108
Declassify On: 20380701

Classified By: rhledge

Derived From: NSA/CSSM 1-52
Dated: 20070108
Declassify On: 20380701

Classified By: rhledge
Damage Assessment Key Points

(S//REL TO FVEY) We know that a small number of documents have been leaked to the press.

The potentially compromised documents provide varying levels of description for:

The requirements levied by policy makers and others on the SIGINT system, and details on the USG's interest in topics, countries, and organizations: