

UK Spymasters Begged to Feast at NSA Table



London, May 2 (RHC)-- A document has surfaced from the Ed Snowden collection showing that British spy chiefs secretly sought “unsupervised” access to the NSA’s vast trove of private communications.

Britain’s electronic surveillance agency, Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) has always presented its collaboration with the National Security Agency as carefully monitored and limited to the extents of privacy laws. But according to a top secret document which has surfaced from the Edward Snowden collection, GCHQ wanted unlimited and unsupervised access to the NSA’s immense stock of private communications.

The document, which is dated as recently as April 2013, shows that GCHQ had requested authorities for access to data collected under a law that authorizes a variety of controversial NSA surveillance initiatives, including the PRISM program.

PRISM, which is used by the NSA and FBI, grants access to personal emails, chats, photos, videos and other data used by the world’s largest Internet companies, including Google, Yahoo!, Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, and Skype.

The document also reveals GCHQ had also requested greater access to international phone conversations and email that NSA has access to.

The granting of the GCHQ access by the NSA is not referred to in the Snowden file but this shows the NSA was supportive of the idea. It also implies that GCHQ was granted full access to PRISM during the 2012 London Olympics.

Last June the British Foreign office issued a statement saying that warrants to intercept the communications of any individual in the UK must be personally signed by a cabinet secretary.

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