

German Chancellor Angela Merkel Defends BND Over NSA Spying Scandal



Berlin, May 5 (RHC)-- German Chancellor Angela Merkel has defended her country's intelligence agency over its cooperation with U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) to spy on EU countries and entities.

"In the face of international terrorism threats, they can only do this in cooperation with other intelligence agencies — and that includes first and foremost the NSA," said Merkel during her first public comments on the spying scandal on Monday.

"Intelligence agencies must be able to work in secret to ensure public safety. The German government will do everything it can to ensure that intelligence agencies are able to carry out their duties." And she added that she would fully cooperate with a parliamentary investigation committee probing the accusations.

On April 30th, a report surfaced that the BND had helped the NSA carry out "political espionage" on high-ranking French officials and the European Commission. Earlier, Germany's Bild daily reported that Berlin was spying on European companies on behalf of the United States.

In 2013, Edward Snowden, a former NSA contractor, blew the whistle on the agency, suggesting Washington had been conducting massive Internet and phone data spying on “friendly countries and their leaders,” including Germany.

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