

**Abdullah tops list of world leaders 'spied' by NSA in 2009, says German daily
Malaysian Insider
30 March, 2014
By Sheridan Mahavera**

A secret document revealed by a German daily, Der Spiegel, shows that former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (pic) was at the top of a list of world leaders targeted for surveillance by the United States' National Security Agency.

The list was compiled in 2009 and contained the names of 122 world leaders, starting with Abdullah and ending with former Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

Other leaders include German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Syria's Bashar al-Assad.

According to the paper, the documents did not provide sufficient information to determine the types of surveillance, with the NSA saying it would not comment on the matter.

Abdullah took over the premiership from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 2003. He resigned six years later following Barisan Nasional's poor performance in the 2008 general election, after calls led by Dr Mahathir for his removal.

During his tenure, Abdullah came under the spotlight after it was revealed that Scomi, a company owned by his son Kamaluddin, was allegedly involved in supplying dual-use technology to Libya's clandestine nuclear-weapons programme. This followed an admission by Pakistani nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan that he had shared nuclear information and designs with other countries.

In 2004, a US report named Abdullah for being involved in an Iraq oil-for-food programme scandal, but he denied the allegation, saying he had merely endorsed a valid legitimate business organised by the United Nations in collaboration with the Iraqi government.

The Spiegel report, published yesterday, cited former CIA agent Edward Snowden as the source for the top-secret document.

Only 12 names were, however, shared with Spiegel, including Merkel's, confirming Snowden's claim last year that the German leader's mobile phone had been tapped by the NSA.

The paper also reported that British security agency Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) had infiltrated German Internet firms and that a court order was obtained by the NSA to spy on Germany.

The latest revelation comes several months after Putrajaya summoned American and Australian diplomats in Kuala Lumpur over an alleged United States-led spying network in Asia, including China and Indonesia.

Based on Snowden's revelation, it was widely reported that Australian embassies in Asia were being used to tap phone calls and data.

Der Spiegel had earlier published a map dated August 2010, showing the existence of some 90 electronic surveillance facilities worldwide, including US embassies in Jakarta, Bangkok, Phnom Penh and Yangon.

Snowden had also said Singapore had aided the spying activity, describing the city state a key “third party” to providing access to Malaysian communications.

Snowden is at the centre of some 200,000 leaked documents showing American espionage worldwide.

Washington also runs a monitoring station in its Kuala Lumpur embassy to tap and monitor phone and network communications. – March 30, 2014.

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