

Former German Secret Agent Confesses to Spying for CIA



Munich, November 17 (RHC)-- A former German secret service agent accused of treason has admitted to spying for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), telling a court he had done so out of dissatisfaction with his job.

"No one trusted me with anything at [Germany's] Federal Intelligence Service (BND). At the CIA it was different," Markus Reichel told a court in the German city of Munich during his Monday trial. The 32-year-old man is charged with passing 200 secret documents, including names and addresses of BND agents, to the CIA from 2008 until mid-2014 in exchange for at least 95,000 euros (102,000 dollars).

In addition, he provided three documents to the Russian secret service in the country's Munich consulate, prosecutors said.

Reichel was a BND employee until his arrest in July last year. If convicted, he could face up to 15 years in jail. He was unable to find a job after finishing his studies until late 2007, when the BND gave him a job with a monthly net pay of 1,200 euros (1,282 dollars). He was among the lowest-paid BND staff.

The spying case emerged following revelations that the U.S. has been carrying out extensive surveillance on global communications.

In October 2013, Edward Snowden, a former contractor of the US National Security Agency (NSA), leaked two top secret US government spying programs under which the NSA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) are eavesdropping on millions of American and European phone records and the Internet data from major Internet companies such as Facebook, Yahoo, Google, Apple, and Microsoft.

The scandal took even broader dimensions after a confidential memo obtained from Snowden revealed that the NSA had illegally eavesdropped on the phone conversations of dozens of world leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The information made public by Snowden strained relations between Washington and Berlin, resulting in the expulsion of the top CIA official in Germany in July 2014.

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