

Brazil expresses concern at report of NSA spying

July 7 2013, by Jenny Barchfield

Brazil's foreign minister said Sunday his government is worried by a report that the United States has collected data on millions of telephone and email conversations in his country and promised an effort for international protection of Internet privacy.

The O Globo newspaper reported over the weekend that information released by NSA leaker Edward Snowden shows that the number of telephone and [email messages](#) logged by the U.S. National Security Agency in January alone was not far behind the 2.3 million reportedly collected in the United States.

Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota expressed "deep concern at the report that electronic and telephone communications of Brazilian citizens are being the object of espionage by organs of American intelligence.

"The Brazilian government has asked for clarifications" through the U.S. Embassy in Brazil and Brazil's embassy in Washington, he said.

Patriota also said Brazil will ask the U.N. for measures "to impede abuses and protect the privacy" of Internet users, laying down rules for governments "to guarantee cybernetic security that protects the rights of citizens and preserves the sovereignty of all countries."

The spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Brazil's capital, Dean Chaves, said diplomats there would not have any comment.

But the Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued a statement saying, "The U.S. government will respond through diplomatic channels to our partners and allies in the Americas ... While we are not going to comment publicly on specific alleged intelligence activities, as a matter of policy we have made clear that the United States gathers foreign intelligence of the type gathered by all nations."

The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff warned Sunday that Snowden's overall disclosures have undermined U.S. relationships with other countries and affected what he calls "the importance of trust." Gen. Martin Dempsey told CNN's "State of the Union" that the U.S. will "work our way back. But it has set us back temporarily."

O Globo's article said that "Brazil, with extensive digitalized public and private networks operated by large telecommunications and internet companies, appears to stand out on maps of the U.S. agency as a priority target for telephony and data traffic, alongside nations such as China, Russia and Pakistan."

The report did not describe the sort of data collected, but the U.S. programs appear to gather what is called metadata: logs of message times, addresses and other information rather than the content of the messages.

The report was co-authored by U.S. journalist Glenn Greenwald, who has been key in earlier reports on Snowden's revelations.

In a column Sunday for the British-based newspaper The Guardian, Greenwald said that "the NSA has, for years, systematically tapped into the Brazilian telecommunication network and indiscriminately intercepted, collected and stored the email and telephone records of millions of Brazilians."

He said Brazil was merely an example of a global practice.

"There are many more populations of non-adversarial countries which have been subjected to the same type of mass surveillance net by the NSA: indeed, the list of those which haven't been are shorter than those which have," he wrote.

The O Globo article said the NSA collected the data through an association between U.S. and Brazilian telecommunications companies. It said it could not verify which Brazilian companies were involved or if they were aware their links were being used to collect the data.

While some Brazilians were upset, others seemed to shrug.

"On the one hand, the size of the U.S. espionage program and the number of Brazilians who fell into it is ridiculous," said Rodolfo Andrade, a 29-year-old businessman in Brasilia. "On the other hand, it helps international security."

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Citation: Brazil expresses concern at report of NSA spying (2013, July 7) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-07-brazil-nsa-spying.html>

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