

NSA spies 'bugged European politicians' offices in America': Fugitive whistleblower Ed Snowden reveals secret operation

- Microphones were put in building and computers compromised as spooks targeted EU in Washington and UN offices in New York
- Head of European Parliament demands 'clarification' from U.S. and warns of rift if report is true
- Der Spiegel says 'strictly confidential' document was leaked by runaway analyst Edward Snowden

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Whistleblower: Edward Snowden leaked a document which allegedly showed U.S. spooks had spied on the EU in America

A document leaked by fugitive ex-CIA whistleblower Edward Snowden claims the U.S. secretly bugged EU offices in America.

Spooks at the National Security Agency (NSA) nobbled EU internal computer networks in Washington and at the 27-member bloc's UN office in New York, according to Germany's Der Spiegel magazine.

Microphones were installed in the building and the computer network compromised, 'giving the agency access to emails and internal documents.'

The document, dated September 2010 and classified 'strictly confidential', has created a diplomatic rift between America and Europe.

Martin Schultz, head of the European Parliament, has demanded 'full clarification' from the U.S. and said that if the report was true, it would have a 'severe impact'.

He said it would be 'a huge scandal', and cause a 'big strain' on the relations between the EU and the U.S.

Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn said U.S. spying was 'out of control, adding: 'The U.S. would do better to monitor its intelligence services instead of its allies.'





Targeted: The 27-bloc EU offices at the UN building in New York was spied on by the U.S. National Security Agency

The document allegedly referred to the EU as a 'target'. Details of European positions on trade and military matters would have been useful to those involved in negotiations between Washington and European governments, says the BBC's Stephen Evans.





Request: Vice president Joe Biden has asked Ecuador to reject an asylum plea by Edward Snowden

Der Spiegel claims the document, was leaked by Snowden, a contracted analyst with the CIA who has since requested asylum in Ecuador after revealing the existence of the so-called PRISM surveillance programme.

The top-secret PRISM programme collects and analyses information from internet and phone users around the world, with access to data from Google, Yahoo! and other Internet firms. U.S. officials say the information gathered is vital in the fight against global terrorism.

Snowden is believed to be currently staying at Moscow's airport where he arrived last weekend from Hong Kong.

America has charged him with theft of government property, unauthorised communication of national defence information and wilful communication of classified communications intelligence.

Each charge carries a maximum 10-year prison sentence.

Vice President Joe Biden called Ecuador's President Rafael Correa, asking him to reject an asylum request made by Snowden, it was revealed yesterday.

'They did discuss Snowden, but I don't have additional details,' Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes told reporters traveling with President Barack Obama in Africa.

It's the highest-level conversation between the U.S. and Ecuador that has been publicly disclosed since Ecuador began considering the possibility of offering Snowden a sanctuary.