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DID YOU KNOW?: Two Secretive Israeli Companies Reportedly Bugged The US Telecommunications Grid For The NSA

■ MICHAEL KELLEY (HTTP://WWW.BUSINESSINSIDER.COM/AUTHOR/MICHAEL-KELLEY)

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The newest information regarding the NSA domestic spying scandal

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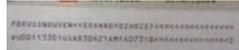
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ACLU (http://www.aclu.org/national-security/nsa-unchained-infographic)

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(<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-washington-post-backtracks-on-claim-tech-companies-participate-knowingly-in-the-nsas-data-collection-2013-6>) raises an important question: If America's tech giants didn't 'participate knowingly' in the dragnet of electronic communication, how does the NSA get all of their data (<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-impact-of-nsa-domestic-spying-2013-6>)?

One theory: the NSA hired two secretive Israeli companies to wiretap the U.S. telecommunications network.

In April 2012 Wired's James Bamford — author of the book "The Shadow Factory: The NSA from 9/11 to the Eavesdropping on America (<http://www.amazon.com/Shadow-Factory-NSA-Eavesdropping-America/dp/0307279391>)" — reported that two companies with extensive links to Israel's intelligence service provided hardware and software to wiretap the U.S. telecommunications network (<http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2012/04/shady-companies-nsa/all/1>) for the National Security Agency (NSA).

By doing so, this would imply, companies like Facebook and Google don't have to explicitly provide the NSA with access to their servers because major Internet Service Providers (ISPs) such as AT&T and Verizon already allows the U.S. signals intelligence agency to eavesdrop on all of their data anyway.

From Bamford (<http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2012/04/shady-companies-nsa/all/1>) (emphasis ours):

"According to a former Verizon (<http://www.businessinsider.com/blackboard/verizon>) employee briefed on the program, Verint (<http://verint.com/>), owned by Comverse Technology, **taps the communication lines at Verizon...**

At AT&T the wiretapping rooms are powered by software and hardware from Narus (<http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2006/05/70908>), now owned by Boeing (<http://www.businessinsider.com/blackboard/boeing>), a discovery made by AT&T whistleblower Mark Klein (http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2007/05/att_whistleblow/) in 2004."

Klein, an engineer, discovered the "secret room" at AT&T central office in San Francisco (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/07/AR2007110700006.html>), through which the NSA actively **"*vacuumed up Internet and phone-call data from ordinary Americans with the cooperation of AT&T"** through the wiretapping rooms, **emphasizing** (<http://www.businessinsider.com/nsa-collecting-phone-records-of-americans-2013-6>) that "much of the data sent through AT&T to the NSA was purely domestic."

NSA whistleblower Thomas Drake corroborated Klein's assertions, testifying (<https://www.eff.org/document/drake-declaration-support-plaintiffs-motion>) that while the NSA is using Israeli-made NARUS hardware (<http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2006/05/70914>) to "seize and save (<https://www.eff.org/document/drake-declaration-support-plaintiffs-motion>) all personal electronic communications."

Both Verint and Narus were founded in Israel in the 1990s. Both provide monitoring and intercept capabilities to service providers and government organizations (http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2001/10/15/311567/index.htm), promoting claims that their equipment can access and retain large amounts of information on a vast number of targets.

From Robert Poe of Wired (<http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2012/04/shady-companies-nsa/all/1>):

Narus' product, the Semantic Traffic Analyzer, is a software application that runs on standard IBM or Dell servers using the Linux operating system. It's renowned within certain circles for its ability to inspect traffic in real time on high-bandwidth pipes, identifying packets of interest as they race by at up to 10 Gbps.

"*Anything that comes through (an internet protocol network), we can record,"

Steve Bannerman, marketing vice president of Narus (<http://www.narus.com/>), a Mountain View, California company, said

(<http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2006/05/70914>). "We can reconstruct all of their e-mails along with attachments, see what web pages they clicked on, we can reconstruct their (voice over internet protocol) calls."

With a telecom wiretap the NSA only needs companies like Microsoft, Google, and Apple to *passively* participate while the agency intercepts, stores, and analyzes their communication data. The indirect nature of the agreement would provide tech giants with plausible deniability.

And having a foreign contractor bug the telecom grid would mean that the NSA gained access to most of the domestic traffic flowing through the U.S. without *technically* doing it themselves.

This would provide the NSA, whose official mission is to spy on foreign communications, with plausible deniability regarding domestic snooping.



AP/Rick Bowmer

An aerial view of the NSA's \$2 billion Utah Data Center in Bluffdale, Utah, where the signals intelligence agency can intercept, store, and analyze reams of foreign and domestic communications. It's expected to open in October.

Meanwhile projects like the agency's \$2 billion data center in Bluffdale, Utah (<http://nsa.gov1.info/utah-data-center/>) — which can collect and analyze "yottobytes" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yottabyte>)" of information— to sift through domestic internet

traffic.



AP/Rick Bowmer

Equipment for cooling data mining equipment at the NSA's data center in Bluffdale, Utah

In 2007 a former commander of the highly secret Unit 8200 (i.e. Israel's NSA) told Forbes (http://www.forbes.com/2007/02/07/israel-military-unit-ventures-biz-cx_gk_0208israel.html) that the technology of Comverse (i.e. the company that owns Verint) is based on Unit 8200 technology.

One of the founders of Verint, Jacob "Kobi" Alexander, is a former Israeli intelligence officer.

A co-founder and former chairman of Narus, Ori Cohen, told Fortune (http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2001/10/15/311567/index.htm) in 2001 that his partners have done technology work for Israeli intelligence.

In 2011 another former chief of Unit 8200 acknowledged to the Israeli paper Haartzet (<http://rpdefense.over-blog.com/article-une-unite-d-elite-qui-a-pour-but-de-developper-les-prouesses-technologiques-de-tsahal-85544009.html>) that high-tech firms around the world employ both Unit 8200 equipment and its veteran personnel.

From Bamford Wired (<http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2012/04/shady-companies-nsa/all/1>) (emphasis ours):

“Cautious estimates indicate that in the past few years... Unit 8200 veterans have set up some 30 to 40 high-tech

companies, including 5 to 10 that were floated on Wall Street.” Referred to only as “Brigadier General B,” he added, “This correlation between serving in the intelligence Unit 8200 and starting successful high-tech companies is not coincidental: Many of the technologies in use around the world and developed in Israel were originally military technologies and were developed and improved by Unit veterans.”

The NSA began eavesdropping on the international communications of Americans after President Bush secretly authorized (http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/16/politics/16program.html?_r=1) the practice in 2002 — without the court-approved warrants ordinarily required for domestic spying — to search for evidence of terrorist activity.

The newest revelations confirm (<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2013/06/confirmed-nsa-spying-millions-americans>) that the practices employed during the secret program, code-named Stellar Wind (http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2012/03/ff_nsadatacenter/all/1), hasn't stopped under President Obama (<http://www.businessinsider.com/obamas-fbi-chief-backed-nsa-wiretapping-2013-5>).

From the Pulitzer-Prize winning 2005 story (<http://www.pulitzer.org/archives/7040>) by Eric Lichtblau and James Risen of the New York Times:

As part of the program approved by President Bush for domestic surveillance without warrants, the N.S.A. has gained the cooperation of American telecommunications companies to obtain backdoor access to streams of domestic and international communications, the officials said.

Last year the ACLU published this infographic

(<http://www.businessinsider.com/infographic-how-the-nsa-intercepts-the-electronic-communications-of-americans-2012-5>), which is the best way to visualize what bugging the telecommunications grid provides the NSA:

The NSA Unchained

★ In November 2001, the National Security Agency began illegally intercepting Americans' phone calls and emails without warrants or suspicion of wrongdoing. In 2008, Congress amended the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), rubber-stamping this warrantless wiretapping program and giving the NSA power to conduct dragnet surveillance of Americans' international communications.

"It's exactly what the founding fathers never wanted."

—NSA whistleblower BILL BINNEY 1

Every day, the NSA intercepts and stores **1.7 billion** emails, phone calls, texts, and other electronic communications. 2

That's equivalent to **138 million books**, every 24 hours. 3

Americans' Private Data

↓

NSA Data Center

The NSA has dozens of facilities around the globe. The new NSA data center in Utah alone is **5.7 times the size of the U.S. Capitol**. 4

The NSA has as many employees as the CIA and the FBI combined.



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In addition to legalizing President Bush's warrantless wiretapping program, the 2008 FISA Amendments Act gave telecommunications companies **retroactive immunity** for disclosing Americans' communications.

FBI "officials complained privately that they were forced to chase many hundreds of NSA-generated leads that . . . often seemed to wind up with the pizza delivery man."

—New York Times reporter ERIC LICHTBLAU 6

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When probed by Congressional intelligence committees about surveillance under the amended law, intelligence officials admitted the agency had been engaged in **"significant and systemic" "overcollection"** of Americans' domestic communications. 7

Government reports confirm that the NSA has violated FISA, but the NSA **refuses to release information** about these abuses. 8



ACLU Tell Congress to Fix FISA and rein in the NSA:
 visit www.aclu.org/FixFISA

- SOURCES
1. http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/05/23/110523fa_fact_mayer?currentPage=all
 2. <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/top-secret-america/articles/a-hidden-world-growing-beyond-control/print/>
 3. http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/05/23/110523fa_fact_mayer?currentPage=all
 4. http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/press_room/2011/utah_groundbreaking_ceremony.shtml
 5. *Body of Secrets* (2002), James Bamford. Page 482
 6. http://tpmmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2008/03/lichtblau_pizza_hut_leads.php
 7. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/16/us/16nsa.html?pagewanted=all>
 8. <http://www.aclu.org/blog/national-security/fbi-if-we-told-you-you-might-sue-1>

(<http://static2.businessinsider.com/image/4fbd210d69bedddf40000007-960/fisainfographic3.jpg>) ACLU (<http://www.aclu.org/files/pages/fisainfographic3.pdf>)

**emphasis added by the author of this article*

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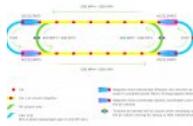
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Michael Kelley (/commenter?)

id=4f47bcb5eab8ea925100004a on Jun 7, 4:48 PM

(<http://www.businessinsider.com/c/51b2472169beddce67000001>)

said:

@Heretic: Have no fear — my mustache is here!



ibsteve2u (/commenter?)

id=4f8ca7f76bb3f7b731000000 on Jun 11, 8:51 AM

(<http://www.businessinsider.com/c/51b71d3cecad049c5a000014>)

said:

Re: "...taps the communication lines at Verizon".

In the biz, "tap" is often interchangeable with "intercept".

Which should give Americans pause when they consider all of those electronic voting machines reporting back to central tabulating computers. If you can intercept, you can inject.



Greg Burton (/commenter?)

id=4fa9631e69beddcf6e000000 on Jun 18, 11:56 AM

(<http://www.businessinsider.com/c/51c083136bb3f7013200001f>) said:

Controlling both sides of the "terrorist" equation: committing terrorist acts, intentionally creating false terrorism, fanning the flames of terrorist fear on the one side; reporting on, spying on, investigating, profiting from, legislating, prosecuting and enforcing police state laws on the other. Meanwhile Palestine is systemically reduced into Israel, the world becomes a gulag, while we are distracted fighting a concocted enemy used to undermine regimes targeted for subordination to their satanic NWO.



The Bleachers

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