

Estonia says Europe overreacted to US cyber spying

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Estonia's President Toomas Hendrik Ilves waves in Bratislava on June 12, 2013. Europeans have overreacted to allegations that the United States had been snooping on them and vacuuming up huge amounts of phone and Internet data, cyber-savvy Estonia said in an interview published Thursday.

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"I could understand such condemnation from European countries that are lily white virgins and not themselves involved in these kinds of activities," Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves told Estonia's leading Postimees daily.

"But it is very hard to understand the criticism when you know how some big European states have acted in a similar way," he said, pointing to recent revelations of German, French and British surveillance programmes.

Ilves has flatly denied that Estonia is involved in any cyber snooping.

The ongoing spy row sparked by fugitive US intelligence leaker Edward Snowden cast a shadow over the Monday start of EU-US talks in Washington on what could be the world's largest free-trade deal.

A Baltic nation of 1.3 million people, Estonia is among the world's most wired countries, with citizens able to access virtually all public services online.

An EU and NATO member since 2004, it also hosts the Western defence alliance's cyber defence centre, which brings together IT [security experts](#) from Europe and the US.

Keith B. Alexander, chief of the US National Security Agency implicated in the cyber snooping scandal, opened a meeting of 400 global cyber experts at the centre in early June.

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