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NSA Can Hear Phone Calls Despite Obama Assurances

By Todd Beamon | Saturday, 15 Jun 2013 11:56 PM

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Despite President Barack Obama's assurances that "nobody is listening to your telephone calls," the National Security Agency acknowledged in a new classified briefing this week that it did not need court authorization to listen to domestic phone communications.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, a New York Democrat, said that during a secret briefing to members of Congress this week, he was told that the contents of a phone call could be accessed "simply based on an analyst deciding that," the technology reviews website CNET.com reports.

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And if the agency wanted "to listen to the phone," the analyst's decision is sufficient, without any other legal authorization required, Nadler said.

"I was rather startled," Nadler, an attorney who serves on the House

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ranking individuals to eavesdrop on American's phone calls, according to CNET.

Further, Nadler's disclosure indicates the NSA analysts could also access the content of e-mails, text messages, and instant messages without seeking court approval, CNET reports.

The same legal standards that apply to phone calls also apply to Internet communications.

According to the website's report, the latest NSA disclosure appears to confirm some of the accusations made by Edward Snowden, a former

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Snowden told the Guardian in a video interview that, while not all NSA analysts had this ability, he could from the agency's location in Hawaii "wiretap anyone from you or your accountant to a federal judge to even the president."

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He currently is in hiding in Hong Kong and has reportedly shown The South China Morning Post "unverified documents" describing an extensive U.S. campaign to obtain information from computers in Hong Kong and mainland China.

The NSA declined to comment to CNET on Friday. A representative said that Nadler was not immediately available for further comment.

Under the law, surveillance may be authorized by the attorney general and director of national intelligence without prior approval by the secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, as long as minimization requirements and general procedures endorsed by the court are followed.

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The 2008 law requires that the NSA "not intentionally target any person known at the time of acquisition to be located in the United States," CNET reports.

A possible interpretation of that language, some legal experts told CNET, is that the NSA might vacuum up everything it can domestically, thinking that indiscriminate data acquisition was not intended to "target" specific American citizens.

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4th Ammendment - "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."
There should be NO question that this government intrusion is UNCONSTITUTIONAL!! What aren't Americans standing up against this clear assault on their rights and freedoms??

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Mauna • 3 years ago

Obama caught in another lie. I wish Snowden would reveal the information he has on Obama. Snowden said he could look in Obama's files, and Obama's buddies said "that's impossible!" That could never happen. Well, now we have it, it could, And, I would bet Snowden was looking in Obama's files or listening to Obama's conversation when he heard some things that scared the heck out of him, and he decided he had better let the American citizens know what was going on before it was too late. Just think about it.

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Guest • 3 years ago

Those that demand that their words be privatized must trash their phones and personal computers. Electronic scanning devices have eliminated the expression of any personal thought transported through air or wires. Only a whisper in a friends ear is safe.

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Bhr • 3 years ago

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