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Dominic Grieve QC, MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

13th January 2014

Dear Mr Grieve,

Communications Data Monitoring

I wrote to you in April 2012 when the government was trying to introduce the "Snooper's Charter". At the time it appeared that officials wanted to massively increase their access to our private lives. Post-Snowden we know that *they already had that access* and were merely trying to consolidate their legal position.

There is a lot of noise in the press about the data-collection activities of the NSA, but it is clear that our own "security services" are guilty of at least as much intrusion into the private dealings of innocent people.

Agencies on both sides of the Atlantic claim to be working entirely within the law. If this is true then all I can say is that the law is completely inadequate. Every law that I have looked at that might provide some measure of control has a get-out clause for national security. It comes as no surprise then to find that "national security" is an ever-expanding monster.

In the time of the previous government, your party appeared to be against state intrusion into the lives of its citizens yet now the pages of Hansard are filled with your colleagues defending these actions and refusing to allow effective control and oversight of the myriad agencies permitted to snoop on us. I am reminded of the old saying: "It does not matter who you vote for because the Government always gets in".

In my previous letter I demonstrated how much detail about your life and my life could be extracted from communications metadata. I will not repeat that here, but I will remind you that the overwhelming majority of the data collected concerns *only* honest law-abiding citizens. We know it is being collected and we don't like it. Being watched affects everyone's behaviour. In the jargon of the time, *it chills free speech*. This must stop. The surveillance culture has become a greater danger to society than the threats it claims to be working against.

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Findlay BSc PhD MIET CEng

This is an open letter: I have placed a copy on the web at:
<http://www.skills-1st.co.uk/papers/policy/dominic-grieve-commsdata-20140113.pdf>