

NSA used decryption technology to spy on the United Nations

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The German news magazine *Der Spiegel* reported over the weekend that documents supplied by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden prove the NSA spied on internal communications at the United Nations headquarters in New York City during the summer of 2012. The NSA has also targeted the European Union and the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), according to *Der Spiegel*.

Documents published by *Der Spiegel* show that the NSA tapped into the UN's internal video conferencing system and deployed decryption technology to gain access to the video stream. Within weeks of penetrating the video stream, the NSA ramped up the number of communications being decrypted and monitored from 12 to 458.

"The data traffic gives us internal video teleconferences of the United Nations (yay!)," read one of the documents quoted in the report.

Der Spiegel further reported on a US intelligence program called the "Special Collection Service," which operates in diplomatic facilities across the globe. "The surveillance is intensive and well organized and has little or nothing to do with warding off terrorists," the magazine wrote.

Previous revelations have shown systematic spying by the US on EU governments. American intelligence operatives apparently gained access to the virtual private network (VPN) relied on by EU embassies in the US. Files copied from NSA servers by Snowden include detailed plans of the EU's information technology infrastructure and other internal EU documents.

The latest revelations of the massive and international scope of the US government's illegal spying operations come only two weeks after a White House press conference in which President Obama

repeated the official lies about the supposedly limited and legally sanctioned character of the secret NSA programs. Obama once again declared that the government is not targeting the telephone calls, emails and other communications of ordinary Americans and that the surveillance programs are focused on stopping terror attacks. Both of these claims have been repeatedly exposed as falsifications by revelations and documents published by newspapers such as the British *Guardian* and the *Washington Post*, based on material supplied by Snowden.

The government's response is to tell more lies, on the one hand, and step up its repression of whistle-blowers and journalists, on the other. Last week saw the vindictive sentencing of Private Bradley Manning to 35 years in prison for the supposed "crime" of exposing war crimes and other criminal activities of the US government. It also saw the detention of *Guardian* journalist Glenn Greenwald's partner, David Miranda, by British authorities, acting in collusion with the Obama administration.

Other new reports show that the NSA allocated millions of dollars for payment to Internet companies that collaborated with its PRISM surveillance program. The NSA says the money went to compensate companies, including Google, Microsoft and Facebook, that assumed new costs in order to comply with a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court ruling upholding an NSA demand that they allow the agency to tap into their email streams.

A top secret NSA memo from December 2012 read, "Last year's problems resulted in multiple extensions to the certifications' expiration dates, which cost millions of dollars for PRISM providers to implement each successive extension—costs covered by Special Source Operations."

Snowden has described Special Source Operations (SSO) as the “crown jewel” of the NSA. It manages surveillance programs that involve collaboration with corporate communication providers.

The SSO oversaw compensation of the various companies as they updated their data collection operations to reflect new NSA protocols. For instance, a Snowden-leaked document reads: “All PRISM providers, except Yahoo and Google, were successfully transitioned to the new certifications. We expect Yahoo and Google to complete transitioning by Friday 6 October.”

These millions are being paid to sustain illegal and unconstitutional spying on the American people. Under section 702 of the 2008 FISA Amendments Act (FAA), PRISM is authorized to engage in the warrantless collection of the electronic communications of foreign targets, for which the FISA court signs annual authorizations. As Snowden’s documents have proven, however, Americans’ communications are regularly collected in vast quantities in the course of these operations.

In a related development, editors of several European newspapers, including *Politiken* of Denmark, Sweden’s *Dagens Nyheter*, *Aftenposten* of Norway, and *Helsingin Sanomat* of Finland, sent a letter to the UK last week condemning the detention of David Miranda as a violation of freedom of the press in European countries. The editors accused the British government of attempting to legalize state harassment of journalists through the use of anti-terror legislation.



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