

No Chance of Fair U.S. Trial, Snowden Says

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Edward Snowden rejected the idea of returning to the U.S., saying he had "no chance" for a fair trial unless the laws were changed, while his attorney suggested that the security leaker may ask Russia to extend his temporary asylum.

In an online chat Thursday, Snowden said that returning home would be "the best resolution for the government, the public, and myself," but that he would not do so unless laws were changed to offer him "whistleblower" protection.

"There's no chance to have a fair trial, and no way I can come home and make my case to a jury," Snowden said in the chat, which was set up by The Courage Foundation organization of his supporters.

The U.S. Whistleblower Protection Act prevents the government from taking retaliatory action against employees who report supposed crimes or misconduct by government agencies. However, the law does not cover security employees or contractors who go public with

confidential information, instead of filing complaints through official investigative bodies or elected representatives.

"My case clearly demonstrates the need for comprehensive whistleblower protection act reform," Snowden said.

"If we had had a real process in place, and reports of wrongdoing could be taken to real, independent arbiters rather than captured officials, I might not have had to sacrifice so much to do what at this point even the president seems to agree needed to be done," he said.

President Barack Obama has said repeatedly that Snowden should stand trial in the U.S., and denounced attempts by any individual who objects to the government's policy to "take it into their own hands to publicly disclose classified information."

"Our nation's defense depends in part on the fidelity of those entrusted with our nation's secrets," Obama said last week.

He has declined to specify whether Snowden may be eligible for clemency, regardless of his motives.

Attorney General Eric Holder said that the U.S. would like to "engage in conversation" with Edward Snowden about resolving his case if the former NSA contractor accepted responsibility for his leaks, but that granting clemency "would be going too far," NBC reported Thursday.

Snowden's Russian lawyer Anatoly Kucherena said his client was currently studying Russian and might ask the government to extend his temporary asylum status, Kommersant reported Friday.

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