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# U.S. Tapped Schrder's Phone, Report Says

By The Moscow Times

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George W. Bush and Gerhard Schröder address the media from the White House steps in the Rose Garden in 2001. **Paul Morse / whitehouse.gov**

Intelligence leaker Edward Snowden, who was granted asylum in Russia after disclosing details of widespread U.S. surveillance, said that U.S. intelligence agencies were monitoring the mobile phone of then-German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder more than 10 years ago, a news report said.

U.S. intelligence began monitoring Schröder's phone conversations around 2002 because of his government's opposition to the U.S.-led military intervention in Iraq, a research conducted by the German newspaper Suddeutsche Zeitung and television network NDR revealed, The Guardian reported.

In October, based on information provided by Snowden, Germany accused the National Security Agency of tapping the phone of the current German Chancellor Angela Merkel. She

was later assured by U.S. President Barack Obama that the U.S. "will not monitor the communications of Chancellor Merkel."

Schröder said in response to the revelations that he would not have imagined being tapped by U.S. intelligence services, but that he was "no longer surprised."

The former chancellor was a less frequent mobile phone user than his successor Merkel has been, having said in an interview in 2005 that he preferred to communicate indirectly through his personal assistants who would handle his phone calls.

Unidentified members of the National Security Agency told German media that the phone tapping was not aimed personally against Schröder or Merkel, but targeted any person who occupied the country's highest office at the time.

U.S. National Security Council representative Kathleen Hayden declined to comment on the information about the tapping of Schröder's communications, while noting that the administration has undertaken a number of steps concerning the work of secret services and aimed at restoring relations with U.S. allies.

Last month Obama signed a decree prohibiting intelligence services to conduct surveillance of foreign leaders that are considered U.S. allies.

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