

NSA feeds raw intelligence data to Israel

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A secret memo provided by former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden to the British *Guardian* newspaper reveals that the US spy agency is funneling raw intelligence data, including information from intercepted communications of US citizens, to Israeli intelligence.

“The National Security Agency routinely shares raw intelligence with Israel without first sifting it to remove information about US citizens,” the *Guardian* article by Glenn Greenwald, Laura Poitras and Ewen MacAskill reports.

The undated five-page memo records an agreement reached between the NSA and its Israeli counterpart, the ISNU (Israeli Sigint National Unit), in March 2009, during the first months of the Obama administration.

Entitled “Protection of US Persons,” it purports to lay out a protocol for the Israeli spy agency’s handling of “signals intelligence information that has not been reviewed for foreign intelligence purposes or minimized,” i.e., raw intercepts provided without any filtering by the NSA itself. “Minimization” refers to an ostensible policy of determining whether phone calls, emails and other communications intercepted from American citizens are “essential to assess or understand the significance of the foreign intelligence.”

The memo states that the terms of the agreement are designed to ensure that the handling of such material by Israeli intelligence is “consistent with the requirements upon NSA by US law and Executive Order to establish safeguards protecting the rights of US persons under the Fourth Amendment of the US Constitution.”

The Fourth Amendment, part of the Bill of Rights, protects against “unreasonable searches and seizures,” barring searches without narrowly defined warrants based on probable cause. It has been ripped to shreds by the NSA’s domestic spying operations, which amount to the wholesale seizure of personal records from virtually every American citizen and millions of

people abroad, with no specific warrants whatsoever.

While insisting that the Israelis operate with deference to the US Constitution and law, the memo adds, “This agreement is not intended to create any legally enforceable rights and shall not be construed to be either an international agreement or a legally binding instrument according to international law.” In other words, in practice ISNU and the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad are free to do as they please.

The memo requests that the Israelis notify the NSA whenever it fishes data on US citizens out of the raw intelligence stream, but allows them to keep “any files containing the identities of US persons” for up to a year. It also permits them to “disseminate foreign intelligence information concerning US persons” gleaned from the unfiltered data provided by the NSA to the Israeli agency’s “customers,” so long as it does so in “a manner that does not identify the US person.”

The most extraordinary passage in the memo requires that the Israeli spooks “destroy upon recognition” any communication provided by the NSA “that is either to or from an official of the US government.” It goes on to spell out that this includes “officials of the Executive Branch (including the White House, Cabinet Departments, and independent agencies); the US House of Representatives and Senate (members and staff); and the US Federal Court System (including, but not limited to, the Supreme Court).”

The stunning implication of this passage is that NSA spying targets not only ordinary American citizens, but also Supreme Court justices, members of Congress and the White House itself. One could hardly ask for a more naked exposure of a police state.

The pretense that Israeli intelligence stumbling across such material would “destroy” it without so much as a peek is ludicrous, and everyone involved in preparing the agreement knows it.

Israel is ostensibly one of Washington’s closest

allies. The two countries' intelligence agencies collaborate on joint operations such as the unleashing of the Stuxnet virus on the computers at Iran's main nuclear enrichment facilities.

But part of the \$52.6 billion "black budget" request made for 2013 by US intelligence agencies, revealed in a document obtained by Snowden and released last month to the *Washington Post*, states that these agencies' counterintelligence operations "are strategically focused against [the] priority targets of China, Russia, Iran, Cuba and Israel."

According to a report on defense contractors' security prepared by the US government's General Accounting Office in 1996, Israel "conducts the most aggressive espionage operation against the United States of any US ally."

This has resulted in high profile arrests of Israeli spies such as Jonathan Pollard, a civilian US intelligence analyst for the Navy who was turning over extensive top secret material to Israeli intelligence, and Lawrence Franklin, a mid-level Pentagon official sentenced to 12 years in prison for passing secret documents to Israeli officials. Two senior lobbyists at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) were indicted in the Franklin case, but charges were ultimately dropped.

Israeli espionage has focused on US policy in the Middle East, military secrets and industrial/commercial information that could benefit Israeli corporations. Israeli intelligence agencies are continuously engaged in efforts to manipulate US policy to serve the interests of the Zionist regime. No doubt, the raw intelligence provided by the NSA is gone over with a fine-tooth comb to uncover information that could be useful in this regard.

This latest in the series of revelations provided by Snowden demolishes claims made by President Obama last month that the NSA and his administration are taking the strongest possible measures to ensure the privacy of US citizens whose telephone calls and electronic communications are swept up in the spy agency's massive dragnet. On the contrary, these communications are being handed over to a foreign secret police organization, one of the most aggressive and deadly on the face of the planet. Mossad is well known for organizing extra-judicial assassinations around the world.

The information disclosed by Snowden and the *Guardian* has been largely blacked out by the corporate-controlled media in the US. The *New York Times*, the supposed "newspaper of record," has ignored the *Guardian*'s exposé of NSA-Israeli intelligence sharing entirely, while the *Washington Post* relegated it to the bottom of its "technology" page, below stories on the lack of female characters in computer games and false rumors about Apple's new iPhone.



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