

Snowden Leaks Documents of UK Spying on Argentina



Buenos Aires, April 06 (teleSUR-RHC) Just days after tension over the Malvinas Islands between Great Britain and Argentina regained momentum, newly leaked documents recently by NSA whistle blower Edward Snowden claim the United Kingdom spied on the Argentine government for several years, because they feared the Latin American country would attempt to recover the islands.

The newly-revealed documents suggest that Britain began spying on the South American country's officials in 2009. The intelligence data also revealed that British spy agency Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) had been allegedly preparing a covert plan called "QUITO Operation," which involved the Joint Threat Research and Intelligence Group (JTRIG), a classified unit that spread misinformation.

Snowden handed the new documents to the Intercept, and they were published in partnership with the Argentine news site *Todo Noticias*.

The first reports about JTRIG appeared last year and they showed it had developed secret tools to fill the Internet with false data: the ability to manipulate the results of online polls, artificially inflate page view counts on websites, plant false Facebook wall posts for "entire countries," the Intercept reported. The spying began because the U.K. government feared that Argentina could be planning another operation to regain control of its islands, which were colonized by the British empire in 1833.

In 1982, Argentina staged 74-day war with the U.K. over the Malvinas in which more than 900 people died. About 650 of the victims were Argentine and the remaining 250 were British.

Last month, the British government announced it would invest about \$400 million to increase its military presence in the South American islands, claiming Argentina was still a threat. The announcement was harshly condemned by Argentina, whose government responded saying they were willing to hold talks over the Malvinas islands, while also sending official letters of complaint to the U.N. Secretary-General and heads of several regional organizations accusing the U.K. of further militarizing the Islands.

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