

U.S. National Security Agency Spied on Three German Chancellors



Berlin, July 8 (RHC)-- The U.S. National Security Agency spied on the last three German chancellors and their offices for decades, according to the whistleblower website WikiLeaks. The WikiLeaks documents leaked on Wednesday suggested that the NSA spooked on Angela Merkel, Gerhard Schröder, and Helmut Kohl.

The documents showed that the NSA had spied on Merkel and her staff far longer and more widely than previously realized. "The names associated with some of the targets indicate that spying on the Chancellery predates Angela Merkel as it includes staff of former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (in office 1998-2002), and his predecessor Helmut Kohl (in office 1982-1998)," WikiLeaks said in a statement. The spy agency reportedly targeted 125 phone numbers of top German officials as well.

The new list includes 56 phone numbers for the chancellor and the federal chancellery. Almost two dozen of them belong to Merkel's current political entourage. The U.S. government was eavesdropping not only on Merkel and her cabinet, but also on Germany's free press under the cover of US national security, according to a last week CNN report.

CNN has learned that in the summer of 2011, the CIA station chief at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin met with Germany's intelligence coordinator, Günter Heiss, and his assistant Guido Müller. The CIA station chief, who was also representing the NSA, urged the two men to take action against Heiss' deputy, Hans-Josef Vorbeck, who he said was leaking classified information to the German press, specifically to Der Spiegel.

Later that summer, Heiss went to Washington and discussed this same matter with US government officials, CNN has learned. At the same time, the Chancellery opened a file on U.S. documents of intercepted communications between Vorbeck and journalists.

The NSA has been under fire for its mass spying programs since its former contractor Edward Snowden began leaking documents in 2013.

The latest report comes as WikiLeaks revealed late last month that the NSA had spied on the last three French presidents, as well as French ministers and on the country's largest companies.

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