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German Government Sends Envoys to Washington to Protest Over NSA Spying

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The German government of Angela Merkel has announced that it is sending two top intelligence officials to Washington, D.C. to speak to their American counterparts, and presumably demand answers about the NSA's long-term spying activities of their German "friends." The heads of the domestic and foreign intelligence services will arrive next week, according to *Der Spiegel*.

It turns out that not only was the U.S. spying on Merkel's phone recently, but it had been doing so for 10 years, according to the latest *Spiegel* revelations. Merkel harumphed that relations between Europe and the U.S. had been "severely shaken," and Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy announced Friday that he too had had summoned the U.S. ambassador to explain the matter to his government. Germany and Brazil are working on drafting a U. N. resolution against spying.

Meanwhile, the White House indicated it was considering signing "no spying" agreements with various erstwhile allies—it already has such agreements with the U.K, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Deputy NSA head Ben Rhodes told NBC on Friday: "We are already in diplomatic and intelligence channels talking to the Germans. French, countries around the world — Brazil and Mexico as well.. I think we'll have a series of bilateral discussions with these countries and look at multilateral discussions as well.

But the official response coming from the State Department remains the unrepentant in-your-face line that Obama has had all along. State Department spokesman Jen Psaki said Friday: "We will of course continue to gather the information we need to keep ourselves and our allies safe. We of course will factor in the views of our friends and partners as we have those discussions with them, and we'll continue to balance our security needs with privacy concerns."

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