

U.S. Congressman Suspects Snowden of Working With FSB

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U.S. Representative Mike Rogers.

The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate intelligence committees will investigate suspicions that intelligence leaker Edward Snowden might have already been in touch with Russian security services while working as a defense contractor on U.S. soil, the committees' leaders said.

Representative Mike Rogers, a Republican from Michigan and head of the House Intelligence Committee, told NBC's "Meet the Press," broadcast Sunday, that "the nature of the information that was stolen" pointed at the interest of foreign security agencies. He added that the technical complexity of some of the steps involved in acquiring the files — which he believes to have been beyond Snowden's own capabilities — suggested that he had highly skilled outside help.

"I believe there's a reason he ended up in the hands — the loving arms — of an FSB [Federal

Security Service] agent in Moscow. I do not think that's a coincidence," Rogers said.

Roger's counterpart in the Senate, the chamber's intelligence committee head Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat from California, sounded less definite but did not rule out the possibility of foreign cooperation.

Asked by NBC's program host if Snowden might have been cooperating with the Russians, she said: "He may well have. We don't know at this stage."

Both the House and Senate intelligence committees will look into the possibility, the two lawmakers said— despite a senior FBI official saying Sunday it was still the bureau's conclusion that Snowden had acted alone.

Ben Wizner, an American Civil Liberties Union lawyer who advises Snowden, derided the accusations that the leaker may have been working for Russian spy agencies, saying Sunday that the suspicion was "not only false, it is silly," The New York Times reported.

Rogers and Feinstein offered no specific evidence that Snowden may have been cooperating with foreign intelligence services, with Rogers saying the suspicion was based on "clues" rather than solid proof.

Instead, Rogers cited a classified report by the Defense Intelligence Agency that said Snowden stole about 1.7 million intelligence files that concern vital operations of the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force.

Some of the files that Snowden took had "nothing to do with Americans' privacy, a lot to do with our operations overseas," Rogers said. "And some of the things he did were beyond his technical capabilities."

Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee Michael McCaul, a Republican from Texas, also voiced suspicions on Sunday that Snowden may have had foreign handlers long before he fled the U.S. with a batch of security files.

"I don't think Mr. Snowden woke up one day and had the wherewithal to do this all by himself," McCaul said on ABC's program "This Week."

"I personally believe that he was cultivated by a foreign power to do what he did," McCaul said, though he declined to point suspicions specifically at Russia, saying he could not be sure.

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