

Wikileaks Says NSA Spied on Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe



Washington, August 1 (RHC)-- The whistleblowers at WikiLeaks have published a trove of documents that reveal a systematic mass surveillance program that the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) has been conducting against high ranking Japanese politicians.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is the most high profile official among the 35 top secret targets mentioned in the documents released on Friday. The documents, referred to as "Target Tokyo," note that beginning from September 2006 until 2007, the NSA spied on Abe for at least a year during his first term in office.

According to a WikiLeaks statement, the U.S. was aware of Tokyo's internal affairs such as trade talks, climate change policies, nuclear and energy programs and even the contents of a confidential briefing at Abe's residence.

In one case, the NSA even eavesdropped on Japan's secret G-8 proposals on climate change and snooped on Tokyo's confidential plans for the World Trade Organization. Japanese ministries, Bank of Japan officials and a number of government organizations have also undergone surveillance by

Washington.

Other Japanese targets that have fallen prey to espionage by the Americans include several organizations and individuals with financial affiliations.

Mitsubishi, one of the country's biggest automakers, and its fossil fuel department add more diversity to the range of targets the NSA deemed worthy of spying in Japan.

WikiLeaks stated that the NSA has shared the information it had gathered from Japan with the so-called "Five Eyes" group of countries - Australia, Canada, the UK and New Zealand – which are English-speaking countries and share almost all their intelligence, without ever targeting each other's nationals unwarranted.

The new leaks are expected to strain Tokyo-Washington relations. In his meeting with the Japanese premier a few months back, the US President Barack Obama called Japan "one of America's closest allies in the world."

There is also another important side to the new revelations as they put Japan beside all the other major countries that are angered by the NSA surveillance programs carried out against them, including Brazil, France, Britain and Germany.

The NSA spying scandal was first exposed in 2013 by former CIA employee and government contractor Edward Snowden, who is also believed to be behind the recent leaks.

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