

## 70.3M records, 30 days: NSA report draws Paris ire (Update)

October 21 2013, by Lori Hinnant

---



U.S. Ambassador to France Charles H. Rivkin, right, leaves the Foreign Ministry in Paris, after he was summoned Monday, Oct. 21, 2013. The French government had summoned the ambassador to explain why the Americans spied on one of their closest allies. Le Monde newspaper said Monday, Oct. 21, 2013 that documents leaked by Edward Snowden show that the U.S. National Security Agency swept up 70.3 million French phone records in a 30-day period. (AP Photo/Claude Paris)

The U.S. National Security Agency swept up 70.3 million French

telephone records in a 30-day period, according to a newspaper report Monday that offered new details of the massive scope of a surveillance operation that has angered some of the country's closest allies. The French government summoned the U.S. ambassador for an explanation on Monday and renewed demands for talks on protection of personal data, as well as pledges that the surveillance would cease.

A look at recent reactions around the world to the revelations:

## FRANCE

The report in *Le Monde*, co-written by Glenn Greenwald, who originally revealed the surveillance program based on leaks from former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, found that when certain numbers were used, the conversations were automatically recorded. The surveillance operation also swept up text messages based on key words, *Le Monde* reported, based on records from Dec. 10 to Jan 7.

"This sort of practice between partners that invades privacy is totally unacceptable and we have to make sure, very quickly, that this no longer happens," French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said during a meeting in Luxembourg with his European counterparts. Fabius said the U.S. ambassador had been summoned to the Foreign Ministry and he planned to bring up the matter in no uncertain terms Tuesday during his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, who landed in Paris just as *Le Monde* released details of the surveillance.

"We fully agree that we cooperate to fight terrorism. It is indispensable. But this not justify that personal data of millions of our compatriots are snooped on," Fabius said.

The most recent documents cited by *Le Monde*, dated to April 2013, also indicated the NSA's interest in email addresses linked to

Wanadoo— once part of France Telecom—and Alcatel-Lucent, the French-American telecom company. One of the documents instructed analysts to draw not only from the electronic surveillance program, but also from another initiative dubbed Upstream, which allowed surveillance on undersea communications cables.

The U.S "gathers foreign intelligence of the type gathered by all nations," said Caitlin Hayden, spokeswoman for the National Security Council at the White House. "We've begun to review the way that we gather intelligence, so that we properly balance the legitimate security concerns of our citizens and allies with the privacy concerns that all people share."

## EUROPEAN UNION

A European Parliament committee on Monday approved sweeping new data protection rules that would strengthen online privacy and outlaw most data transfers to other countries' authorities.

The rules, which still require approval from the European Union's 28 member states, will for the first time create a strong data protection law for the bloc's 500 million citizens, replacing an outdated patchwork of national rules that only allow for tiny fines in cases of violation.



In this March 8, 2013 file photo, U.S Ambassador to France Charles H. Rivkin, stands as the US national anthem is played aboard US aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, in Marseille, southern France. Le Monde newspaper says Monday, Oct.21, 2013 that documents leaked by Edward Snowden show that the U.S. National Security Agency swept up 70.3 million French phone records in a 30-day period. The French government has summoned the Rivkin to explain why the Americans spied on one of their closest allies.(AP Photo/Claude Paris, File)

The legislation, among other things, enables users to ask companies to fully erase their personal data, handing them a so-called right to be forgotten. It would also limit user profiling, require companies to explain their use of personal data in detail to customers, and mandate that companies seek prior consent. The legislation also foresees stiff fines—up to 5 percent of a company's annual turnover—for violations.

## MEXICO

Der Spiegel reported that an operation dubbed "Flat liquid" accessed Mexico's "presidencia" domain, purportedly used by former Mexican President Felipe Calderon and his Cabinet. Mexico condemned the report and promised a diplomatic note in protest.

Earlier, a document dated June 2012 indicated the NSA had read current Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto's emails before he was elected last year. Pena Nieto has said that would be an illegal act if it occurred, and his administration has demanded an investigation.

"In a relationship of neighbors and partners, there is no room for the kind of activities that allegedly took place," Mexico's government said in a statement Sunday.

## BRAZIL

The reaction of Brazil's president has been the strongest so far—she canceled a state visit to Washington and condemned the U.S. at the United Nations General Assembly.

Brazil officials have said they want to question Snowden directly, after information he leaked indicated President Dilma Rousseff's communications with aides were intercepted, the computer network of state-run oil company Petrobras was hacked, and data on billions of emails and telephone calls flowing through Brazil were monitored by the NSA.

## GERMANY

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's government canceled a Cold War-era agreement that allowed the U.S. and Britain the authority to request German authorities to conduct surveillance operations within the country to protect their troops stationed there.

Privacy is especially cherished in Germany after the country's painful history of mass surveillance of citizens of communist East Germany and Adolf Hitler's Nazi state.

"I can understand the anger in France. You don't do that among partners. You don't do that among friends. That is why it is important that everything becomes clear what happened. That applies to France. It applies to other countries, and also for Germany," German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said Monday. "We know there are security interests, but it is about finding the right balance between security interests and freedom rights."

## BRITAIN

In Britain, debate has focused on the role of the country's electronic snooping agency GCHQ, which gathers vast quantities of online data as a key partner of the NSA.

Stories published in The Guardian newspaper based on Snowden's leaks claimed the two agencies traded large amounts of information, and said GCHQ had access to the NSA's PRISM information-gathering program, raising concerns the agency used PRISM to get around British restrictions on domestic spying.

Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee has promised to hold open hearings as part of a widened investigation into the scale of electronic surveillance. Three British civil liberties organizations have also have filed a lawsuit at the European Court of Human Rights, accusing GCHQ of violating the privacy of millions of citizens.

Prime Minister David Cameron has defended cyber-surveillance programs as proportionate and necessary, and said last week that The Guardian's stories "damaged national security."

© 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: 70.3M records, 30 days: NSA report draws Paris ire (Update) (2013, October 21)  
retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-10-703m-days-nsa-paris-ire.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.