

Report Says NSA Spied on German Chancellor and Other Ministers



Berlin, July 2 (RHC)-- New WikiLeaks documents show that the United States not only spied on German Chancellor Angela Merkel but also on several ministers of the country.

Relations between Germany and the United States were strained after U.S. surveillance whistleblower Edward Snowden in 2013 revealed extensive US foreign spying. Snowden also revealed that the United States had monitored Merkel's telephone conversations for more than 10 years.

The German daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung reports that the National Security Agency (NSA) did not limit its surveillance activities to Merkel, and spied on the activities of the ministries of finance, economy and agriculture.

The newspaper said WikiLeaks had shown it a list of 69 phone numbers of ministers and senior officials that were targeted by the NSA. According to the report, current Economy Minister and Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel were among those snooped on by the U.S. spy agency.

Ed Snowden, a former NSA contractor, began leaking classified intelligence documents in June 2013, revealing the extent of the NSA's spying activity. The disclosures have revealed that the NSA has been collecting the phone records of millions of Americans and foreign nationals as well as political leaders around the world.

Snowden, who lives in Russia where he has been granted asylum, has said that U.S. government surveillance methods far surpass those of an "Orwellian" state, referring to George Orwell's classic novel "1984," which describes a society where personal privacy is continuously invaded by spy agencies.

The Snowden revelations prompted Brazil and Germany to draft a United Nations General Assembly resolution aimed at restraining the NSA's surveillance programs against other nations.

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