

Germany Calls for U.S. Answers over NSA Spying on Foreign Minister



Berlin, July 23 (RHC)-- Germany has called on the United States to provide answers over the latest revelation concerning the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) spying on German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

German Foreign Minister Spokesman Martin Schaefer told reporters on Wednesday that Berlin was “demanding answers” from Washington over the issue, adding that if the fresh leaks were true, they would be “damaging” to ties between the two countries.

Schaefer also noted that Stephan Steinlein, a deputy German foreign minister, had spoken with John B. Emerson, the U.S. ambassador to Germany, to demand “the necessary clarifications and explanations on this case and all the other cases that remain unresolved.”

The remarks came two days after whistleblower website WikiLeaks published documents showing that Steinmeier was the target of systematic spying by the NSA. Wikileaks released on Monday an intercepted conversation held by Steinmeier back in November 2005, after his first official trip to the US since taking office.

German weekly Der Spiegel said in a report published in October 2013 that it had seen secret documents from the NSA supplied by American whistleblower Edward Snowden revealing that German Chancellor Angela Merkel's cell phone had been listed by the NSA's Special Collection Service (SCS) since 2002 and may have been monitored for over 10 years.

Citing documents from WikiLeaks dating back to between 2010 and 2012, the German media also reported earlier this month that the NSA did not just tap Merkel's cell phone calls but also eavesdropped on several German officials. Snowden leaked two top secret US government spying programs in June 2013, which showed that the NSA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had been eavesdropping on millions of American and European phone records and the Internet data.

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