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Alleged CIA Spy in Germany May Have Worked for Russia All Along

By Anna Dolgov

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Edward Snowden revealed the NSA had been tapping Chancellor Angela Merkel's cell phone.

Germany has expelled the U.S. CIA's station chief in the country, in a dramatic turn of events set into motion after a low-level German intelligence official was caught offering his spying services to Russia.

Cooperation between Germany and the U.S. requires "mutual trust and openness," German government spokesman Steffen Seibert said in a statement Thursday. "The federal government is ready to continue this and expects the same from its closest partners."

Germany was first unsettled by U.S. spying practices after documents leaked by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden revealed that the NSA had been tapping Chancellor Angela Merkel's mobile phone and conducting surveillance inside Germany.

Tensions rekindled last week after German authorities arrested a low-level employee of the

Federal Intelligence Service, or BND, on suspicion of offering to spy for Russia.

The BND official later admitted that he had previously worked for the CIA, but that the U.S. spy body lost interest after two years of service during which the man reportedly leaked more than 200 classified documents, news reports said.

The man then reportedly approached the Russian consulate in Munich with an offer to spy for Moscow, but was caught by Germany's anti-espionage officials.

German espionage-affairs analyst Erich Schmidt-Eenboom told Germany's Deutsche Welle after the scandal broke out that the BND official might have been spying for Russia from the very beginning, even if he believed he was selling documents to the CIA.

"In the intelligence business, it is possible to be recruited under false pretenses," Schmidt-Eenboom was quoted as saying. "Meaning he could have been told he was working for an American agency by people actually working for Russian intelligence. That's indeed possible in this business."

In a timely coincidence, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday lashed out at spying practices by some nations — which he did not name — against their allies.

"As for the aforementioned cyber espionage, this is not only blatant hypocrisy in relations between allies and partners, but also a direct infringement against state sovereignty and a violation of human rights, interference in private lives," Putin said in an interview published on the Kremlin website Friday.

See also:

[Edward Snowden's Lawyer Confirms NSA Leaker Wants To Stay in Russia]

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