

Spying on Our Allies: US taps half-billion German phone and internet activities a month

By [RT](#)

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US combs through half a billion of German phone calls, emails and text messages on a monthly basis and has classified its European ally on the same target level as China, a German news magazine revealed.

The NSA document leaked by whistleblower Edward Snowden and published by Der Spiegel classified Germany as a “*third-class*” partner, on the same level as China, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, meaning that the US surveillance in Germany was stronger than in any other EU country.

“We can attack the signals of most foreign third-class partners, and we do it too,” the document states.

It revealed that NSA monitors phone calls, text messages, emails and internet chat contributions and has saved the metadata (connections and not the content) at its headquarters.



A general view of the large former monitoring base of the U.S. intelligence organization National Security Agency (NSA) in Bad Aibling south of Munich (Reuters / Michaela Rehle)

NSA snooped through 20-60 million German phone connections and 10 million internet data sets a day, Der Spiegel claims.

In comparison, US tapped around 2 million connection data a day in France.

The only countries exempt from the surveillance attacks were Canada, Australia, Britain and New Zealand.



Reuters / Pawel Kopczynsky

Snowden's documents already revealed that NSA had spied on EU, including Germany, but the extent of surveillance was not known.

Spiegel's earlier [report](#), which revealed that European citizens, employees of the EU diplomatic missions in Washington and the UN were under electronic surveillance from the NSA, was met with [anger](#) from EU policymakers.

Germany demanded an "immediate" US response over bugging allegations, adding that this kind of surveillance was reminiscent of the Cold War.

"It must ultimately be immediately and extensively explained by the American side whether media reports about completely disproportionate tapping measures by the US in the EU are accurate or not," Minister of Justice Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger said in a statement.

The president of the European parliament has also demanded an explanation from US authorities over the latest revelation.

"I am deeply worried and shocked about the allegations of US authorities spying on EU offices," said Martin Schulz. "If the allegations prove to be true, it would be an extremely serious matter which will have a severe impact on EU-US relations."

The whistleblower behind the leaked documents, Snowden, has left US for Hong Kong in May and currently remains in the transit area of Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport while Ecuador reviews his asylum request.

Edward Snowden, a former CIA employee and ex-staff member of a private contractor working for the NSA, disclosed secret documents revealing US surveillance program PRISM and British secret Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) sharing its intelligence with NSA, as part of the [Tempora](#) data collection project.

The US has charged Snowden with espionage and is trying to extradite him.

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