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## US shows refusal to respect European Privacy Requirements

The Obama Administration has unilaterally decided to 'tear up' the agreement negotiated with the Eurozone on the monitoring of SWIFT transactions.

Originally, the US set up secret monitoring of the International Financial system in order to combat terrorist funding and money laundering. When this covert monitoring came to light in 2006, Europe agreed to provide the information on request - subject to several conditions;

- The minimum amount to monitor should be \$10,000
- The request should be approved by Europol
- The data must be relevant to a specific terrorist investigation

However, **Obama's administration has decided it is not willing to co-operate**, and that it will monitor any transaction it wants without seeking approval or permission. Europe was not notified of this, and instead were only made aware when the Washington Post [stated](#) that "*transactions between European and US banks would be captured regardless of whether there is a substantiated need*".

Unsurprisingly, the European Commission are high unimpressed and are "requesting Clarification" from Washington. This rather docile term generally means "very p\*ssed off" in the world of European Politics.

The Dutch MEP met with the European Commission before releasing the following statement;

We are all getting a bit tired of being taken by surprise all the time. The US is our friend and ally, so we shouldn't be treated this way

To add insult to injury, the US Government is once again labouring under the **delusion** that it owns the Internet.

The National Security Crowd want legislation passed requiring **all** services that enable communications — including encrypted email transmitters like BlackBerry, social networking websites and software that permits direct “peer to peer” messaging such as Skype — to be technically capable of complying if ordered by a court/Government Agency to impose a wire tap.

The proposal has already been criticised by the [Center for Democracy and Technology](#), who claim that the Government want to ‘turn back the clock’ and make the Internet work the way the Telephone system once did.

London MEP – Sarah Lufford – echoed these concerns stating;

How the US chooses to snoop on people within its own borders is its own business. But there seems little point in struggling to reach transatlantic agreements on data transfer such as those on financial transactions (SWIFT/TFTP) and Passenger Name Records if the US is going to undermine them through constantly moving the goalposts.

We need an overarching EU-US deal not only on privacy safeguards but also on the broad limits of what personal information will be sought by law enforcement agencies. Permanent mission creep is very destabilising of the trust necessary to reach long-term agreements.

MEPs are fully supportive of necessary and proportionate efforts to catch major criminals. But the US must be stopped from trashing the international boundaries of privacy. The European Commission and EU governments must in particular make crystal clear – as they have so far failed to do – what the rules are on data-mining and profiling.

These sentiments are likely to be echoed by Internet Users world wide.

Contrary to popular belief, the Internet was **not** invented in the US. It does **not** belong to the US Government (indeed the Domain Name Regulator ICAAN has recently become fully independent of the US Gov), and the US has **no** god-given right to snoop on the communication of any individual.

Whilst intelligence gathering may be essential for National Security Purposes, it is unacceptable that the US should try to pass a local law and then enforce that law on the rest of the world (sentiments, strangely enough, echoed by those concerned with overreaching copyright legislation).

The US does **not** have the authority or the right to try and police the Internet. They never have, and probably never will, regardless of any legislation they may pass to the contrary.

Protect your rights, write to your local MP/MEP and ensure that they are made aware of the liberties that the Obama Administration is taking. As the quotes show, the US is supposed to be an Ally, yet treats us with disdain. **It is time that they were reminded that Europe is not part of the USA, their laws have no bearing on us and their Law Enforcement Agencies have no right to monitor our bank transfers or our communications.**

If this legislation should pass, we at Freedom4All will be among the first to publish articles on how to secure your communications. Privacy is a fundamental human right, and must be respected!

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