

# Germany denies military knew about PRISM

July 17 2013

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A protestor holds a banner that reads, "When injustice is law, resistance becomes the duty" to protest against the NSA internet surveillance programme "PRISM" on June 29, 2013 in Hannover, central Germany.

The German government Wednesday denied a report claiming that the nation's military knew for years about the US surveillance programme PRISM revealed by fugitive former intelligence analyst Edward Snowden.

Germany's foreign intelligence service BND said that a separate

programme with the same name existed for NATO forces in Afghanistan to share intelligence.

The spokesman for Chancellor Angela Merkel, who faces elections on September 22, said he had no reason to doubt the BND statement.

The issue is sensitive for Merkel, who said last week she only learnt about the scope of the US National Security Agency (NSA) snooping through media reports.

Many Germans are angry that their emails, phone calls, web searches and other data have been captured and stored under the NSA programme.

Any suggestion that the government failed to stop it or was complicit in it would spell political danger for Merkel, whose chancellery oversees Germany's secret services.

The mass-circulation daily Bild reported earlier that the German [military command](#) for northern Afghanistan had been informed of PRISM in September 2011 in a letter from the Kabul command of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force.

According to Bild, the letter mentioned that the programme was for phone and email surveillance and run by the NSA.

However, the BND later said in a brief statement: "The programme referred to as PRISM in today's Bild newspaper is a NATO/ISAF programme that is not identical to the PRISM programme of the NSA. It is also not classified as secret."

The BND also stressed that it "had no knowledge of the name, scope and extent of the NSA programme".

Merkel has testily told Washington that "we are not in the Cold War anymore" but also defended the role of secret services in keeping citizens safe and preventing terrorist attacks.

Snowden, on the run from the US government, has been marooned at a Moscow airport since June 23 and on Tuesday filed an application for temporary asylum in Russia. Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua have said they would be open to offering refuge to Snowden.

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