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June 16, 2006

Thomas F. Ahern, Administrator  
Division of Public Utilities and Carriers  
89 Jefferson Boulevard  
Warwick, RI 02888

**Re: Rhode Island American Civil Liberties Union Informal Complaint**

Dear Mr. Ahern:

As requested in your letter to Donna Cupelo dated May 25, 2006, I am responding to the informal complaint filed with you on May 24, 2006, by the Rhode Island American Civil Liberties Union ("RI ACLU") based on recent press coverage concerning Verizon's alleged cooperation with certain classified intelligence gathering activities by the National Security Agency ("NSA"). The Division should reject the request by the RI ACLU to open an investigation concerning whether Verizon Rhode Island disclosed records to, or otherwise cooperated with, the NSA in connection with any national security surveillance activities and whether such cooperation, if any, violated any state law. The FCC already has rejected a similar request, concluding that "the classified nature of the NSA's activities make us unable to investigate the alleged violations" at issue. *See* Letter from Kevin Martin, Chairman FCC, to Congressman Edward Markey (May 22, 2006) (attached hereto as Exhibit 1).<sup>1/</sup>

More recently, the Department of Justice filed suit in federal court in New Jersey requesting injunctive relief and a declaratory judgment that subpoenas issued by the New Jersey Attorney General that sought information relating to the alleged provision of call records to the NSA "may not be enforced by the State Defendants or responded to by the

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<sup>1/</sup> The only other state commission to decide to date whether to entertain the ACLU's complaint also concluded that it could not address the ACLU's claims. *See* Letter from David Lynch, General Counsel, Iowa Utils. Board to Mr. Frank Burdette (May 25, 2006) (attached hereto as Exhibit 2).

Carrier Defendants because any attempt to obtain or disclose the information that is the subject of these Subpoenas would be invalid under, preempted by, and inconsistent with” federal law. *See* Complaint, *United States v. Farber, et. al* at 13 (D.N.J. filed on June 14, 2006) (“New Jersey Complaint”) (attached hereto as Exhibit 3). In addition, the Department sent a letter to Verizon, as well as several other carriers, in which it stated that “responding to the subpoena[] would be inconsistent with and preempted by federal law.” *See* Letter from Peter D. Keisler, Asst. Attorney General to John A. Rogovin, Counsel for Verizon, *et al.* at 2 (June 14, 2006) (attached hereto as Exhibit 4).

For many of the same reasons given by the FCC and the Department of Justice, the Division should similarly reject the RI ACLU’s request.<sup>2</sup> In particular, (i) the Division will be unable to adduce any facts relating to these claims and thus will be unable to resolve the issues raised in the RI ACLU request; and (ii) any potential relief would implicate issues of national security and is beyond the Division’s power to grant.<sup>3/</sup>

1. The President and the Attorney General have acknowledged the existence of a counter-terrorism program aimed at al Qaeda involving the NSA.<sup>4/</sup> They have also made it plain, however, that the NSA program is highly classified, including the identities of any cooperating parties, the nature of such cooperation (if any), and the existence and content of any written authorizations or certifications relating to the program. As a result, the Division will be unable to obtain any information concerning whether Verizon had any role in the program. Nor will the RI ACLU or other parties be able to provide the Division with anything more than newspaper articles as a foundation for their concerns. In short, the Division will have no basis on which it can determine whether the news media’s characterizations of the NSA’s activities are correct.

2. As Verizon has already stated, it can neither confirm nor deny whether it has any relationship to the classified NSA program. *See Verizon Issues Statement on NSA Media Coverage*, News Release (May 16, 2006) (attached hereto as Exhibit 5). However, Verizon has further noted that media reports have made claims concerning Verizon that are false. In

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<sup>2</sup> The RI ACLU notes “that other public utilities commissions in New England have already begun investigating these matters.” RI ACLU Complaint at 3. This assertion is not correct. The Maine Public Utilities Commission received a complaint on May 8, 2006, from ten customers concerning the NSA program to which Verizon responded on May 19. The Maine commission has not determined whether to proceed with an investigation. Likewise, neither the Vermont Public Service Board nor Department of Public Service has yet decided to open investigations.

<sup>3/</sup> Indeed, by submitting this response, Verizon is not suggesting that the Division has jurisdiction over the issues raised by the ACLU request.

<sup>4/</sup> *See, e.g.*, Department of Justice, Legal Authorities Supporting the Activities of the National Security Agency Described by the President (Jan. 19, 2006); Press Conference of President Bush (Dec. 19, 2005), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/12/20051219-2.html>; Press Briefing by Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and General Michael Hayden, Principal Deputy Director for National Intelligence (Dec. 19, 2005), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/12/20051219-1.html>.

particular, Verizon has responded to these reports by explaining that it has not turned over data on local calls to the NSA and in fact does not even make records of such calls in most cases because the vast majority of customers are not billed on a per-call basis for local calls. *See id.* As Verizon has also made clear, to the extent it provides assistance to the government for national security or other purposes, it “will provide customer information to a government agency only where authorized by law for appropriately-defined and focused purposes.” *See Verizon Issues Statement on NSA and Privacy Protection*, New Release (May 12, 2006) (attached hereto as Exhibit 6). Verizon “has a longstanding commitment to vigorously safeguard our customers’ privacy,” as reflected in, among other things, its publicly available privacy principles. *See id.*

3. Verizon is prohibited, however, from providing any information concerning its alleged cooperation with the NSA program. Indeed, it is a felony under federal criminal law for any person to divulge classified information “concerning the communication intelligence activities of the United States” to any person that has not been authorized by the President, or his lawful designee, to receive such information. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 798. Further, Congress has made clear that “nothing in this . . . or any other law . . . shall be construed to require disclosure of . . . any function of the National Security Agency, [or] of any information with respect to the activities thereof.” 50 U.S.C. § 402 note (emphasis added). As the courts have explained, this provision reflects a “congressional judgment that, in order to preserve national security, information elucidating the subjects specified ought to be safe from forced exposure.” *The Founding Church of Scientology of Washington, D.C., Inc. v. Nat’l Security Agency*, 610 F.2d 824, 828 (D.C. Cir. 1979). Similarly, if there were activities relating to the NSA program undertaken pursuant to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (“FISA”), that fact, as well as any records relating to such activities, must remain a secret under federal law. *See* 50 U.S.C. §§ 1805 (c)(2)(B) & (C). The same is true of activities that might be undertaken pursuant to the Wiretap Act. *See, e.g.*, 18 U.S.C. §2511(2)(a)(ii)(B).

4. The United States Government has made it clear that it will take steps to prohibit the disclosure of this information. For instance, the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) has invoked the “state secrets” privilege in connection with a pending federal court action against AT&T concerning its alleged cooperation with the NSA. Under that well-established privilege, the government is entitled to invoke a privilege under which information that might otherwise be relevant to litigation may not be disclosed where such disclosure would be harmful to national security. *See United States v. Reynolds*, 345 U.S. 1, 7-11 (1953). When properly invoked, the state-secrets privilege is an absolute bar to disclosure, and “no competing public or private interest can be advanced to compel disclosure. . . .” *Ellsberg v. Mitchell*, 709 F.2d 51, 57 (D.C. Cir. 1983). Further, if the subject matter of a litigation is a state secret, or the privilege precludes access to evidence necessary for the plaintiff to state a prima facie claim or for the defendant to establish a valid defense, then the court must dismiss the case altogether. *See, e.g., Zuckerbraun v. Gen. Dynamics Corp.*, 935 F.2d 544, 547-48 (2d Cir. 1991); *Halkin v. Helms*, 598 F.2d 1 (D.C. Cir. 1978); *Halkin v. Helms*, 690 F.2d 977 (D.C. Cir. 1982).

In the AT&T case, the Department of Justice has invoked the state secrets privilege and set forth its view that claims that AT&T violated the law through its alleged cooperation with the NSA program “cannot be litigated because adjudication of Plaintiffs’ claims would put at risk the disclosure of privileged national security information.” See Memorandum of the United States in Support of the Military and State Secrets Privilege and Motion to Dismiss or, in the Alternative, for Summary Judgment, filed on May 13, 2006, in *Hepting v. AT&T*, No. C-06-0672-VRW (N.D. Cal.) (attached hereto as Exhibit 7). The district court ruled on June 6, 2006 that if the government is correct in asserting that “litigation would inevitably risk . . . disclosure” of state secrets, then the case should be dismissed. *Hepting v. AT&T*, No. C-06-0672-VRW (N.D. Cal., Order issued June 6, 2006) at 2 (attached as Exhibit 8). A hearing on the DOJ’s motion is now scheduled for June 23, 2006. The DOJ’s rationale applies equally to Verizon’s alleged cooperation with the NSA and, as the DOJ’s New Jersey Complaint makes clear, to investigations by state officials such as what the ACLU seeks here. See, e.g., New Jersey Complaint ¶¶ 30-33. Indeed, the government has indicated in a recent filing in support of a motion by AT&T, Inc. to stay another case pending against it, *Terkel v. AT&T, Inc.*, 06 C 2837 (E.D. Ill.), that it “intends to assert the military and state secrets privilege” in all of the similar cases pending against telecommunications companies. Statement of Interest of the United States in Support of AT&T’s Motion for a Stay Pending Decision by the Judicial Panel on Multi-District Litigation at 2, *Terkel v. AT&T, Inc.*, 06 C 2837 (E.D. Ill. filed June 6, 2006) (attached as Exhibit 9). At a minimum, therefore, the Division should not go forward without consulting with the DOJ, especially in light of the DOJ’s action in New Jersey described above.

5. Finally, as noted above, Verizon has made it very clear that it cooperates with national security and law enforcement requests entirely within the bounds of the law. The assumptions in the popular press that the alleged assistance in connection with the NSA program violates the law are without any basis. None of the federal statutes governing the privacy of telecommunications and customer data forbids telecommunications providers from assisting the government under appropriate circumstances. The Wiretap Act, FISA, the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, and the Telecommunications Act all contain exceptions to the general prohibitions against disclosure and expressly authorize disclosure to or cooperation with the government in a variety of circumstances.<sup>5/</sup> Further, these laws provide that “no cause of action shall lie” against those providing assistance pursuant to these authorizations<sup>6/</sup> and also that “good faith reliance” on statutory authorizations, court orders, and other specified items constitutes “a complete defense against any civil or criminal action

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<sup>5/</sup> See, e.g., 18 U.S.C. §§ 2511(2), 2511(3), 2518(7), 2702(b), 2702(c), 2703, 2709; 50 U.S.C. §§ 1805(f), 1843. For example, 18 U.S.C. § 2709 requires a telephone company to disclose certain information if it receives a “national security letter.” Similarly, Section 2511(2)(a) expressly authorizes companies to provide “information, facilities, or technical assistance” upon receipt of a specified certification “notwithstanding any other law.”

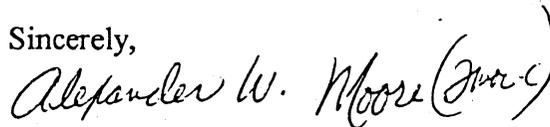
<sup>6/</sup> See, e.g., 18 U.S.C. §§ 2511(2)(a)(ii), 2703(e), § 3124(d); 50 U.S.C. §§ 1805(i), 1842(f).

brought under this chapter or any other law.”<sup>71</sup> To the extent that state laws do not contain similar exceptions or authorizations, they are preempted. *See, e.g., Camacho v. Autor. de Tel. de Puerto Rico*, 868 F.2d 482, 487-88 (1<sup>st</sup> Cir. 1989) (Puerto Rico’s constitutional prohibition on wiretapping “stands as an obstacle to the due operation of . . . federal law” and is preempted by the Wiretap Act.).

For similar reasons, the Division lacks the authority or jurisdiction to investigate or resolve the RI ACLU’s allegation that the activities alleged are unauthorized and, therefore, unlawful. Reaching a conclusion as to that question would require the Division to investigate matters relating to national security and to interpret and enforce the federal statutes described above authorizing disclosures to federal agencies in various circumstances. These areas fall outside the Division’s jurisdiction and authority. *See, e.g., New Jersey Complaint* ¶¶ 38-44.

In sum, there is no basis to assume that Verizon has violated the law. Further, Verizon is precluded by federal law from providing information about its cooperation, if any, with this national security matter. Verizon accordingly cannot confirm or deny cooperation in such a program or the receipt of any government authorizations or certifications, let alone provide the other information the RI ACLU suggests that the Division request. As a result, there would be no evidence for the Division to consider in any investigation. Moreover, neither the federal nor state wiretapping and surveillance statutes authorize or contemplate investigations or enforcement proceedings by the Division to determine criminal culpability. Nor does the Division possess the practical tools and ability to construe and enforce state and/or federal criminal statutes, consistent with all constitutional rights and protections. Accordingly, even if the Division could inquire into the facts – and as discussed above it cannot – the Division lacks the authority or jurisdiction to investigate or resolve the RI ACLU’s allegations. Instead, ongoing Congressional oversight through the Senate and House Intelligence committees, as well as the pending proceedings in federal court that will consider the state secrets issues, are the more appropriate forums for addressing any issues related to this national security program.

Sincerely,



Alexander W. Moore

Enclosures

cc: Ms. Donna Cupelo  
Mr. Steven Brown

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<sup>71</sup> *See, e.g.,* 18 U.S.C. §§ 2520(d), 2707(e); § 3124(e).



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

EXHIBIT 1

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

May 22, 2006

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2108 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Markey:

Thank you for your letter regarding recent media reports concerning the collection of telephone records by the National Security Agency. In your letter, you note that section 222 of the Communications Act provides that “[e]very telecommunications carrier has a duty to protect the confidentiality of proprietary information of, and relating to . . . customers.” 47 U.S.C. § 222(a). You have asked me to explain the Commission’s plan “for investigating and resolving these alleged violations of consumer privacy.”

I know that all of the members of this Commission take very seriously our charge to faithfully implement the nation’s laws, including our authority to investigate potential violations of the Communications Act. In this case, however, the classified nature of the NSA’s activities makes us unable to investigate the alleged violations discussed in your letter at this time.

The activities mentioned in your letter are currently the subject of an action filed in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. The plaintiffs in that case allege that the NSA has “arrang[ed] with some of the nation’s largest telecommunications companies . . . to gain direct access to . . . those companies’ records pertaining to the communications they transmit.” *Hepting v. AT&T Corp.*, No. C-06-0672-VRW (N.D. Cal.), Amended Complaint ¶ 41 (Feb. 22, 2006). According to the complaint, for example, AT&T Corp. has provided the government “with direct access to the contents” of databases containing “personally identifiable customary proprietary network information (CPNI),” including “records of nearly every telephone communication carried over its domestic network since approximately 2001, records that include the originating and terminating telephone numbers and the time and length for each call.” *Id.* ¶¶ 55, 56, 61; *see also, e.g.*, Leslie Cauley, “NSA Has Massive Database of Americans’ Phone Calls,” *USA Today* A1 (May 11, 2006) (alleging that the NSA “has been secretly collecting the phone call records of tens of millions of Americans, using data provided” by major telecommunications carriers).

The government has moved to dismiss the action on the basis of the military and state secrets privilege. *See Hepting*, Motion to Dismiss or, in the Alternative, for Summary Judgment by the United States of America (May 12, 2006). Its motion is accompanied by declarations from John D. Negroponte, Director of National Intelligence, and Lieutenant General Keith B. Alexander, Director, National Security Agency, who have maintained that disclosure of information “implicated by Plaintiffs’ claims . . . could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to the national security of the United States.” Negroponte Decl. ¶ 9. They specifically address “the NSA’s purported involvement” with specific telephone companies, noting that “the United States can neither confirm nor deny alleged NSA activities, relationships, or targets,” because “[t]o do otherwise when challenged in litigation would result in the exposure of intelligence information, sources, and methods and would severely undermine surveillance activities in general.” Alexander Decl. ¶ 8.

The representations of Director Negroponte and General Alexander make clear that it would not be possible for us to investigate the activities addressed in your letter without examining highly sensitive classified information. The Commission has no power to order the production of classified information. Rather, the Supreme Court has held that “the protection of classified information must be committed to the broad discretion of the agency responsible, and this must include broad discretion to determine who may have access to it. Certainly, it is not reasonably possible for an outside nonexpert body to review the substance of such a judgment.” *Department of the Navy v. Egan*, 484 U.S. 518, 529 (1988).

The statutory privilege applicable to NSA activities also effectively prohibits any investigation by the Commission. The National Security Act of 1959 provides that “nothing in this Act or any other law . . . shall be construed to require the disclosure of the organization or any function of the National Security Agency [or] of any information with respect to the activities thereof.” Pub. L. No. 86-36, § 6(a), 73 Stat. 63, 64, codified at 50 U.S.C. § 402 note. As the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has explained, the statute’s “explicit reference to ‘any other law’ . . . must be construed to prohibit the disclosure of information relating to NSA’s functions and activities as well as its personnel.” *Linder v. NSA*, 94 F.3d 693, 696 (D.C. Cir. 1996); *see also Hayden v. NSA/Central Sec. Serv.*, 608 F.2d 1381, 1390 (D.C. Cir. 1979) (“Congress has already, in enacting the statute, decided that disclosure of NSA activities is potentially harmful.”). This statute displaces any authority that the Commission might otherwise have to compel, at this time, the production of information relating to the activities discussed in your letter.

Page 3—The Honorable Edward J. Markey

I appreciate your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin J. Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kevin J. Martin  
Chairman



THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR  
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

JOHN R. NORRIS, CHAIRMAN  
DIANE MUNNS, BOARD MEMBER  
CURTIS W. STAMP, BOARD MEMBER

May 25, 2006

Frank Burnette  
802 Insurance Exchange Building  
505 Fifth Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309-2317

Dear Mr. Burnette:

I am in receipt of your letter of May 22, 2006, asking the Iowa Utilities Board to investigate the actions of AT&T and Verizon Cellular with respect to allegations that those companies, and others, have provided the National Security Agency with access to certain information. Unfortunately, the Board does not have jurisdiction to conduct such an investigation; the services you describe are deregulated in Iowa.

Specifically, Iowa Code § 476.1D requires that the Board deregulate communications services that are subject to effective competition. Pursuant to that statutory duty, the Board has deregulated the long distance services provided by AT&T and the mobile communications services provided by Verizon. Long distance was deregulated in two steps, in 1989 and 1996, and mobile telephone service was deregulated in 1986.

When services are deregulated, "the jurisdiction of the board as to the regulation of [those] communications services is not applicable...." (Iowa Code § 476.1D(1).) Thus, the Board does not have jurisdiction to conduct the investigation you request.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any comments or questions concerning this matter, please feel free to contact me at my direct number, 515-281-8272, or by email at [david.lynch@iub.state.ia.us](mailto:david.lynch@iub.state.ia.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Lynch".

David J. Lynch  
General Counsel

Cc:  
Iowa Civil Liberties Union  
Qwest Corporation

PETER D. KEISLER  
Assistant Attorney General  
CHRISTOPHER J. CHRISTIE  
United States Attorney  
SUSAN STEELE  
Assistant United States Attorney  
CARL J. NICHOLS  
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DOUGLAS LETTER  
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ALEXANDER HAAS  
Trial Attorney, Federal Programs Branch  
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BY: IRENE DOWDY  
Assistant United States Attorney  
(609) 989-0562

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	)	
	)	CIVIL ACTION NO.:
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	COMPLAINT
v.	)	
	)	
ZULIMA V. FARBER, in her official capacity as	)	
Attorney General of the State of New Jersey;	)	
CATHLEEN O'DONNELL, in her official	)	
capacity as Deputy Attorney General of the State	)	
of New Jersey; KIMBERLY S. RICKETTS, in	)	
her official capacity as Director of the New Jersey	)	
Division of Consumer Affairs; AT&T CORP.;	)	
VERIZON COMMUNICATIONS INC; QWEST	)	
COMMUNICATIONS INTERNATIONAL, INC.;	)	
SPRINT NEXTEL CORPORATION; and	)	
CINGULAR WIRELESS LLC,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	

Plaintiff, the United States of America, by its undersigned attorneys, brings this civil action for declaratory and injunctive relief, and alleges as follows:

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. In this action, the United States seeks to prevent the disclosure of highly confidential and sensitive government information that the defendant officers of the State of New Jersey have sought to obtain from telecommunications carriers without proper authorization from the United States. Compliance with the subpoenas issued by those officers would first place the carriers in a position of having to confirm or deny the existence of information that cannot be confirmed or denied without causing exceptionally grave harm to national security. And if particular carriers are indeed supplying foreign intelligence information to the Federal Government, compliance with the subpoenas would require disclosure of the details of that activity. The defendant state officers' attempts to obtain such information are invalid under the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution and are preempted by the United States Constitution and various federal statutes. This Court should therefore enter a declaratory judgment that the State Defendants do not have the authority to seek confidential and sensitive federal government information and thus cannot enforce the subpoenas they have served on the telecommunications carriers.

### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

2. The Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1345.
3. Venue lies in the District of New Jersey pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1) and (2).

## PARTIES

4. Plaintiff is the United States of America, suing on its own behalf.
5. Defendant Zulima V. Farber is the Attorney General for the State of New Jersey, and maintains her offices in Mercer County. She is being sued in her official capacity.
6. Defendant Cathleen O'Donnell is the Deputy Attorney General for the State of New Jersey, and maintains her offices in Mercer County. She is being sued in her official capacity.
7. Defendant Kimberly S. Ricketts is the Director of the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs. She is being sued in her official capacity. Defendants Zulima V. Farber, Cathleen O'Donnell, and Kimberly S. Ricketts are referred to as the "State Defendants."
8. Defendant AT&T Corp. is a corporation incorporated in the state of New York with its principal place of business in Somerset County, New Jersey, and that has received a subpoena in New Jersey.
9. Defendant Verizon Communications Inc. is a corporation incorporated in the state of Delaware with its principal place of business in the state of New York, that has offices in Somerset County, New Jersey, and that has received a subpoena in New Jersey.
10. Defendant Qwest Communications International, Inc. is a corporation incorporated in the state of Delaware with its principal place of business in the state of Colorado, and that has received a subpoena in New Jersey.
11. Defendant Sprint Nextel Corporation is a corporation incorporated in the state of New Jersey with its principal place of business in the state of Virginia, and that has received a subpoena in New Jersey.
12. Defendant Cingular Wireless LLC is a corporation incorporated in the state of Delaware with its principal place of business in Georgia, and that has received a subpoena in

New Jersey.

13. Defendants AT&T Corp., Cingular Wireless LLC, Qwest Communications International, Inc., Sprint Nextel Corporation, and Verizon Communications, Inc. are referred to as the “Carrier Defendants.”

### STATEMENT OF THE CLAIM

**I. The Federal Government Has Exclusive Control Vis-a-Vis the States With Respect to Foreign-Intelligence Gathering, National Security, the Conduct of Foreign Affairs, and the Conduct of Military Affairs.**

14. The Federal Government has exclusive control vis-a-vis the States over foreign-intelligence gathering, over national security, and over the conduct of war with foreign entities. The Federal Government controls the conduct of foreign affairs, the conduct of military affairs, and the performance of the country’s national security function.

15. In addition, various federal statutes and Executive Orders govern and regulate access to information relating to foreign intelligence gathering.

16. For example, Section 102A(i)(1) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-458, 118 Stat. 3638 (Dec. 17, 2004), codified at 50 U.S.C. § 403-1(i)(1), confers upon the Director of National Intelligence the authority and responsibility to “protect intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure.”

17. Federal law also makes it a felony for any person to divulge classified information “concerning the communication intelligence activities of the United States” to any person who has not been authorized by the President, or his lawful designee, to receive such information. 18 U.S.C. § 798.

18. And federal law establishes unique protections from disclosure for information related to the National Security Agency. Federal law states that “nothing in this . . . or any other

law . . . shall be construed to require disclosure of . . . any function of the National Security Agency, [or] of any information with respect to the activities thereof.” 50 U.S.C. § 402 note.

19. Several Executive Orders have been promulgated pursuant to these constitutional and statutory authorities that govern access to and handling of national security information.

20. First, Executive Order No. 12958, 60 Fed. Reg. 19825 (April 17, 1995), as amended by Executive Order No. 13292, 68 Fed. Reg. 15315 (March 25, 2003), prescribes a uniform system for classifying, safeguarding and declassifying national security information. It provides that:

A person may have access to classified information provided that:

- (1) a favorable determination of eligibility for access has been made by an agency head or the agency head's designee;
- (2) the person has signed an approved nondisclosure agreement; and
- (3) the person has a need-to-know the information.

Exec. Order No. 13292, Sec. 4.1(a). “Need-to-know” means “a determination made by an authorized holder of classified information that a prospective recipient requires access to specific classified information in order to perform or assist in a lawful and authorized governmental function.” Exec. Order No. 12958, Sec. 4.1(c). Executive Order No. 12958 further states, in part, that “Classified information shall remain under the control of the originating agency or its successor in function.” Exec. Order No. 13292, Sec. 4.1(c).

21. Second, Executive Order No. 12968, 60 Fed. Reg. 40245 (Aug. 2, 1995), establishes a uniform Federal personnel security program for employees of the Federal Government, as well as employees of an industrial or commercial contractor of a Federal agency, who will be considered for initial or continued access to the classified information. The Order states, in part,

that “Employees who are granted eligibility for access to classified information shall . . . protect classified information in their custody from unauthorized disclosure . . . .” Exec. Order No. 12968, Sec. 6.2(a)(1).

22. In addition, the courts have developed several doctrines that are relevant to this dispute and that establish the supremacy of federal law with respect to national security information and intelligence gathering. For example, suits alleging secret espionage agreements with the United States are not justiciable.

23. The Federal Government also has an absolute privilege to protect military and state secrets from disclosure. Only the Federal Government can waive that privilege, which is often called the “state secrets privilege.”

## **II. The Terrorist Surveillance Program and the Federal Government’s Invocation of the State Secrets Privilege**

24. The President has explained that, following the devastating events of September 11, 2001, he authorized the National Security Agency (“NSA”) to intercept certain international communications into and out of the United States of persons linked to al Qaeda or related terrorist organizations. *See* Press Conference of President Bush (Dec. 19, 2005), *available at* <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/12/20051219-2.html>. (“President’s Press Release”).

25. The Attorney General of the United States has further explained that, in order to intercept a communication, there must be “a reasonable basis to conclude that one party to the communication is a member of al Qaeda, affiliated with al Qaeda, or a member of an organization affiliated with al Qaeda.” Press Briefing by Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and General Michael Hayden, Principal Deputy Director for National Intelligence (Dec. 19, 2005),

available at <http://whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/12/20051219-1.html>. This activity is known as the Terrorist Surveillance Program (“TSP”).

26. The purpose of these intercepts is to provide the United States with an early warning system to detect and prevent another catastrophic terrorist attack in the United States. *See* President’s Press Release. The President has stated that the NSA activities “ha[ve] been effective in disrupting the enemy, while safeguarding our civil liberties.” *Id.*

27. Since January 2006, more than 20 class action lawsuits have been filed alleging that telecommunications carriers, including the Carrier Defendants, have unlawfully provided assistance to the NSA. The first lawsuit, *Hepting v. AT&T Corp., et al.*, was filed in the District Court for the Northern District of California in January 2006. Case No. C-06-0672-VRW.

28. Those lawsuits, including the *Hepting* case, generally make two sets of allegations. First, the lawsuits allege that the telecommunications carriers unlawfully intercepted the contents of certain telephone calls and emails and provided them to the NSA. Second, the lawsuits allege that telecommunications carriers have unlawfully provided the NSA with access to calling records and related information.

29. The Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation is currently considering a motion to transfer all of these lawsuits to a single district court for pretrial proceedings. *In re: National Security Agency Telecommunications Records Litigation*, MDL Docket No. 1791 (JPML).

30. In the *Hepting* case, the state secrets privilege has been formally asserted by the Director of National Intelligence, John D. Negroponte, and the Director of the National Security Agency, Lieutenant General Keith B. Alexander. The Director of National Intelligence is the “head of the intelligence community” of the United States. 50 U.S.C. § 403(b)(1). General Alexander has also invoked the NSA’s statutory privilege. *See* 50 U.S.C. § 402 note.

31. The public declarations of the Director of National Intelligence and the Director of the NSA in the *Hepting* case state that, “[i]n an effort to counter the al Qaeda threat, the President of the United States authorized the NSA to utilize its [signals intelligence] capabilities to collect certain ‘one-end foreign’ communications where one party is associated with the al Qaeda terrorist organization for the purpose of detecting and preventing another terrorist attack on the United States. This activity is known as the Terrorist Surveillance Program (‘TSP’).” Negroponete Decl. ¶ 11 (Exhibit A, attached to this Complaint); *see* Alexander Decl. ¶ 7 (Exhibit B, attached to this Complaint).

32. Director Negroponete and General Alexander have concluded that “[t]o discuss this activity in any greater detail, however, would disclose classified intelligence information and reveal intelligence sources and methods, which would enable adversaries of the United States to avoid detection by the U.S. Intelligence Community and/or take measures to defeat or neutralize U.S. intelligence collection, posing a serious threat of damage to the United States’ national security interests.” Negroponete Decl. ¶ 11; *see* Alexander Decl. ¶ 7.

33. The public declarations further state that “any further elaboration on the public record concerning these matters would reveal information that could cause the very harms [that] the assertion of the state secrets privilege is intended to prevent.” Negroponete Decl. ¶ 12; *see* Alexander Decl. ¶ 8. The assertion of the privilege encompasses “allegations about NSA’s purported involvement with AT&T.” Negroponete Decl. ¶ 12; Alexander Decl. ¶ 8. Director Negroponete and General Alexander have explained that “[t]he only recourse for the Intelligence Community and, in this case, for the NSA, is to neither confirm nor deny these sorts of allegations, regardless of whether they are true or false. To say otherwise when challenged in

litigation would result in routine exposure of intelligence information, sources, and methods and would severely undermine surveillance activities in general.” Negroponte Decl. ¶ 12; *see* Alexander Decl. ¶ 8.

### **III. The State Defendants Seek to Require the Production of Potentially Highly Classified and Sensitive Information**

34. On May 17, 2006, the State Defendants sent subpoenas duces tecum entitled “Provision of Telephone Call History Data to the National Security Agency” (“Subpoenas”) to each of the Carrier Defendants. A representative Subpoena is attached as Exhibit C. The materials sought by these Subpoenas include, among other items, “[a]ll names and complete addresses of Persons including, but not limited to, all affiliates, subsidiaries and entities, that provide Telephone Call History Data to the NSA”;<sup>1</sup> “[a]ll Executive Orders issued by the President of the United States and provided to Verizon concerning any demand or request to provide Telephone Call History Data to the NSA”; “[a]ll orders, subpoenas and warrants issued by or on behalf of any unit or officer of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government and provided to Verizon concerning any demand or request to provide Telephone Call History Data to the NSA”; “[a]ll orders, subpoenas and warrants issued by or on behalf of any Federal or State judicial authority and provided to Verizon concerning any demand or request to provide Telephone Call History Data to the NSA”; “[a]ll Documents concerning the basis for Verizon’s provision of Telephone Call History Data to the NSA, including, but not limited to, any legal or contractual authority”; “[a]ll Documents concerning any written or oral contracts, memoranda of

---

<sup>1</sup> Under the Subpoenas, “‘Telephone Call History Data’ means any data Verizon provided to the NSA including, but not limited to, records of landline and cellular telephone calls placed, and/or received by a Verizon subscriber with a New Jersey billing address or New Jersey telephone number.” See Definitions, ¶ 8.

understanding, memoranda of agreement, other agreements or correspondence by or on behalf of Verizon and the NSA concerning the provision of Telephone Call History Data to the NSA”; “[a]ll Documents concerning any communication between Verizon and the NSA or any other unit or officer of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government concerning the provision of Telephone Call History Data to the NSA”; and “[t]o the extent not otherwise requested, [a]ll Documents concerning any demand or request that Verizon provide Telephone Call History Data to the NSA.” See Subpoenas, ¶¶ 1-13.

35. These Subpoenas specify that they are “issued pursuant to the authority of N.J.S.A. 56:8-1, et seq., specifically N.J.S.A. 56:8-3 and 56:8-4.” The cited provisions of state law concern consumer fraud, and provide, *inter alia*, that “[w]hen it shall appear to the [state] Attorney General that a person has engaged in, is engaging in, or is about to engage in any practice declared to be unlawful by this act, or when he believes it to be in the public interest that an investigation should be made to ascertain whether a person in fact has engaged in, is engaging in or is about to engage in, any such practice, he may . . . [e]xamine any merchandise or sample thereof, record, book, document, account or paper as he may deem necessary.” N.J.S.A. 56:8-3. “To accomplish the objectives and to carry out the duties prescribed by this act, the [state] Attorney General, in addition to other powers conferred upon him by this act, may issue subpoenas to any person, administer an oath or affirmation to any person, conduct hearings in aid of any investigation or inquiry, promulgate such rules and regulations, and prescribe such forms as may be necessary, which shall have the force of law.” N.J.S.A. 56:8-4.

36. The cover letter accompanying these Subpoenas states: “Failure to comply with this Subpoena may render you liable for contempt of court and such other penalties as are provided

by law.”

37. These Subpoenas demand that responses be submitted by the Carrier Defendants on or before May 30, 2006. The State Defendants have extended the time for responses to June 15, 2006.

#### **IV. The State Defendants Lack Authority to Compel Compliance with the Subpoenas.**

38. The State Defendants’ authority to seek or obtain the information requested in these Subpoenas is fundamentally inconsistent with and preempted by the Federal Government’s exclusive control over all foreign intelligence gathering activities. In addition, no federal law authorizes the State Defendants to obtain the information they seek.

39. The State Defendants have not been granted access to classified information related to the activities of the NSA pursuant to the requirements set out in Executive Order No. 12958 or Executive Order No. 13292.

40. The State Defendants have not been authorized to receive classified information concerning the communication intelligence activities of the United States in accordance with the terms of 18 U.S.C. § 798, or any other federal law, regulation, or order.

41. In seeking information bearing upon NSA’s purported involvement with the Carrier Defendants, the Subpoenas seek disclosure of matters with respect to which the Director of National Intelligence has determined that disclosure, including confirming or denying whether or to what extent such materials exist, would improperly reveal intelligence sources and methods.

42. The United States has a strong and compelling interest in preventing the disclosure of sensitive and classified information. The United States has a strong and compelling interest in preventing terrorists from learning about the methods and operations of terrorist surveillance

activities being undertaken or not being undertaken by the United States.

43. As a result of the Constitution, federal laws, applicable privileges, and the United States' interest in preventing the unauthorized disclosure of sensitive or classified information, the Carrier Defendants will be unable to confirm or deny their involvement, if any, in intelligence activities of the United States, and therefore cannot provide a substantive response to the Subpoenas.

44. The United States will be irreparably harmed if the Carrier Defendants are permitted or are required to disclose sensitive and classified information to the State Defendants in response to the Subpoenas.

**COUNT ONE – VIOLATION OF AND PREEMPTION UNDER THE SUPREMACY  
CLAUSE AND FEDERAL LAW  
(ALL DEFENDANTS)**

45. Plaintiff incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 46 above.

46. The Subpoenas, and any responses required thereto, are invalid under, and preempted by, the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution, Art. VI, Cl. 2, federal law, and the Federal Government's exclusive control over foreign intelligence gathering activities, national security, the conduct of foreign affairs, and the conduct of military affairs.

**COUNT TWO – UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF SENSITIVE AND  
CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION  
(ALL DEFENDANTS)**

47. Plaintiff incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 48 above.

48. Providing responses to the Subpoenas would be inconsistent with and would violate federal law including, but not limited to, Executive Order 12958, 18 U.S.C. § 798, and 50 U.S.C. § 402 note, as well as other applicable federal laws, regulations, and orders.

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, the United States of America prays for the following relief:

1. That this Court enter a declaratory judgment pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2201(a), that the Subpoenas issued by the State Defendants may not be enforced by the State Defendants or responded to by the Carrier Defendants because any attempt to obtain or disclose the information that is the subject of these Subpoenas would be invalid under, preempted by, and inconsistent with the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution, Art. VI, Cl. 2, federal law, and the Federal Government's exclusive control over foreign intelligence gathering activities, national security, the conduct of foreign affairs, and the conduct of military affairs.
  
2. That this Court grant plaintiff such other and further relief as may be just and proper, including any necessary and appropriate injunctive relief.

Respectfully submitted,

PETER D. KEISLER  
Assistant Attorney General  
CHRISTOPHER J. CHRISTIE  
United States Attorney  
SUSAN STEELE  
Assistant United States Attorney  
CARL J. NICHOLS  
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U. S. Department of Justice

Civil Division

Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

June 14, 2006

VIA FACSIMILE AND EMAIL

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**Re: Subpoenas Duces Tecum Served on Telecommunications Carriers  
Seeking Information Relating to the Alleged Provision of Telephone  
Call History Data to the National Security Agency**

Dear Counsel:

This letter is to advise you that today the United States of America has filed a lawsuit against the Attorney General and other officials of the State of New Jersey, as well as AT&T Corp., Verizon Communications, Inc., Qwest Communications International, Inc., Sprint Nextel Corporation, and Cingular Wireless LLC (together the "telecommunications carriers"). That lawsuit seeks a declaration that those state officials do not have the authority to enforce subpoenas duces tecum (hereafter the "subpoenas") recently issued to the telecommunications carriers seeking information relating to the alleged provision of "telephone call history data" to the National Security Agency, and that the telecommunications carriers cannot respond to these subpoenas. A copy of the Complaint the United States has filed, as well as a letter we have sent today to Attorney General Farber, are attached hereto.

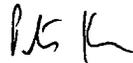
As noted in our Complaint and letter to Attorney General Farber concerning those issues, the subpoenas infringe upon federal operations, are contrary to federal law, and are invalid under the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution. Responding to the subpoenas – including by disclosing whether or to what extent any responsive materials exist – would violate federal laws and Executive Orders. Moreover, the Director of National Intelligence recently has asserted the state secrets privilege with respect to the very same topics and types of information sought by the subpoenas, thereby underscoring that any such information cannot be disclosed. For these reasons, described in more detail in the attachments hereto, please be advised that we

Messrs. Berenson, Kester, Rogovin, Ms. Varney  
Page 2

believe that enforcing compliance with, or responding to, the subpoenas would be inconsistent with and preempted by federal law.

Please do not hesitate to contact Carl Nichols or me should you have any questions in this regard.

Sincerely,



Peter D. Keisler  
Assistant Attorney General

Attachments

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## News Release

### Verizon Issues Statement on NSA Media Coverage

May 16, 2006

**Media contact:**  
Peter Thonis, 212-395-2355

**NEW YORK** – *Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE:VZ) today issued the following statement regarding news coverage about the NSA program which the President has acknowledged authorizing against al-Qaeda:*

As the President has made clear, the NSA program he acknowledged authorizing against al-Qaeda is highly-classified. Verizon cannot and will not comment on the program. Verizon cannot and will not confirm or deny whether it has any relationship to it.

That said, media reports made claims about Verizon that are simply false.

One of the most glaring and repeated falsehoods in the media reporting is the assertion that, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Verizon was approached by NSA and entered into an arrangement to provide the NSA with data from its customers' domestic calls.

This is false. From the time of the 9/11 attacks until just four months ago, Verizon had three major businesses – its wireline phone business, its wireless company and its directory publishing business. It also had its own Internet Service Provider and long-distance businesses. Contrary to the media reports, Verizon was not asked by NSA to provide, nor did Verizon provide, customer phone records from any of these businesses, or any call data from those records. None of these companies – wireless or wireline – provided customer records or call data.

Another error is the claim that data on local calls is being turned over to NSA and that simple "calls across town" are being "tracked." In fact, phone companies do not even make records of local calls in most cases because the vast majority of customers are not billed per call for local calls. In any event, the claim is just wrong. As stated above, Verizon's wireless and wireline companies did not provide to NSA customer records or call data, local or otherwise.

Again, Verizon cannot and will not confirm or deny whether it has any relationship to the classified NSA program. Verizon always stands ready, however, to help protect the country from terrorist attack. We owe this duty to our fellow citizens. We also have a duty, that we have always fulfilled, to protect the privacy of our customers. The two are not in conflict. When asked for help, we will always make sure that any assistance is authorized by law and that our customers' privacy is safeguarded.

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## News Release

### Verizon Issues Statement on NSA and Privacy Protection

May 12, 2006

Media contact:  
Peter Thonis, 212-395-2355

**NEW YORK** – *Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE:VZ) today issued the following statement:*

The President has referred to an NSA program, which he authorized, directed against al-Qaeda. Because that program is highly classified, Verizon cannot comment on that program, nor can we confirm or deny whether we have had any relationship to it.

Having said that, there have been factual errors in press coverage about the way Verizon handles customer information in general. Verizon puts the interests of our customers first and has a longstanding commitment to vigorously safeguard our customers' privacy – a commitment we've highlighted in our privacy principles, which are available at [www.verizon.com/privacy](http://www.verizon.com/privacy).

Verizon will provide customer information to a government agency only where authorized by law for appropriately-defined and focused purposes. When information is provided, Verizon seeks to ensure it is properly used for that purpose and is subject to appropriate safeguards against improper use. Verizon does not, and will not, provide any government agency unfettered access to our customer records or provide information to the government under circumstances that would allow a fishing expedition.

In January 2006, Verizon acquired MCI, and we are ensuring that Verizon's policies are implemented at that entity and that all its activities fully comply with law.

Verizon hopes that the Administration and the Congress can come together and agree on a process in an appropriate setting, and with safeguards for protecting classified information, to examine any issues that have been raised about the program. Verizon is fully prepared to participate in such a process.

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11 Attorneys for Intervenor Defendant United States of America

12  
 13 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
 14 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

15  
 16 TASH HEPTING, GREGORY HICKS )  
 CAROLYN JEWEL, and ERIK KNUTZEN )  
 17 on Behalf of Themselves and All Others )  
 Similarly Situated, )

18 Plaintiffs, )

19 v. )

20  
 21 AT&T CORP., AT&T INC., and )  
 22 DOES 1-20, inclusive, )

23 Defendants. )  
 24

Case No. C 06-0672-VRW

NOTICE OF MOTION AND MOTION TO  
 DISMISS OR, IN THE ALTERNATIVE,  
 FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT  
 BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Judge: The Hon. Vaughn R. Walker  
 Hearing Date: June 21, 2006  
 Courtroom: 6, 17th Floor

25  
 26  
 27 NOTICE OF MOTION AND MOTION TO DISMISS, OR, IN THE ALTERNATIVE, FOR SUMMARY  
 JUDGMENT BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

28 Case No. C 06-0672-VRW

1 PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that, on June 21, 2006,<sup>1</sup> before the Honorable Vaughn R.  
2 Walker, intervenor United States of America will move for an order dismissing this action,  
3 pursuant to Rules 12(b)(1) and 12(b)(6) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, or, in the  
4 alternative, for summary judgment, pursuant to Rule 56 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.  
5 As explained in the United States' unclassified memorandum as well as the memorandum  
6 submitted *ex parte* and *in camera*, the United States' invocation of the military and state secrets  
7 privilege and of specified statutory privileges requires dismissal of this action, or, in the  
8 alternative, summary judgment in favor of the United States.

9 Respectfully submitted,

10 PETER D. KEISLER  
11 Assistant Attorney General, Civil Division

12 CARL J. NICHOLS  
13 Deputy Assistant Attorney General

14 DOUGLAS N. LETTER  
15 Terrorism Litigation Counsel

16 JOSEPH H. HUNT  
17 Director, Federal Programs Branch

18 *s/Anthony J. Coppolino*  
19 ANTHONY J. COPPOLINO  
20 Special Litigation Counsel  
21 tony.coppolino@usdoj.gov

22 *s/Andrew H. Tannenbaum*  
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24 Trial Attorney  
25 andrew.tannenbaum@usdoj.gov  
26 U.S. Department of Justice  
27 Civil Division, Federal Programs Branch  
28 20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

---

24 <sup>1</sup> The United States has filed an Administrative Motion to Set Hearing Date for the United  
25 States' Motions requesting that the Court set the hearing date for this motion and the United  
26 States' Motion To Intervene, for June 21, 2006 – the present hearing date for Plaintiffs' Motion  
for Preliminary Injunction.

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Attorneys for Intervenor Defendant United States

DATED: May 12, 2006

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 21 *Attorneys for the United States of America*

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

17 TASH HEPTING, GREGORY HICKS, )  
 18 CAROLYN JEWEL, and ERIK KNUTZEN, )  
 19 On Behalf of Themselves and All Others )  
 20 Similarly Situated, )  
 21 Plaintiffs, )  
 22 v. )  
 23 AT&T CORP., AT&T INC., and )  
 24 DOES 1-20, inclusive, )  
 25 Defendants. )

Case No. C-06-0672-VRW

**MEMORANDUM OF THE  
 UNITED STATES IN SUPPORT  
 OF THE MILITARY AND  
 STATE SECRETS PRIVILEGE  
 AND MOTION TO DISMISS OR,  
 IN THE ALTERNATIVE, FOR  
 SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

Hon. Vaughn R. Walker

**(U) INTRODUCTION**

1  
2 (U) The United States of America, through its undersigned counsel, hereby submits this  
3 Memorandum of Points and Authorities in support of the assertion of the military and state  
4 secrets privilege (commonly known as the “state secrets privilege”)<sup>1</sup> by the Director of National  
5 Intelligence (“DNI”), and related statutory privilege assertions by the DNI and the Director of  
6 the National Security Agency (“DIRNSA”).<sup>2</sup> Through these assertions of privilege, the United  
7 States seeks to protect certain intelligence activities, information, sources, and methods,  
8 implicated by the allegations in this case. The information to be protected is described herein, in  
9 a separate memorandum lodged for the Court’s *in camera*, *ex parte* consideration, and in public  
10 and classified declarations submitted by the DNI and DIRNSA.<sup>3</sup> For the reasons set forth in  
11 those submissions, the disclosure of the information to which these privilege assertions apply  
12 would cause exceptionally grave harm to the national security of the United States.  
13  
14

15 (U) In addition, the United States has also moved to intervene in this action, pursuant to  
16 Rule 24 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, for the purpose of seeking dismissal of this  
17 action or, in the alternative, summary judgment. As set forth below, this case cannot be litigated  
18 because adjudication of Plaintiffs’ claims would put at risk the disclosure of privileged national  
19 security information.  
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22 <sup>1</sup> (U) The phrase “state secrets privilege” is often used in this memorandum to refer  
23 collectively to the military and state secrets privilege and the statutory privileges invoked in this  
24 case.

25 <sup>2</sup> (U) This submission is made pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 517, as well as pursuant to the  
26 Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

27 <sup>3</sup> (U) The classified declarations of John D. Negroponte, DNI, and Keith B. Alexander,  
28 DIRNSA, as well as the separately lodged memorandum for the Court’s *in camera*, *ex parte*  
consideration, are currently stored in a proper secure location by the Department of Justice and  
are available for review by the Court upon request.

1 [REDACTED TEXT]

2 (U) The state secrets privilege has long been recognized for protecting information vital  
3 to the nation's security or diplomatic relations. See *United States v. Reynolds*, 345 U.S. 1  
4 (1953); *Kasza v. Browner*, 133 F.3d 1159 (9th Cir.), cert. denied, 525 U.S. 967 (1998). "Once  
5 the privilege is properly invoked and the court is satisfied that there is a reasonable danger that  
6 national security would be harmed by the disclosure of state secrets, the privilege is absolute,"  
7 and the information at issue must be excluded from disclosure and use in the case. *Kasza*, 133  
8 F.3d at 1166. Moreover, if "the 'very subject matter of the action' is a state secret, then the court  
9 should dismiss the plaintiff's action based solely on the invocation of the state secrets privilege."  
10 *Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1166. In such cases, "sensitive military secrets will be so central to the  
11 subject matter of the litigation that any attempt to proceed will threaten disclosure of the  
12 privileged matters." See *Fitzgerald v. Penthouse Int'l, Ltd.*, 776 F.2d 1236 (4th Cir. 1985).  
13 Dismissal is also necessary when either the plaintiff cannot make out a prima facie case in  
14 support of its claims absent the excluded state secrets, or if the privilege deprives the defendant  
15 of information that would otherwise provide a valid defense to the claim. *Kasza*, 133 F.3d at  
16 1166.  
17  
18  
19

20 [REDACTED TEXT]

21 (U) BACKGROUND

22 A. (U) September 11, 2001

23 (U) On September 11, 2001, the al Qaeda terrorist network launched a set of coordinated  
24 attacks along the East Coast of the United States. Four commercial jetliners, each carefully  
25 selected to be fully loaded with fuel for a transcontinental flight, were hijacked by al Qaeda  
26 operatives. Those operatives targeted the Nation's financial center in New York with two of the  
27  
28

1 jetliners, which they deliberately flew into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. Al  
2 Qaeda targeted the headquarters of the Nation's Armed Forces, the Pentagon, with the third  
3 jetliner. Al Qaeda operatives were apparently headed toward Washington, D.C. with the fourth  
4 jetliner when passengers struggled with the hijackers and the plane crashed in Shanksville,  
5 Pennsylvania. The intended target of this fourth jetliner was most evidently the White House or  
6 the Capitol, strongly suggesting that al Qaeda's intended mission was to strike a decapitation  
7 blow to the Government of the United States—to kill the President, the Vice President, or  
8 Members of Congress. The attacks of September 11 resulted in approximately 3,000 deaths—  
9 the highest single-day death toll from hostile foreign attacks in the Nation's history. In addition,  
10 these attacks shut down air travel in the United States, disrupted the Nation's financial markets  
11 and Government operations, and caused billions of dollars of damage to the economy.  
12  
13

14 (U) On September 14, 2001, the President declared a national emergency “by reason of  
15 the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center, New York, New York, and the Pentagon, and the  
16 continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on the United States.” Proclamation No.  
17 7463, 66 Fed. Reg. 48199 (Sept. 14, 2001). The United States also launched a massive military  
18 response, both at home and abroad. In the United States, combat air patrols were immediately  
19 established over major metropolitan areas and were maintained 24 hours a day until April 2002.  
20 The United States also immediately began plans for a military response directed at al Qaeda's  
21 training grounds and haven in Afghanistan. On September 14, 2001, both Houses of Congress  
22 passed a Joint Resolution authorizing the President “to use all necessary and appropriate force  
23 against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or  
24 aided the terrorist attacks” of September 11. Authorization for Use of Military Force, Pub. L.  
25 No. 107-40 § 21(a), 115 Stat. 224, 224 (Sept. 18, 2001) (“Cong. Auth.”). Congress also  
26  
27  
28

1 expressly acknowledged that the attacks rendered it “necessary and appropriate” for the United  
2 States to exercise its right “to protect United States citizens both at home and abroad,” and  
3 acknowledged in particular that the “the President has authority under the Constitution to take  
4 action to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States.” *Id.* pmb1.

5 (U) As the President made clear at the time, the attacks of September 11 “created a state  
6 of armed conflict.” Military Order, § 1(a), 66 Fed. Reg. 57833, 57833 (Nov. 13, 2001). Indeed,  
7 shortly after the attacks, NATO took the unprecedented step of invoking article 5 of the North  
8 Atlantic Treaty, which provides that an “armed attack against one or more of [the parties] shall  
9 be considered an attack against them all.” North Atlantic Treaty, Apr. 4, 1949, art. 5, 63 Stat.  
10 2241, 2244, 34 U.N.T.S. 243, 246; see also Statement by NATO Secretary General Lord  
11 Robertson (Oct. 2, 2001), available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011002a.htm> (“[I]t  
12 has now been determined that the attack against the United States on 11 September was directed  
13 from abroad and shall therefore be regarded as an action covered by Article 5 of the Washington  
14 Treaty . . .”). The President also determined that al Qaeda terrorists “possess both the capability  
15 and the intention to undertake further terrorist attacks against the United States that, if not  
16 detected and prevented, will cause mass deaths, mass injuries, and massive destruction of  
17 property, and may place at risk the continuity of the operations of the United States  
18 Government,” and he concluded that “an extraordinary emergency exists for national defense  
19 purposes.” Military Order, § 1(c), (g), 66 Fed. Reg. at 57833-34.

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23 **B. (U) The Continuing Terrorist Threat Posed by al Qaeda**

24 (U) With the attacks of September 11, Al Qaeda demonstrated its ability to introduce  
25 agents into the United States undetected and to perpetrate devastating attacks. But, as the  
26 President has made clear, “[t]he terrorists want to strike America again, and they hope to inflict  
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28

1 even more damage than they did on September the 11th.” Press Conference of President Bush  
2 (Dec. 19, 2005).<sup>4</sup> For this reason, as the President explained, finding al Qaeda sleeper agents in  
3 the United States remains one of the paramount national security concerns to this day. *See id.*

4 (U) Since the September 11 attacks, al Qaeda leaders have repeatedly promised to  
5 deliver another, even more devastating attack on America. For example, in October 2002, al  
6 Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri stated in a video addressing the “citizens of the United States”:  
7 “I promise you that the Islamic youth are preparing for you what will fill your hearts with  
8 horror.” In October 2003, Osama bin Laden stated in a released videotape that “We, God  
9 willing, will continue to fight you and will continue martyrdom operations inside and outside the  
10 United States . . . .” And again in a videotape released on October 24, 2004, bin Laden warned  
11 U.S. citizens of further attacks and asserted that “your security is in your own hands.” In recent  
12 months, al Qaeda has reiterated its intent to inflict a catastrophic terrorist attack on the United  
13 States. On December 7, 2005, al-Zawahiri professed that al Qaeda “is spreading, growing, and  
14 becoming stronger,” and that al Qaeda is “waging a great historic battle in Iraq, Afghanistan,  
15 Palestine, and even in the Crusaders’ own homes.” Finally, as is well known, since September  
16 11, al Qaeda has staged several large-scale attacks around the world, including in Indonesia,  
17 Madrid, and London, killing hundreds of innocent people.  
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21 [REDACTED TEXT]

22 C. (U) Intelligence Challenges After September 11, 2001

23 [REDACTED TEXT]  
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25  
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27  
28 <sup>4</sup> (U) Available at <http://www.white-house.gov/news/releases/2005/12/20051219-2.html>.

1 **D. (U) NSA Activities Critical to Meeting Post-9/11 Intelligence Challenges**

2 **[REDACTED TEXT]**

3 **E. (U) Plaintiffs' Claims**

4 (U) Against this backdrop, upon the media disclosures in December 2005 of certain post-  
5 9/11 intelligence gathering activities, Plaintiffs filed this suit alleging that the Government is  
6 conducting a massive surveillance program, vacuuming up and searching the content of  
7 communications engaged in by millions of AT&T customers. While clearly putting purported  
8 Government activities at issue, *see* Am. Compl. ¶ 3, Plaintiffs filed suit against AT&T, alleging  
9 that it illegally provides the NSA with direct access to key facilities and databases and discloses  
10 to the Government the content of telephone and electronic communications as well as detailed  
11 communications records about millions of customers. *See* Am. Complaint ¶¶ 3-6.

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13  
14 (U) Plaintiffs first put at issue NSA's activities in connection with the TSP, which was  
15 publicly described by the President in December 2005, alleging that "NSA began a classified  
16 surveillance program shortly after September 11, 2001 to intercept the communications within  
17 the United States without judicial warrant." *See* Am. Compl. ¶ 32-37. Plaintiffs also allege that  
18 as part of this "data mining" program, "the NSA intercepts millions of communications made or  
19 received by people inside the United States, and uses powerful computers to scan their contents  
20 for particular names, numbers, words, or phrases." *Id.* ¶ 39. Plaintiffs allege in particular that  
21 AT&T has assisted the Government in installing "interception devices," "pen registers" and "trap  
22 and trace" devices in order to "acquire the content" of communications and receive "dialing,  
23 routing, addressing, or signaling information." *Id.* ¶¶ 42-47.

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25  
26 (U) Plaintiffs seek declaratory and injunctive relief and damages under various federal  
27 and state statutory provisions and the First and Fourth Amendments, Am. Compl. ¶¶ 65-66 &  
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1 Counts II-VI, and also seek declaratory and injunctive relief under the First and Fourth  
2 Amendments on the theory that the Government has instigated, directed, or tacitly approved the  
3 alleged actions by AT&T, and that AT&T acts as an instrument or agent of the Government. *Id.*  
4 ¶¶ 66, 82, 85 & Count I. Finally, Plaintiffs have also moved for a preliminary injunction that  
5 would, *inter alia*, enjoin AT&T “from facilitating the interception, use, or disclosure of its  
6 customers’ communications by or to the United States Government,” except pursuant to a court  
7 order or an emergency authorization of the Attorney General. *See* [Proposed] Order Granting  
8 Preliminary Injunction (Docket No. 17) ¶ 3.

10 **(U) ARGUMENT**

11 **[REDACTED TEXT]**

13 **I. (U) THE STATE SECRETS PRIVILEGE BARS USE OF PRIVILEGED  
14 INFORMATION REGARDLESS OF A LITIGANT’S NEED.**

15 (U) The ability of the executive to protect military or state secrets from disclosure has  
16 been recognized from the earliest days of the Republic. *See Totten v. United States*, 92 U.S. 105  
17 (1875); *United States v. Burr*, 25 F. Cas. 30 (C.C.D. Va. 1807); *Reynolds*, 345 U.S. at 6-7. The  
18 privilege derives from the President’s Article II powers to conduct foreign affairs and provide for  
19 the national defense. *United States v. Nixon*, 418 U.S. 683, 710 (1974). Accordingly, it “must  
20 head the list” of evidentiary privileges. *Halkin I*, 598 F.2d at 7.

22 **A. (U) Procedural Requirements**

23 (U) As a procedural matter, “[t]he privilege belongs to the Government and must be  
24 asserted by it; it can neither be claimed nor waived by a private party.” *Reynolds*, 345 U.S. at 7;  
25 *see also Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1165. “There must be a formal claim of privilege, lodged by the  
26 head of the department which has control over the matter, after actual personal consideration by  
27 the officer.” *Reynolds*, 345 U.S. at 7-8 (footnotes omitted). Thus, the responsible agency head  
28

1 must personally consider the matter and formally assert the claim of privilege.

2 **B. (U) Information Covered**

3 (U) The privilege protects a broad range of state secrets, including information that would  
4 result in "impairment of the nation's defense capabilities, disclosure of intelligence-gathering  
5 methods or capabilities, and disruption of diplomatic relations with foreign Governments."  
6 *Ellsberg v. Mitchell*, 709 F.2d 51, 57 (D.C. Cir. 1983), *cert. denied sub nom. Russo v. Mitchell*,  
7 465 U.S. 1038 (1984) (footnotes omitted); *accord Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1166 ("[T]he Government  
8 may use the state secrets privilege to withhold a broad range of information;"); *see also Halkin v.*  
9 *Helms (Halkin II)*, 690 F.2d 977, 990 (D.C. Cir. 1982) (state secrets privilege protects  
10 intelligence sources and methods involved in NSA surveillance). In addition, the privilege  
11 extends to protect information that, on its face, may appear innocuous but which in a larger  
12 context could reveal sensitive classified information. *Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1166.

15 It requires little reflection to understand that the business of foreign intelligence  
16 gathering in this age of computer technology is more akin to the construction of a  
17 mosaic than it is to the management of a cloak and dagger affair. Thousands of  
18 bits and pieces of seemingly innocuous information can be analyzed and fitted  
19 into place to reveal with startling clarity how the unseen whole must operate.

19 *Halkin I*, 598 F.2d at 8. "Accordingly, if seemingly innocuous information is part of a classified  
20 mosaic, the state secrets privilege may be invoked to bar its disclosure and the court cannot order  
21 the Government to disentangle this information from other classified information." *Kasza*, 133  
22 F.3d at 1166.

24 **C. (U) Standard of Review**

25 (U) An assertion of the state secrets privilege "must be accorded the 'utmost deference'  
26 and the court's review of the claim of privilege is narrow." *Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1166. Aside  
27 from ensuring that the privilege has been properly invoked as a procedural matter, the sole  
28

1 determination for the court is whether, “under the particular circumstances of the case, ‘there is a  
2 reasonable danger that compulsion of the evidence will expose military matters which, in the  
3 interest of national security, should not be divulged.’” *Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1166 (quoting  
4 *Reynolds*, 345 U.S. at 10); *see also In re United States*, 872 F.2d 472, 475-76 (D.C. Cir. 1989);  
5 *Tilden v. Tenet*, 140 F. Supp. 2d 623, 626 (E.D. Va. 2000).

6  
7 (U) Thus, in assessing whether to uphold a claim of privilege, the court does not balance  
8 the respective needs of the parties for the information. Rather, “[o]nce the privilege is properly  
9 invoked and the court is satisfied that there is a reasonable danger that national security would be  
10 harmed by the disclosure of state secrets, the privilege is absolute[.]” *Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1166;  
11 *see also In re Under Seal*, 945 F.2d at 1287 n.2 (state secrets privilege “renders the information  
12 unavailable regardless of the other party’s need in furtherance of the action”); *Northrop Corp. v.*  
13 *McDonnell Douglas Corp.*, 751 F.2d 395, 399 (D.C. Cir. 1984) (state secrets privilege “cannot  
14 be compromised by any showing of need on the part of the party seeking the information”);  
15 *Ellsberg*, 709 F.2d at 57 (“When properly invoked, the state secrets privilege is absolute. No  
16 competing public or private interest can be advanced to compel disclosure of information found  
17 to be protected by a claim of privilege.”). The court may consider the necessity of the  
18 information to the case only in connection with assessing the sufficiency of the Government’s  
19 showing that there is a reasonable danger that disclosure of the information at issue would harm  
20 national security. “[T]he more plausible and substantial the Government’s allegations of danger  
21 to national security, in the context of all the circumstances surrounding the case, the more  
22 deferential should be the judge’s inquiry into the foundations and scope of the claim.” *Id.* at 59.

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25  
26 Where there is a strong showing of necessity, the claim of privilege should not be  
27 lightly accepted, but even the most compelling necessity cannot overcome the  
28 claim of privilege if the court is ultimately satisfied that military secrets are at  
stake.

1 *Reynolds*, 345 U.S. at 11; *Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1166.

2 (U) Judicial review of whether the claim of privilege has been properly asserted and  
3 supported does not require the submission of classified information to the court for *in camera*, *ex*  
4 *parte* review. In particular, where it is possible to satisfy the court, from all the circumstances of  
5 the case, that there is a reasonable danger that compulsion of the evidence will expose state  
6 secrets which, in the interest of national security, should not be divulged, “the occasion for the  
7 privilege is appropriate, and the court should not jeopardize the security which the privilege is  
8 meant to protect by insisting upon an examination of the evidence, even by the judge alone, in  
9 chambers.” *Reynolds*, 345 U.S. at 8. Indeed, one court has observed that *in camera*, *ex parte*  
10 review itself may not be “entirely safe.”  
11

12  
13 It is not to slight judges, lawyers or anyone else to suggest that any such  
14 disclosure carries with it serious risk that highly sensitive information may be  
15 compromised. In our own chambers, we are ill equipped to provide the kind of  
16 security highly sensitive information should have.

17 *Clift v. United States*, 597 F.2d 826, 829 (2d Cir. 1979) (quoting *Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. v. Colby*,  
18 509 F.2d 1362, 1369 (4th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 421 U.S. 992 (1975)).

19 (U) Nonetheless, the submission of classified declarations for *in camera*, *ex parte* review  
20 is “unexceptional” in cases where the state secrets privilege is invoked. *Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1169  
21 (citing *Black v. United States*, 62 F.3d 1115 (8th Cir. 1995), *cert. denied*, 517 U.S. 1154 (1996));  
22 *see Zuckerbraun v. General Dynamics Corp.*, 935 F.2d 544 (2d Cir. 1991); *Fitzgerald v.*  
23 *Penthouse Int’l, Ltd.*, 776 F.2d 1236 (4th Cir. 1985); *Molerio v. FBI*, 749 F.2d 815, 819, 822  
24 (D.C. Cir. 1984); *Farnsworth Cannon, Inc. v. Grimes*, 635 F.2d 268, 281 (4th Cir. 1980) (en  
25 banc); *see also, e.g., In re United States*, 872 F.2d at 474 (classified declaration of assistant  
26 director of the FBI’s Intelligence Division submitted for *in camera* review in support of Attorney  
27  
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1 General's formal invocation of state secrets privilege).

2 **II. (U) THE UNITED STATES PROPERLY HAS ASSERTED THE STATE**  
3 **SECRETS PRIVILEGE AND ITS CLAIM OF PRIVILEGE SHOULD BE**  
4 **UPHELD.**

5 **A. (U) The United States Properly Has Asserted the State Secrets**  
6 **Privilege.**

7 (U) It cannot be disputed that the United States properly has asserted the state secrets  
8 privilege in this case. The Director of National Intelligence, who bears statutory authority as  
9 head of the United States Intelligence Community to protect intelligence sources and methods,  
10 *see* 50 U.S.C. § 403-1(i)(1), has formally asserted the state secrets privilege after personal  
11 consideration of the matter. *See Reynolds*, 345 U.S. at 7-8.<sup>5</sup> DNI Negroponte has submitted an  
12 unclassified declaration and an *in camera*, *ex parte* classified declaration, both of which state that  
13 the disclosure of the intelligence information, sources, and methods described herein would  
14 cause exceptionally grave harm to the national security of the United States. *See Public and In*  
15 *Camera, Ex Parte* Declarations of John D. Negroponte, Director of National Intelligence. Based  
16 on this assertion of privilege by the head of the United States intelligence community, the  
17 Government's claim of privilege has been properly lodged.

18  
19 **B. (U) The United States Has Demonstrated that There is a Reasonable Danger**  
20 **that Disclosure of the Intelligence Information, Sources, and Methods**  
21 **Implicated by Plaintiffs' Claims Would Harm the National Security of the**  
22 **United States.**

23 (U) The United States also has demonstrated that there is a reasonable danger that  
24 disclosure of the information subject to the state secrets privilege would harm U.S. national  
25 security. *Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1170. While "the Government need not demonstrate that injury to  
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27

28 <sup>5</sup> (U) *See* 50 U.S.C. § 401a(4) (including the National Security Agency is included in the  
United States "Intelligence Community").

1 the national interest will inevitably result from disclosure," *Ellsberg, supra*, 709 F.2d at 58, the  
2 showing made here is more than reasonable, and highly compelling.

3 (U) DNI Negroonte, supported by the *Ex Parte, In Camera* Declaration of General  
4 Alexander, has asserted the state secrets privilege and demonstrated the exceptional harm that  
5 would be caused to U.S. national security interests by disclosure of each of the following the  
6 categories of privileged information at issue in this case.  
7

8 **[REDACTED TEXT]**

9 (U) Each of the foregoing categories of information is subject to DNI Negroonte's state  
10 secrets privilege claim, and he and General Alexander have amply demonstrated a reasoned basis  
11 that disclosure of this information would cause exceptionally grave damage to the national  
12 security and, therefore, that this information should be excluded from this case.  
13

14 **C. (U) Statutory Privilege Claims Have Also Been Properly Raised in This Case.**

15 (U) Two statutory protections also apply to the intelligence-related information, sources  
16 and methods described herein, and both have been properly invoked here as well. First, Section  
17 6 of the National Security Agency Act of 1959, Pub. L. No. 86-36, § 6, 73 Stat. 63, 64, codified  
18 at 50 U.S.C. § 402 note, provides:  
19

20 [N]othing in this Act or any other law . . . shall be construed to require the  
21 disclosure of the organization or any function of the National Security Agency,  
22 of any information with respect to the activities thereof, or of the names, titles,  
23 salaries, or number of persons employed by such agency.

24 *Id.* Section 6 reflects a "congressional judgment that in order to preserve national security,  
25 information elucidating the subjects specified ought to be safe from forced exposure." *The*  
26 *Founding Church of Scientology of Washington, D.C., Inc. v. Nat'l Security Agency*, 610 F.2d  
27 824, 828 (D.C. Cir. 1979); *accord Hayden v. Nat'l Security Agency*, 608 F.2d 1381, 1389 (D.C.  
28 Cir. 1979). In enacting Section 6, Congress was "fully aware of the 'unique and sensitive'

1 activities of the [NSA] which require ‘extreme security measures.’” *Hayden*, 608 F.2d at 1390  
2 (citing legislative history). Thus, “[t]he protection afforded by section 6 is, by its very terms,  
3 absolute. If a document is covered by section 6, NSA is entitled to withhold it. . . .” *Linder v.*  
4 *Nat’l Security Agency*, 94 F.3d 693, 698 (D.C. Cir. 1996).

5 (U) The second applicable statute is Section 102A(i)(1) of the Intelligence Reform and  
6 Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-458, 118 Stat. 3638 (Dec. 17, 2004), codified  
7 at 50 U.S.C. § 403-1(i)(1). This statute requires the Director of National Intelligence to “protect  
8 intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure. The authority to protect  
9 intelligence sources and methods from disclosure is rooted in the “practical necessities of  
10 modern intelligence gathering,” *Fitzgibbon v. CIA*, 911 F.2d 755, 761 (D.C. Cir. 1990), and has  
11 been described by the Supreme Court as both “sweeping,” *CIA v. Sims*, 471 U.S. 159, 169  
12 (1985), and “wideranging.” *Snepp v. United States*, 444 U.S. 507, 509 (1980). Sources and  
13 methods constitute “the heart of all intelligence operations,” *Sims*, 471 U.S. at 167, and “[i]t is  
14 the responsibility of the [intelligence community], not that of the judiciary to weigh the variety  
15 of complex and subtle factors in determining whether disclosure of information may lead to an  
16 unacceptable risk of compromising the . . . intelligence-gathering process.” *Id.* at 180.

17 (U) These statutory privileges have been properly asserted as to any intelligence-related  
18 information, sources and methods implicated by Plaintiffs’ claims and the information covered  
19 by these privilege claims are at least co-extensive with the assertion of the state secrets privilege  
20 by the DNI. *See* Public Declaration of John D. Negroponte, Director of National Intelligence,  
21 and Public Declaration of Keith T. Alexander, Director of the National Security Agency.

22 **III. (U) THE STATE SECRETS PRIVILEGE REQUIRES DISMISSAL OF THIS**  
23 **ACTION.**

24 (U) Once the court has upheld a claim of the state secrets privilege, the evidence and  
25

1 information identified in the privilege assertion is removed from the case, and the Court must  
2 undertake a separate inquiry to determine the consequences of this exclusion on further  
3 proceedings.

4 (U) If “the ‘very subject matter of the action’ is a state secret, then the court should  
5 dismiss the plaintiff’s action based solely on the invocation of the state secrets privilege.” *Kasza*,  
6 133 F.3d at 1166 (citing *Reynolds*, 345 U.S. at 11 n. 26); *see also Totten v. United States*, 92 U.S.  
7 (2 Otto) 105, 107, 23 L.Ed. 605 (1875) (“[P]ublic policy forbids the maintenance of any suit in a  
8 court of justice, the trial of which would inevitably lead to the disclosure of matters which the  
9 law itself regards as confidential, and respecting which it will not allow the confidence to be  
10 violated.”); *Weston v. Lockheed Missiles & Space Co.*, 881 F.2d 814, 816 (9th Cir. 1989)  
11 (recognizing that state secrets privilege alone can be the basis of dismissal of a suit). In such  
12 cases, “sensitive military secrets will be so central to the subject matter of the litigation that any  
13 attempt to proceed will threaten disclosure of the privileged matters.” *Fitzgerald*, 776 F.2d at  
14 1241-42. *See also Maxwell v. First National Bank of Maryland*, 143 F.R.D. 590, 598-99 (D. Md.  
15 1992); *Edmonds v. U.S. Department of Justice*, 323 F. Supp. 2d 65, 77-82 (D.D.C. 2004), *aff’d*,  
16 161 Fed. Appx. 6, 045286 (D.C. Cir. May 6, 2005) (*per curiam* judgment), *cert. denied*, 126 S.  
17 Ct. 734 (2005); *Tilden*, 140 F. Supp. 2d at 626.

21 (U) Even if the very subject matter of an action is not a state secret, if the plaintiff cannot  
22 make out a prima facie case in support of its claims absent the excluded state secrets, the case  
23 must be dismissed. *See Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1166; *Halkin II*, 690 F.2d at 998-99; *Fitzgerald*, 776  
24 F.2d at 1240-41. And if the privilege “deprives the *defendant* of information that would  
25 otherwise give the defendant a valid defense to the claim, then the court may grant summary  
26 judgment to the defendant.” *Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1166 (quoting *Bareford v. General Dynamics*  
27  
28

1 *Corp.*, 973 F.2d 1138, 1141 (5th Cir. 1992)); *see also Molerio v. FBI*, 749 F.2d 815, 825 (D.C.  
2 Cir. 1984) (granting summary judgment where state secrets privilege precluded the Government  
3 from using a valid defense).

4 [REDACTED TEXT]

5 **A. (U) Further Litigation Would Inevitably Risk the Disclosure of State Secrets.**

6 [REDACTED TEXT]

7  
8 **B. (U) Information Subject to the State Secrets Privilege is  
9 Necessary to Adjudicate Plaintiffs' Claims.**

10 (U) Beyond the foregoing concerns, it should also be apparent that any attempt to litigate  
11 the merits of the Plaintiffs' claims will require the disclosure of information covered by the state  
12 secrets assertion. Adjudicating each claim in the Amended Complaint would require  
13 confirmation or denial of the existence, scope, and potential targets of alleged intelligence  
14 activities, as well as AT&T's alleged involvement in such activities. Because such information  
15 cannot be confirmed or denied without causing exceptionally grave damage to the national  
16 security, every step in this case—either for Plaintiffs to prove their claims, for Defendants to  
17 defend them, or for the United States to represent its interests—runs into privileged information.  
18

19  
20 **1. (U) Plaintiffs Cannot Establish Standing**

21 (U) As a result of the Government's state secrets assertion, Plaintiffs will not be able to  
22 prove that they have standing to litigate their claims. Plaintiffs, of course, bear the burden of  
23 establishing standing and must, at an "irreducible constitutional minimum," demonstrate (1) an  
24 injury-in-fact, (2) a causal connection between the injury and the conduct complained of, and (3)  
25 a likelihood that the injury will be redressed by a favorable decision. *Lujan v. Defenders of*  
26 *Wildlife*, 504 U.S. 555, 560-61 (1992). In meeting that burden, the named Plaintiffs must  
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28

1 demonstrate an actual or imminent—not speculative or hypothetical—injury that is particularized  
2 as to them; they cannot rely on alleged injuries to unnamed members of a purported class.<sup>6</sup>  
3 Moreover, to obtain prospective relief, Plaintiffs must show that they are “immediately in danger  
4 of sustaining some direct injury” as the result of the challenged conduct. *City of Los Angeles v.*  
5 *Lyons*, 461 U.S. 95, 102 (1983); *O’Shea v. Littleton*, 414 U.S. 488, 495-96 (1974).<sup>7</sup> In addition  
6 to the constitutional requirements of Article III, Plaintiffs must also satisfy prudential standing  
7 requirements, including that they “assert [their] own legal interests rather than those of third  
8 parties,” *Phillips Petroleum Co. v. Shutts*, 472 U.S. 797, 804 (1985), and that their claim not be a  
9 “generalized grievance” shared in substantially equal measure by all or a large class of citizens.  
10  
11 *Warth v. Seldin*, 422 U.S. 499 (1975).

12  
13 (U) Plaintiffs cannot prove these elements without information covered by the state  
14 secrets assertion.<sup>8</sup> The Government’s privilege assertion covers any information tending to  
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16 <sup>6</sup> (U) See, e.g., *Warth v. Seldin*, 422 U.S. 490, 502 (1975) (the named plaintiffs in an  
17 action “must allege and show that they personally have been injured, not that injury has been  
18 suffered by other, unidentified members of the class to which they belong and which they  
19 purport to represent”).

20 <sup>7</sup> (U) Standing requirements demand the “strictest adherence” when, like here,  
21 constitutional questions are presented and “matters of great national significance are at stake.”  
22 *Elk Grove Unified Sch. Dist. v. Newdow*, 542 U.S. 1, 11 (2004); see also *Raines v. Byrd*, 521  
23 U.S. 811, 819-20 (1997) (“[O]ur standing inquiry has been especially rigorous when reaching the  
24 merits of the dispute would force us to decide whether an action taken by one of the other two  
25 branches of the Federal Government was unconstitutional.”); *Schlesinger v. Reservists Comm. to*  
26 *Stop the War*, 418 U.S. 208, 221 (1974) (“[W]hen a court is asked to undertake constitutional  
27 adjudication, the most important and delicate of its responsibilities, the requirement of concrete  
28 injury further serves the function of insuring that such adjudication does not take place  
unnecessarily.”).

29 <sup>8</sup> (U) The focus herein is on Plaintiffs’ inability to prove standing because it is their  
30 burden to demonstrate jurisdiction. See *Lujan*, 504 U.S. at 561. Dismissal of this action,  
31 however, is also required for the equally important reason that AT&T and the Government  
32 would not be able to present any evidence disproving standing on any claim without revealing  
33 information covered by the state secrets privilege assertion (e.g., whether or not a particular  
34 person’s communications were intercepted). See *Halkin I*, 598 F.2d at 11 (rejecting plaintiffs’

1 confirm or deny (a) the alleged intelligence activities, (b) whether AT&T was involved with any  
2 such activity, and (c) whether a particular individual's communications were intercepted as a  
3 result of any such activity. See Public Declaration of John D. Negroponte. Without these  
4 facts—which should be removed from the case as a result of the state secrets assertion—  
5 Plaintiffs cannot establish any alleged injury that is fairly traceable to AT&T. Thus, regardless  
6 of whether they adequately allege such facts, Plaintiffs ultimately will not be able to prove  
7 injury-in-fact or causation.<sup>9</sup>

8  
9 (U) In such circumstances, courts have held that the assertion of the state secrets privilege  
10 requires dismissal of the case. In *Halkin I*, for example, a number of individuals and  
11 organizations claimed that they were subject to unlawful surveillance by the NSA and CIA  
12 (among other agencies) due to their opposition to the Vietnam War. See 598 F.2d at 3. The D.C.  
13

14  
15 argument that the acquisition of a plaintiff's communications may be presumed from the  
16 existence of a name on a watchlist, because "such a presumption would be unfair to the  
individual defendants who would have no way to rebut it").

17 <sup>9</sup> (U) To the extent Plaintiffs challenge the TSP, see, e.g., Am. Compl. 32-37, their  
18 allegations are insufficient on their face to establish standing even apart from the state secrets  
19 issue because Plaintiffs fail to demonstrate that they fall anywhere near the scope of that  
20 program. Plaintiffs do not claim to be, or to communicate with, members or affiliates of al  
21 Qaeda—indeed, Plaintiffs expressly *exclude* from their purported class any foreign powers or  
22 agents of foreign powers, "including without limitation anyone who knowingly engages in  
23 sabotage or international terrorism, or activities that are in preparation therefore." Am. Compl.  
24 ¶ 70. The named Plaintiffs thus are in no different position from any other citizen or AT&T  
25 subscriber who falls *outside* the narrow scope of the TSP but nonetheless disagrees with the  
26 program. Such a generalized grievance is clearly insufficient to support either constitutional or  
27 prudential standing to challenge the TSP. See *Halkin II*, 690 F.2d at 1001-03 (holding that  
28 individuals and organizations opposed to the Vietnam War lacked standing to challenge  
intelligence activities because they did not adequately allege that they were (or immediately  
would be) subject to such activities; thus, their claims were "nothing more than a generalized  
grievance against the intelligence-gathering methods sanctioned by the President") (internal  
quotation marks and citation omitted); *United Presbyterian Church v. Reagan*, 738 F.2d 1375,  
1380 (D.C. Cir. 1984) (rejecting generalized challenge to alleged unlawful surveillance). To the  
extent Plaintiffs allege classified intelligence activities beyond the TSP, Plaintiffs could not  
prove such allegations in light of the state secrets assertion.

1 Circuit upheld an assertion of the state secrets privilege regarding the identities of individuals  
2 subject to NSA surveillance, rejecting the plaintiffs' argument that the privilege could not extend  
3 to the "mere fact of interception," *id.* at 8, and despite significant public disclosures about the  
4 surveillance activities at issue, *id.* at 10.<sup>10</sup> A similar state secrets assertion with respect to the  
5 identities of individuals subject to CIA surveillance was upheld in *Halkin II*. See 690 F.2d at  
6 991. As a result of these privilege assertions in both *Halkin I* and *Halkin II*, the D.C. Circuit held  
7 that the plaintiffs were incapable of demonstrating that they had standing to challenge the alleged  
8 surveillance. See *id.* at 997.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, the court held that the fact of such surveillance  
9 could not be proven even if the CIA had actually requested NSA to intercept the plaintiffs'  
10 communications by including their names on a "watchlist" sent to NSA—a fact which was not  
11 covered by the state secrets assertion in that case. See *id.* at 999-1000 ("[T]he absence of proof  
12 of actual acquisition of appellants' communications is fatal to their watchlisting claims."). The  
13 court thus found dismissal warranted, even though the complaint alleged actual interception of  
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16

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17 <sup>10</sup> (U) As the court of appeals recognized, the "identification of the individuals or  
18 organizations whose communications have or have not been acquired presents a reasonable  
19 danger that state secrets would be revealed . . . [and] can be useful information to a sophisticated  
intelligence analyst." *Halkin I*, 598 F.2d at 9.

20 <sup>11</sup> (U) See *Halkin II*, 690 F.2d at 998 ("We hold that appellants' inability to adduce proof  
21 of actual acquisition of their communications now prevents them from stating a cognizable claim  
22 in the federal courts. In particular, we find appellants incapable of making the showing  
23 necessary to establish their standing to seek relief."); *id.* at 997 (quoting district court's ruling  
24 that "plaintiffs cannot show any injury from having their names submitted to NSA because NSA  
25 is prohibited from disclosing whether it acquired any of plaintiffs' communications"); *id.* at 990  
26 ("Without access to the facts about the identities of particular plaintiffs who were subjected to  
27 CIA surveillance (or to NSA interception at the instance of the CIA), direct injury in fact to any  
28 of the plaintiffs would not have been susceptible of proof."); *id.* at 987 ("Without access to  
documents identifying either the subjects of . . . surveillance or the types of surveillance used  
against particular plaintiffs, the likelihood of establishing injury in fact, causation by the  
defendants, violations of substantive constitutional provisions, or the quantum of damages was  
clearly minimal."); *Halkin I*, 598 F.2d at 7 ("[T]he acquisition of the plaintiffs' communication is  
a fact vital to their claim," and "[n]o amount of ingenuity of counsel . . . can outflank the  
Government's objection that disclosure of this fact is protected by privilege.").

1 plaintiffs' communications, because the plaintiffs' alleged injuries could be no more than  
2 speculative in the absence of their ability to prove that such interception occurred. *Id.* at 999,  
3 1001.<sup>12</sup>

4 (U) Similarly, in *Ellsberg v. Mitchell*, 709 F.2d 51 (D.C. Cir. 1983), a group of  
5 individuals filed suit after learning during the course of the "Pentagon Papers" criminal  
6 proceedings that one or more of them had been subject to warrantless electronic surveillance.  
7 Although two such wiretaps were admitted, the Attorney General asserted the state secrets  
8 privilege, refusing to disclose to the plaintiffs whether any other such surveillance occurred. *See*  
9 *id.* at 53-54. As a result of the privilege assertion, the court upheld the district court's dismissal  
10 of the claims brought by the plaintiffs the Government had not admitted overhearing, because  
11 those plaintiffs could not prove actual injury. *See id.* at 65.

12 (U) The same result is required here. In light of the state secrets assertion, Plaintiffs  
13 cannot prove that their communications were intercepted or disclosed by AT&T, and thus they  
14 cannot meet their burden to establish standing. Accordingly, like other similar cases before it,  
15 this action must be dismissed.<sup>13</sup>

16  
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19  
20 <sup>12</sup> (U) Because the CIA conceded that nine plaintiffs were subjected to certain types of  
21 non-NSA surveillance, the D.C. Circuit held that those plaintiffs had demonstrated an injury-in-  
22 fact. *See Halkin II*, 690 F.2d at 1003. Nonetheless, the nine plaintiffs were precluded from  
23 seeking injunctive and declaratory relief because they could not demonstrate the likelihood of  
24 future injury or a live controversy in light of the fact that the CIA had terminated the specific  
25 intelligence methods at issue. *See id.* at 1005-09.

26 <sup>13</sup> (U) Plaintiffs cannot overcome this fundamental standing bar simply by alleging that  
27 their speech has been chilled as the result of their own subjective fear of Government  
28 surveillance. *See Plaintiffs' Memorandum of Points and Authorities in Support of Motion for  
Preliminary Injunction* at 25. Specifics about this alleged chilling effect are provided with  
respect to only one plaintiff, Carolyn Jewel, who claims that she has refrained from responding  
openly about Islam or U.S. foreign policy in e-mails to a Muslim individual in Indonesia, and  
that she has decided against using the Internet to conduct certain research for her action and  
futuristic romance novels. *See id.* at 26. Plaintiffs offer no explanation as to how this admitted

1 [REDACTED TEXT]

2 2. (U) Plaintiffs' Statutory Claims Cannot Be  
3 Proven or Defended Without State Secrets.

4 [REDACTED TEXT]

5 (U) To prove their FISA claim (as alleged in Count I), Plaintiffs would have to show that  
6 AT&T intentionally acquired, under color of law and by means of a surveillance device within  
7 the United States, the contents of one or more wire communications to or from Plaintiffs. *See*  
8 *Am Compl.* ¶¶ 93–94; 50 U.S.C. §§ 1801(f), 1809, 1810. Likewise, to prove their claim under  
9 18 U.S.C. § 2511 (as alleged in Count III), Plaintiffs would have to demonstrate that AT&T  
10 intentionally intercepted, disclosed, used, and/or divulged the contents of Plaintiffs' wire or  
11 electronic communications. *See Am. Compl.* ¶¶ 102–07. Plaintiffs' claims under 47 U.S.C.  
12 § 605, 18 U.S.C. § 2702, and Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200, *et seq.*, all require similar proof:  
13 the acquisition and/or disclosure of Plaintiffs' communications and related information. Any  
14 information tending to confirm or deny the alleged activities, or any alleged AT&T involvement,  
15 is subject to the state secrets privilege.  
16

17  
18 (U) In addition to proving actual interception or disclosure to the NSA of their  
19 communications, Plaintiffs must also prove, for each of their statutory claims, that any alleged  
20 interception or disclosure was not authorized by the Government. In particular, 18 U.S.C.  
21 § 2511(2)(a)(ii) provides:  
22

23  
24 “self-censorship” makes any sense in light of the acknowledged limitation of the TSP to  
25 international communications actually conducted by al Qaeda-affiliated individuals, as opposed  
26 to a mass targeting of particular *topics* of conversation or research. *Id.* In any event, Plaintiffs'  
27 claim of a chilling effect is foreclosed by *Laird v. Tatum*, 408 U.S. 1 (1972), which squarely  
28 rejected the assertion of a subjective chill caused by the mere existence of an intelligence  
program as a basis to challenge that program. *See* 408 U.S. at 13-14 (“Allegations of a  
subjective chill are not an adequate substitute for a claim of specific present objective harm or a  
threat of specific future harm.”) (internal quotation marks omitted).

1 Notwithstanding any other law, providers of wire or electronic communication  
2 service, their officers, employees, and agents, landlords, custodians, or other  
3 persons, are authorized to provide information, facilities, or technical assistance to  
4 persons authorized by law to intercept wire, oral, or electronic communications or  
5 to conduct electronic surveillance, as defined in section 101 of the Foreign  
6 Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, if such provider, its officers, employees, or  
7 agents, landlord, custodian, or other specified person, has been provided with—  
8 (A) a court order directing such assistance signed by the authorizing judge, or  
9 (B) a certification in writing by a person specified in section 2518(7) of this title or  
10 the Attorney General of the United States that no warrant or court order is  
11 required by law, that all statutory requirements have been met, and that the  
12 specified assistance is required.

13 (U) If a court order or Government certification is provided, the telecommunications  
14 provider is absolutely immune from liability in any case:

15 No cause of action shall lie in any court against any provider of wire or electronic  
16 communication service, its officers, employees, or agents, landlord, custodian, or  
17 other specified person for providing information, facilities, or assistance in  
18 accordance with the terms of a court order or certification under this chapter.

19 18 U.S.C. § 2511(2)(a)(ii).<sup>14</sup>

20 (U) As AT&T has correctly explained, the absence of a court order or Government  
21 certification under section 2511(2)(a)(ii) is an element of Plaintiffs' claims. *See* AT&T's Motion  
22 to Dismiss Amended Complaint at 7-8. Thus, Plaintiffs bear the burden of alleging and proving  
23 the lack of such authorization. *See* Senate Report No. 99-541, reprinted in 1986 U.S.C.C.A.N.  
24 3555, 3580 (1986) (stating that a plaintiff "must allege" the absence of a court order or  
25 certification; otherwise "the defendant can move to dismiss the complaint for failure to state a  
26 claim upon which relief can be granted"). Notably, Plaintiffs fail to meet that burden on the face  
27 of their pleadings; they do not specifically allege that AT&T, if it assisted with any alleged

28 <sup>14</sup> (U) *See also, e.g.*, 18 U.S.C. § 2703(e) (same); 50 U.S.C. § 1809 (prohibiting  
electronic surveillance under color of law "except as authorized by statute"); 18 U.S.C.  
§ 2511 (prohibiting intercepts "[e]xcept as otherwise specifically provided in this chapter").

1 activity, acted without Government authorization. This action may be dismissed on that basis  
2 alone. *See* AT&T's Motion to Dismiss Amended Complaint at 7-8. But even if Plaintiffs  
3 speculated and alleged the absence of section 2511(2)(a)(ii) authorization, they could not meet  
4 their burden of proof on the issue because information confirming or denying AT&T's  
5 involvement in alleged intelligence activities is covered by the state secrets assertion.  
6

7 **[REDACTED TEXT]**

8 **3. (U) Plaintiffs' Fourth Amendment Claim Cannot Be Adjudicated**  
9 **Without State Secrets**

10 (U) Plaintiffs' Fourth Amendment claim also cannot be proven or defended without  
11 information covered by the state secrets assertion. Specifically, Plaintiffs allege that they have a  
12 reasonable expectation of privacy in the contents of, and records pertaining to, their  
13 communications, and that their rights were violated when AT&T allegedly intercepted or  
14 disclosed such communications and records at the instigation of the Government and without  
15 lawful authorization. *See* Am. Compl. ¶¶ 78-89.  
16

17 (U) In their preliminary injunction motion, which is focused on Internet communications,  
18 Plaintiffs further claim that, "[a]s an agent of the Government," AT&T is engaged in "wholesale  
19 copying of vast amounts of communications carried by its WorldNet Internet service." *Pls.*  
20 *Prelim. Inj. Mem.* at 25. Plaintiffs assert that the alleged surveillance violates the Fourth  
21 Amendment because it involves "an automated 'rummaging' through the millions of private  
22 communications passing over AT&T's fiber optic network at the discretion of NSA staff." *See*  
23 *id.* at 27. Plaintiffs simply assume that a warrant is required for any and all of the surveillance  
24 activities alleged in their Complaint. *See id.*  
25  
26

27 **[REDACTED TEXT]**

28 (U) The requirement of a warrant supported by probable cause is not universal but turns

1 on the particular circumstances at issue. The Supreme Court has made clear that, while a search  
2 must be supported, as a general matter, by a warrant issued upon probable cause, it has  
3 repeatedly “reaffirm[ed] a longstanding principle that neither a warrant nor probable cause, nor,  
4 indeed, any measure of individualized suspicion, is an indispensable component of  
5 reasonableness in every circumstance.” *National Treasury Employees Union v. Von Raab*, 489  
6 U.S. 656, 665 (1989).

8 (U) For example, both before and after the enactment of the Foreign Intelligence  
9 Surveillance Act, every federal appellate court to consider the issue has concluded that, even in  
10 peacetime, the President has inherent constitutional authority, consistent with the Fourth  
11 Amendment, to conduct searches for foreign intelligence purposes without securing a judicial  
12 warrant. *See In re Sealed Case*, 310 F.3d 717, 742 (Foreign Intel. Surv. Ct. of Rev. 2002) (“[A]ll  
13 the other courts to have decided the issue [have] held that the President did have inherent  
14 authority to conduct warrantless searches to obtain foreign intelligence information . . . . *We take*  
15 *for granted that the President does have that authority and, assuming that is so, FISA could not*  
16 *encroach on the President’s constitutional power.”) (emphasis added); accord, e.g., *United*  
17 *States v. Truong Dinh Hung*, 629 F.2d 908 (4th Cir. 1980); *United States v. Butenko*, 494 F.2d  
18 593 (3d Cir. 1974) (en banc); *United States v. Brown*, 484 F.2d 418 (5th Cir. 1973). *But cf.*  
19 *Zweibon v. Mitchell*, 516 F.2d 594 (D.C. Cir. 1975) (en banc) (dictum in plurality opinion  
20 suggesting that a warrant would be required even in a foreign intelligence investigation).*

21 (U) In *United States v. United States District Court*, 407 U.S. 297 (1972) (“*Keith*”), the  
22 Supreme Court concluded that the Fourth Amendment’s warrant requirement applies to  
23 investigations of wholly *domestic* threats to security—such as domestic political violence and  
24 other crimes. But the Court made clear that it was not addressing the President’s authority to  
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28

1 conduct *foreign* intelligence surveillance (even within the United States) without a warrant and  
 2 that it was expressly reserving that question: “[T]he instant case requires no judgment on the  
 3 scope of the President’s surveillance power with respect to the activities of foreign powers,  
 4 within or without this country.” *Id.* at 308; *see also id.* at 321-22 & n.20 (“We have not  
 5 addressed, and express no opinion as to, the issues which may be involved with respect to  
 6 activities of foreign powers or their agents.”).<sup>15</sup> That *Keith* does not apply in the context of  
 7 protecting against a foreign attack has been confirmed by the lower courts. After *Keith*, each of  
 8 the three courts of appeals that have squarely considered the question has concluded—expressly  
 9 taking the Supreme Court’s decision into account—that the President has inherent authority to  
 10 conduct warrantless surveillance in the foreign intelligence context. *See, e.g., Truong Dinh*  
 11 *Hung*, 629 F.2d at 913-14; *Butenko*, 494 F.2d at 603; *Brown*, 484 F.2d 425-26. As one court put  
 12 it:  
 13  
 14

15 [F]oreign intelligence gathering is a clandestine and highly unstructured activity,  
 16 and the need for electronic surveillance often cannot be anticipated in advance.  
 17 Certainly occasions arise when officers, acting under the President’s authority, are  
 18 seeking foreign intelligence information, where exigent circumstances would  
 19 excuse a warrant. To demand that such officers be so sensitive to the nuances of  
 20 complex situations that they must interrupt their activities and rush to the nearest  
 21 available magistrate to seek a warrant would seriously fetter the Executive in the  
 22 performance of his foreign affairs duties.

21 <sup>15</sup> (U) *Keith* made clear that one of the significant concerns driving the Court’s  
 22 conclusion in the domestic security context was the inevitable connection between perceived  
 23 threats to domestic security and political dissent. As the Court explained: “Fourth Amendment  
 24 protections become the more necessary when the targets of official surveillance may be those  
 25 suspected of unorthodoxy in their political beliefs. The danger to political dissent is acute where  
 26 the Government attempts to act under so vague a concept as the power to protect ‘domestic  
 27 security.’” *Keith*, 407 U.S. at 314; *see also id.* at 320 (“Security surveillances are especially  
 28 sensitive because of the inherent vagueness of the domestic security concept, the necessarily  
 broad and continuing nature of intelligence gathering, and the temptation to utilize such  
 surveillances to oversee political dissent.”). Surveillance of domestic groups raises a First  
 Amendment concern that generally is not present when the subjects of the surveillance are  
 foreign powers or their agents.

1 *Butenko*, 494 F.2d 605.

2  
3 (U) Beyond this, the Supreme Court has held that the warrant requirement is inapplicable  
4 in situations involving “special needs” that go beyond a routine interest in law enforcement.  
5 *Vernonia Sch. Dist. v. Acton*, 515 U.S. 646, 653 (1995) (there are circumstances ““when special  
6 needs, beyond the normal need for law enforcement, make the warrant and probable-cause  
7 requirement impracticable””) (quoting *Griffin v. Wisconsin*, 483 U.S. 868, 873 (1987)); *Illinois v.*  
8 *McArthur*, 531 U.S. 326, 330 (2001) (“When faced with special law enforcement needs,  
9 diminished expectations of privacy, minimal intrusions, or the like, the Court has found that  
10 certain general, or individual, circumstances may render a warrantless search or seizure  
11 reasonable.”). One application in which the Court has found the warrant requirement  
12 inapplicable is in circumstances in which the Government faces an increased need to be able to  
13 react swiftly and flexibly, or interests in public safety beyond the interests in ordinary law  
14 enforcement are at stake. *See, e.g., Skinner v. Railway Labor Executives’ Ass’n*, 489 U.S. 602,  
15 634 (1989) (drug testing of railroad personnel involved in train accidents). As should be  
16 apparent, demonstrating that this body of law applies to a particular case requires reference to  
17 specific facts.  
18  
19  
20

21 [REDACTED TEXT]

22 (U) Beyond the warrant requirement, analysis of Plaintiffs’ Fourth Amendment claim  
23 requires a fact-intensive inquiry regarding whether a particular search satisfies the Fourth  
24 Amendment’s “central requirement . . . of reasonableness.” *McArthur*, 531 U.S. at 330; *see also*  
25 *Board of Educ. v. Earls*, 536 U.S. 822, 828 (2002). What is reasonable, of course, “depends on  
26 all of the circumstances surrounding the search or seizure and the nature of the search or seizure  
27  
28

1 itself.” *United States v. Montoya de Hernandez*, 473 U.S. 531, 537 (1985). Thus, the  
2 permissibility of a particular practice “is judged by balancing its intrusion on the individual’s  
3 Fourth Amendment interests against its promotion of legitimate Governmental interests.”  
4 *Delaware v. Prouse*, 440 U.S. 648, 654 (1979).

5 [REDACTED TEXT]

6  
7 (U) Indeed, in specifically addressing a Fourth Amendment challenge to warrantless  
8 electronic surveillance, the court in *Halkin II* observed that “the focus of the proceedings would  
9 necessarily be upon ‘the “reasonableness” of the search and seizure in question.’” 690 F.2d at  
10 1001 (citing *Keith*, 407 U.S. at 308). “The valid claim of the state secrets privilege makes  
11 consideration of that question impossible.” *Id.* Without evidence of the detailed circumstances  
12 in which alleged surveillance activities were being conducted—that is, without “the essential  
13 information on which the legality of executive action (in foreign intelligence surveillance)  
14 turns”—the court in *Halkin II* held that “it would be inappropriate to resolve the extremely  
15 difficult and important fourth amendment issue presented.” *Id.*<sup>16</sup> This holding fully applies here.

16  
17 [REDACTED TEXT]

18  
19 (U) None of these issues can be decided on the limited, incomplete public record of what  
20 has been disclosed about the Terrorist Surveillance Program. Any effort to determine the  
21 reasonableness of allegedly warrantless foreign intelligence activities under such conditions  
22 “would be tantamount to the issuance of an advisory opinion on the question.” *Halkin II*, 690  
23 F.2d at 1001 (citing *Chagnon v. Bell*, 642 F.2d 1248, 1263 (D.C. Cir. 1980)). In sum, the  
24

25  
26  
27 <sup>16</sup> (U) See also *Halkin II*, 690 F.2d at 1000 (“Determining the reasonableness of  
28 warrantless foreign intelligence watchlisting under conditions of such informational poverty [due  
to the state secrets assertion] . . . would be tantamount to the issuance of an advisory opinion on  
the question.”).

1 lawfulness of the alleged activities cannot be determined without a full factual record, and that  
2 record cannot be made in civil litigation without seriously compromising U.S. national security  
3 interests.

4 **4. (U) Whether Alleged Surveillance Activities Are Properly Authorized**  
5 **by Law Cannot be Resolved without State Secrets.**

6 (U) Finally, in addition to all of the foregoing issues that could not be litigated  
7 without the disclosure of state secrets, adjudication of whether the alleged surveillance activities  
8 have been conducted within lawful authority cannot be resolved without state secrets. Plaintiffs  
9 allege "that the Program's surveillance has been conducted without Court orders" for several  
10 years, and that it involves "the wholesale, long-term interception of customer communications  
11 seen here." Pls. Prelim. Inj. Mem. at 20. Plaintiffs also seek to address whether the Government  
12 certified to AT&T, pursuant to the statutory provisions on which Plaintiffs have based their  
13 claims, the lawfulness of the alleged activities, *see id.* n. 23, and whether AT&T's reliance on  
14 any such certification would have been reasonable. *Id.* at 21. And Plaintiffs put at issue (as a  
15 general matter) those situations in which warrantless wiretapping may lawfully occur. *Id.* at 20-  
16 21. Again quite clearly, Plaintiffs' allegations put at issue the factual basis of the alleged  
17 activities.  
18  
19

20 [REDACTED TEXT]  
21

22 (U) Litigation regarding Plaintiffs' claim that the President has acted in excess of his  
23 authority also would require an exposition of the scope, nature, and kind of the alleged activities.  
24 It is well-established that, pursuant to his authority under Article II of the Constitution as  
25 Commander-in-Chief, the President's most basic constitutional duty is to protect the Nation from  
26 armed attack. *See, e.g., The Prize Cases*, 67 U.S. 635, 668 (1862); *see generally Ex parte*  
27 *Quirin*, 317 U.S. 1, 28 (1942). It is also well-established that the President may exercise his  
28

1 statutory and constitutional authority to gather intelligence information about foreign enemies.

2 *See, e.g., Totten v. United States*, 92 U.S. 105, 106 (1876) (recognizing President's authority to

3 hire spies); *see also Chicago & S. Air Lines v. Waterman S.S. Corp.*, 333 U.S. 103, 111 (1948)

4 (“The President, both as Commander-in-Chief and as the Nation's organ for foreign affairs, has

5 available intelligence services whose reports neither are not and ought not to be published to the

6 world.”); *United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corp.*, 299 U.S. 304, 320 (1936) (The President

7 “has his confidential sources of information. He has his agents in the form of diplomatic,

8 consular, and other officials.”). And, as noted, courts have held that the President has inherent

9 constitutional authority to authorize foreign intelligence surveillance. *See supra*.

10  
11 **[REDACTED TEXT]**

12  
13 **(U) CONCLUSION**

14 For the foregoing reasons, the Court should:

15  
16 1. Uphold the United States' assertion of the military and state secrets privilege and  
17 exclude from this case the information identified in the Declarations of John D. Negroponte,  
18 Director of National Intelligence of the United States, and Keith B. Alexander, Director of the  
19 National Security Agency; and

20  
21 2. Dismiss this action because adjudication of Plaintiffs' claims risks or requires the  
22 disclosure of protected state secrets and would thereby risk or cause exceptionally grave harm to  
23 the national security of the United States.

1 Respectfully submitted,

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25 DATED: May 12, 2006

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that the foregoing **NOTICE OF MOTION AND MOTION TO DISMISS OR, IN THE ALTERNATIVE, FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA** will be served by means of the Court's CM/ECF system, which will send notifications of such filing to the following:

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1 Plaintiffs' principal argument is that the court need not  
2 address the state secrets issue nor review the classified documents  
3 because plaintiffs can make their *prima facie* case based solely on  
4 the public record, including government admissions regarding the  
5 wiretapping program and non-classified documents provided by former  
6 AT&T technician Mark Klein. Doc #134 (Pl Redact Br) at 5-8. Even  
7 if plaintiffs are correct in this argument, it does not afford  
8 sufficient reason to delay deciding the state secrets issue.

9 The government asserts that "the very subject matter of  
10 Plaintiffs' allegations is a state secret and further litigation  
11 would inevitably risk their disclosure." Doc #145-1 (Gov Br) at  
12 14. If the government is correct, then "the court should dismiss  
13 [plaintiffs'] action based solely on the invocation of the state  
14 secrets privilege." Kasza v Browner, 133 F3d 1159, 1166 (9th Cir  
15 1998). Moreover, until the applicability and reach of the  
16 privilege is ascertained, AT&T might be prevented from using  
17 certain crucial evidence, such as whether AT&T received a  
18 certification from the government. See Gov Br at 16-17. See also  
19 Kasza, 133 F3d at 1166 (noting that a defendant might be entitled  
20 to summary judgment if "the privilege deprives the defendant of  
21 information that would otherwise give the defendant a valid defense  
22 to the claim" (quoting Bareford v General Dynamics Corp, 973 F2d  
23 1138, 1141 (5th Cir 1992)) (emphasis and internal quotation marks  
24 omitted)). The state secrets issue might resolve the case,  
25 discovery or further motion practice might inadvertently cause  
26 state secrets to be revealed and AT&T's defense might be hindered  
27 until the scope of the privilege is clarified. Hence, the court  
28 agrees with the government that the state secrets issue should be

1 addressed first.

2 To address this issue, the government claims that the  
3 court should examine the classified documents, which apparently  
4 "disclose the sources and methods, the intelligence activities,  
5 etc, that could be brought into play by the allegations in  
6 plaintiffs' complaint." Doc #138 (5/17/06 Transcript) at 34:15-17.  
7 Because the government contends that "the primary reasons for  
8 rejecting Plaintiffs' arguments are set forth in the Government's  
9 *in camera, ex parte* materials," Gov Br at 13, the court would be  
10 remiss not to consider those classified documents in determining  
11 whether this action is barred by the privilege. And although the  
12 court agrees with plaintiffs that it must determine the scope of  
13 the privilege before ascertaining whether this case implicates  
14 state secrets, Pl Redact Br at 13-14, review of the classified  
15 documents is necessary to determine the privilege's scope.

16 Plaintiffs also contend that "the government must make a  
17 more specific showing [in its public filings] than it has before  
18 this Court may be required to review secret filings *ex parte*." Id  
19 at 10. But the government, via Director of National Intelligence  
20 John D Negroponete, has stated that "any further elaboration on the  
21 public record concerning these matters would reveal information  
22 that could cause the very harms my assertion of the state secrets  
23 privilege is intended to prevent." Doc #124-2 (Negroponete Decl), ¶  
24 12. See also Doc #124-3 (Alexander Decl), ¶ 8. Although the court  
25 may later require the government to provide a more specific public  
26 explanation why the state secrets privilege must be invoked,  
27 Ellsberg v Mitchell, 709 F2d 51, 63-64 (DC Cir 1983), the court  
28 cannot, without first examining the classified documents, determine

1 whether the government could provide a more detailed public  
2 explanation without potentially "forc[ing] 'disclosure of the very  
3 thing the privilege is designed to protect.'" Id at 63 (quoting  
4 United States v Reynolds, 345 US 1, 8 (1953)).

5 Plaintiffs further assert that adjudicating whether AT&T  
6 received any certification does not require the court to review the  
7 classified documents. Specifically, plaintiffs rely on 18 USC §  
8 2511(2)(a)(ii)(B), which states in relevant part (emphasis added):

9 No provider of wire or electronic communication service  
10 \* \* \* or other specified person shall disclose the  
11 existence of any interception or surveillance or the  
12 device used to accomplish the interception or  
13 surveillance with respect to which the person has been  
14 furnished an order or certification under this  
15 subparagraph, except as may otherwise be required by  
16 legal process and then only after prior notification to  
17 the Attorney General or to the principal prosecuting  
18 attorney of a State or any political subdivision of a  
19 State, as may be appropriate.

20 Plaintiffs claim that the phrase "except as may otherwise be  
21 required by legal process" means that "if the AT&T defendants are  
22 claiming that they have a certification defense, then 'legal  
23 process' would require the disclosure of the fact of that  
24 certification in the ordinary course of litigation." Pl Redact Br  
25 at 8-9.

26 This argument fails, however, because the government's  
27 "state secrets assertion 'covers any information tending to confirm  
28 or deny' whether 'AT&T was involved with any' of the 'alleged  
intelligence activities.'" Gov Br at 17 (quoting Doc #124-1 (Gov  
Mot Dis) at 17-18). Because the existence or non-existence of a  
certification would tend to prove or disprove whether AT&T was  
involved in the alleged intelligence activities, the privilege as  
claimed prevents the disclosure of any certification. And because

1 the "legal process" could not require AT&T to disclose a  
2 certification if the state secrets privilege prevented such  
3 disclosure, discovery on the certification issue cannot proceed  
4 unless the court determines that the privilege does not apply with  
5 respect to that issue.

6 Finally, plaintiffs claim that they should be able to  
7 review the classified documents alongside the court. Plaintiffs  
8 note that due process disfavors deciding this case based on secret  
9 evidence and they contend that "the Court should proceed  
10 incrementally, examining only the least amount of *ex parte*  
11 information when – and if – this becomes absolutely necessary." Pl  
12 Redact Br at 3. Although *ex parte*, *in camera* review is  
13 extraordinary, this form of review is the norm when state secrets  
14 are at issue. See Kasza, 133 F3d at 1169 ("Elaborating the basis  
15 for the claim of privilege through *in camera* submissions is  
16 unexceptionable."). See also Black v United States, 62 F3d 1115,  
17 1119 & n6 (8th Cir 1995); Ellsberg, 709 F2d at 60 ("It is well  
18 settled that a trial judge called upon to assess the legitimacy of  
19 a state secrets privilege claim should not permit the requester's  
20 counsel to participate in an *in camera* examination of putatively  
21 privileged material."). And for the reasons stated above, review  
22 of the classified documents is necessary here to determine whether  
23 the state secrets privilege applies.

24 Plaintiffs also contend that a statutory provision, 50  
25 USC § 1806(f), entitles them to review the classified documents.  
26 Pl Redact Br at 4. Section 1806(f) provides in relevant part:

27 //

28 //

1 [W]henver any motion or request is made by an aggrieved  
2 person \* \* \* to discover or obtain applications or orders  
3 or other materials relating to electronic surveillance  
4 \* \* \* the United States district court \* \* \* shall,  
5 notwithstanding any other law, if the Attorney General  
6 files an affidavit under oath that disclosure or an  
7 adversary hearing would harm the national security of the  
8 United States, review *in camera* and *ex parte* the  
9 application, order, and such other materials relating to  
10 the surveillance as may be necessary to determine whether  
11 the surveillance of the aggrieved person was lawfully  
12 authorized and conducted. In making this determination,  
13 the court may disclose to the aggrieved person, under  
14 appropriate security procedures and protective orders,  
15 portions of the application, order, or other materials  
16 relating to the surveillance only where such disclosure  
17 is necessary to make an accurate determination of the  
18 legality of the surveillance.

11 Plaintiffs contend if the court determines that it must review the  
12 classified documents, this provision indicates that the court  
13 "should do so under conditions that provide for some form of  
14 appropriate access by plaintiffs' counsel." Pl Redact Br at 4.

15 The government and AT&T contend that this provision is  
16 inapplicable here because "[p]laintiffs' claims are based on their  
17 contention that the alleged surveillance activities should have  
18 occurred under FISA, but allegedly did not, whereas the review  
19 available under section 1806(f) is available only when electronic  
20 surveillance did, in fact, occur 'under this chapter.'" Gov Br at  
21 11 (citation omitted); Doc #150 (AT&T Redact Br) at 10. Even if  
22 this provision applies to the present case, it does not follow that  
23 plaintiffs are entitled to view some or all of the classified  
24 documents at this time. Section 1806(f) requires the court to  
25 "review *in camera* and *ex parte* the application, order, and such  
26 other materials relating to the surveillance" when determining  
27 whether the surveillance was legal. Only after such review may the  
28 court disclose the protected materials to the aggrieved person to

1 the extent "necessary to make an accurate determination of the  
2 legality of the surveillance." Hence, § 1806(f) does not provide  
3 plaintiffs with a present right to view the classified documents.

4 The court is mindful of the extraordinary due process  
5 consequences of applying the privilege the government here asserts.  
6 The court is also mindful of the government's claim of  
7 "exceptionally grave damage to the national security of the United  
8 States" (Negroponte Decl, ¶ 3) that failure to apply the privilege  
9 could cause. At this point, review of the classified documents  
10 affords the only prudent way to balance these important interests.

11 Accordingly, because review of the classified documents  
12 is necessary to determine whether and to what extent the state  
13 secrets privilege applies, the court ORDERS the government  
14 forthwith to provide *in camera* and no later than June 9, 2006, the  
15 classified memorandum and classified declarations of John D  
16 Negroponte and Keith B Alexander for review by the undersigned and  
17 by any chambers personnel that he so authorizes.

18  
19 IT IS SO ORDERED.

20   
21 \_\_\_\_\_

22 VAUGHN R WALKER  
23 United States District Chief Judge  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
EASTERN DISTRICT**

STUDS TERKEL, BARBARA FLYNN	)	
CURRIE, DIANE C. GERAGHTY	)	
GARY S. GERSON, JAMES D.	)	Case No. 06 C 2837
MONTGOMERY, and QUENTIN	)	Judge Kennelly
YOUNG, on behalf of themselves and all	)	Magistrate Judge Valdez
others similarly situated, and the	)	
AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION	)	
OF ILLINOIS,	)	
	)	
Plaintiffs,	)	
	)	
v.	)	
	)	
AT&T, Inc.,	)	
	)	
Defendant.	)	

**STATEMENT OF INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES  
IN SUPPORT OF AT&T’S MOTION FOR A STAY PENDING  
DECISION BY THE JUDICIAL PANEL ON MULTI-DISTRICT LITIGATION**

**INTRODUCTION**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 517,<sup>1</sup> the United States of America, through its undersigned counsel, hereby submits this Statement of Interest to support the motion of defendant AT&T, Inc. (“AT&T”) to stay this case pending a final decision by the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation (“JPML”) on the motion to transfer this case and approximately nineteen other similar cases (together, the “MDL Actions”) to a single district court for pretrial proceedings. This case,

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<sup>1</sup> Section 517 provides that the “Solicitor General, or any officer of the Department of Justice, may be sent by the Attorney General to any State or district in the United States to attend to the interests of the United States in a suit pending in a court of the United States, or in a court of a State, or to attend to any other interest of the United States.” 28 U.S.C. § 517. A submission by the United States pursuant to this provision does not constitute intervention under Rule 24 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

like the other MDL Actions, contains allegations about certain telecommunications carriers' purported assistance in classified government activities. Assuming that the MDL Actions are transferred to and consolidated in a single district court, the United States intends to assert the military and state secrets privilege (hereinafter, "state secrets privilege") in those actions and to seek their dismissal. The United States therefore respectfully submits that this case (like the other MDL Actions) should be stayed until the JPML's final decision. Counsel for the United States will attend the June 8, 2006 scheduling conference should the Court wish to address the United States' position.

### **BACKGROUND**

Plaintiffs, subscribers of various communications services of AT&T, bring this purported class action alleging that AT&T participated in a Government program pursuant to which AT&T provided certain telephone records to the National Security Agency ("NSA") in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2702(a)(3). Class Action Complaint ("Complaint") ¶ 1. Plaintiffs seek a preliminary and permanent injunction that enjoins AT&T's alleged actions of providing records pertaining to plaintiffs to the NSA or other governmental agency, except as provided by law. *Id.* at 7-8 (Prayer for Relief). Plaintiffs' claims thus seek to put at issue alleged foreign intelligence surveillance activities undertaken by the United States Government.

On May 24, 2006, Verizon Communications Inc., Verizon Global Networks Inc., and Verizon Northwest Inc. ("Verizon") submitted to the JPML a motion for transfer and coordination pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1407. That motion requests that the JPML (1) transfer 20 virtually identical purported class actions (pending before 14 different federal district courts) to a single district court; and (2) coordinate those actions for pretrial proceedings pursuant to 28

U.S.C. § 1407. This case is included as one of the 20 pending actions in Verizon's motion. The Clerk of the JPML filed Verizon's motion on May 24, 2006, and set a deadline of June 19, 2006, for responses to the motion for transfer. It is anticipated that a hearing on the motion for transfer will be scheduled for the next scheduled sitting of the JPML in July 2006.

### DISCUSSION

As a general matter, it is well-established that every court has an "inherent" power to exercise its discretion to "control the disposition of the causes on its docket with economy of time and effort for itself, for counsel, and for the litigants," including by staying proceedings. *Landis v. North American Co.*, 299 U.S. 248, 254 (1936); *see also Stone v. INS*, 514 U.S. 386, 411 (1995) ("we have long recognized that courts have inherent power to stay proceedings and 'to control the disposition of the causes on its docket . . . .'" (quoting *Landis*, 299 U.S. at 254)). Courts routinely grant a stay of proceedings pending a decision by the JPML of whether to transfer the case under 28 U.S.C. § 1407. *See, e.g., Cline v. Merck & Co., Inc.*, No. S-06-487, 2006 WL 1409555, at \*1-2 (E.D. Cal. May 19, 2006); *Stempien v. Lilly*, 3:06cv01811, 2006 WL 1214836, at \*1-2 (N.D. Cal. May 4, 2006); *Gorea v. The Gillette Co.*, No. 2:05cv02425, 2005 WL 2373440, at \*1 (W.D. Tenn. Sept. 26, 2005); *Hertz Corp. v. The Gator Corp.*, 250 F. Supp. 2d 421, 423 (D. N.J. 2003); *Tench v. Jackson Nat. Life Ins. Co.*, No. 99 C 5182, 1999 WL 1044923, at \*1-2 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 12, 1999). In deciding whether to stay proceedings, courts consider (1) whether judicial economy favors a stay; (2) potential prejudice to the non-moving party; and (3) hardship and inequity to the moving party if the action is not stayed. *See Board of Trustees of Teachers' Retirement System of State of Illinois v. Worldcom, Inc.*, 244 F. Supp. 2d 900, 905 (N.D. Ill. 2002); *Rivers v. Walt Disney Co.*, 980 F. Supp. 1358, 1360 (C.D. Cal. 1997).

The United States agrees with AT&T that this case, like all of the MDL Actions, should be stayed pending the decision of the JPML. All factors point strongly in favor of granting the stay.

Most significantly, judicial economy clearly favors a stay of this litigation pending a decision by the JPML. *See Rivers*, 980 F. Supp. at 1360 (if the JPML grants the motion for transfer, the court “will have needlessly expended its energies familiarizing itself with the intricacies of a case that would be heard by another judge”). Assuming that this case and the other MDL Actions are transferred to and consolidated in a single district court, the United States intends to assert the state secrets privilege and to seek the dismissal of those actions. The state secrets privilege permits the United States to protect against the unauthorized disclosure in litigation of information that may harm national security interests. *See United States v. Reynolds*, 345 U.S. 1, 7-8 (1953); *Kasza v. Browner*, 133 F.3d 1159, 1166 (9th Cir. 1998). If upheld, a state secrets privilege assertion both excludes certain information from a case, and as a result often requires dismissal. *See Kasza*, 133 F.3d at 1166 (“[I]f the very subject matter of the action’ is a state secret, then the court should dismiss the plaintiff’s action based solely on the invocation of the state secrets privilege.”) (quoting *Reynolds*, 345 U.S. at 11 n.26). The United States believes that principle to be applicable to this case and the other MDL Actions; thus, in addition to asserting the state secrets privilege, upon transfer the United States also intends to seek dismissal of all of the MDL Actions. Efficiency dictates that one court – rather than multiple courts proceedings on similar tracks – should decide the appropriateness and effect of the United States’ assertion of the state secrets privilege in all the MDL Actions.

As AT&T explains in its motion, the other factors – *i.e.*, the potential prejudice to the moving and non-moving parties – also support a stay of litigation pending a decision by the JPML. First, AT&T and the United States would be unfairly burdened and prejudiced if a stay is not granted. Without a stay, AT&T and the United States would have to engage in pretrial proceedings, including defending plaintiffs’ motion for preliminary injunction, in which plaintiffs claim that they will adduce at a hearing evidence that AT&T has acted and continues to act in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2702(a)(3) by providing customer and subscriber records to the NSA. *See* Plaintiffs’ Motion for Preliminary Injunction, ¶ 4. Plaintiffs seek a hearing as soon as June 26, 2006, *id.* ¶ 13, and further seek expedited discovery from AT&T prior to that hearing. *See* Plaintiffs’ Motion for Leave to Take Expedited Discovery. And plaintiffs have moved for class certification. *See* Plaintiffs’ Motion for Class Certification. All of these motions should be stayed pending a resolution of the United States’ intended assertion of the state secrets privilege and dismissal in the MDL Actions. *See, e.g., Tenet v. Doe*, 544 U.S. 1, 6 n. 4 (2005) (court should first consider threshold issues raised by the applicability of a rule barring adjudication relating to secret espionage agreements). Without such a stay, AT&T and the United States would be forced to litigate the issues involved in these motions in multiple forums, despite the pending motion for transfer with the JPML.

As AT&T’s motion further demonstrates, plaintiffs will not be unduly prejudiced by a stay. This case was just filed on May 22, 2006, only days before the MDL petition was submitted to the JPML. Responses to the MDL petition are due by June 19, 2006, and a hearing on the petition is anticipated to be scheduled in July 2006. If the MDL petition is granted, plaintiffs will have an opportunity to present their motions to the assigned MDL court.

**CONCLUSION**

For the foregoing reasons, the United States respectfully requests that the Court grant AT&T's Motion for a Stay Pending Decision by the Judicial Panel on Multi-District Litigation.

Respectfully submitted,

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DATED: June 6, 2006

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that the foregoing **STATEMENT OF INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES IN SUPPORT OF AT&T'S MOTION FOR A STAY PENDING DECISION BY THE JUDICIAL PANEL ON MULTI-DISTRICT LITIGATION** will be served by means of the Court's CM/ECF system, which will send notification of such filing to the following:

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