

# US Spied on Japan Government, Companies: WikiLeaks

Tokyo (AFP) - The US spy agency targeted Japanese politicians, its top central banker and major firms for years, WikiLeaks said on Friday, in the latest revelations about Washington's snooping on allies.

The intercepts exposing US National Security Agency activities follow other documents released by the whistleblower group that revealed spying on allies including Germany and France, straining relations.

Japan is one of Washington's key allies in the Asia-Pacific region and they regularly consult on defense, economic and trade issues.

The leaks comes as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe moves to expand the role of Japan's military, a move applauded by Washington but deeply unpopular at home.

The claims of spying on trade officials could prove particularly sensitive after high-profile talks kicked off this week in Hawaii aimed at hammering out a vast free-trade bloc encompassing 40 percent of the world's economy.

The United States, Japan, and 10 other Pacific Rim countries are looking to finalize the most ambitious trade deal in decades.

But Washington and Tokyo -- the biggest economies in the negotiations -- have sparred over auto sector access and Tokyo's concerns about including agricultural products in the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership.

"The reports demonstrate the depth of US surveillance of the Japanese government, indicating that intelligence was gathered and processed from numerous Japanese government ministries and offices," WikiLeaks said.

There was "intimate knowledge of internal Japanese deliberations" on trade issues, nuclear policy, and Tokyo's diplomatic relations with Washington, it said.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did not appear to be a direct target of wiretapping but senior politicians were, including Trade Minister Yoi-chi Miyazawa, while Bank of Japan governor Haruhiko Kuroda was also in the sights of US intelligence, WikiLeaks said.

Tokyo did not immediately react to the leaked documents.

The spying goes back at least as far as Abe's brief first term, which began in 2006, WikiLeaks said. Abe swept to power again in late 2012.

"If this is true, Japan is going to be asking for an explanation from the US side, but it's unlikely to have a major impact on the core of Japan-US relations," said Yoshinobu Yamamoto, a professor of international politics at the University of Niigata Prefecture.

The leaks may provoke a strong reaction from a public wary of Abe's bid to expand the military's role and push through a trade deal strongly opposed by Japan's politically powerful farm lobby.

"I think some interest groups and opposition parties will use this news to stick a spoke in the government's wheel," said Celine Pajon, a Japan specialist at the French Institute of International Relations.

Japanese lawmakers are debating the controversial bills that would expand the role of the military and could possibly see troops fighting abroad in defense of allies -- chiefly the United States -- for the first time since the end of World War II.

Abe, stressing the Japan-US alliance as the cornerstone of its diplomacy, wants to enact the bills soon, but opponents say they will drag officially pacifist Japan into foreign wars.

WikiLeaks said there were also intercepts about "sensitive climate change strategy" and the "content of a confidential prime ministerial briefing that took place at Shinzo Abe's official residence".

One intercepted communication suggested Japanese agriculture ministry officials were alarmed at a possible backlash from Washington over a delay in importing US cherries.

Trading giant Mitsubishi's natural gas division and Mitsui's petroleum unit were targeted, while four reports were classified as "Top Secret".

One report was marked to indicate it could be released to allies Britain, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

## MH370 Clues Mount as Wreckage Identified as Boeing 777



Police carry a piece of debris from an unidentified aircraft found on the Saint-Andre region of the Indian Ocean island of La Reunion, on July 29, 2015

SAINT-ANDRÉ, France (AFP) - Malaysian authorities confirmed Friday that plane wreckage washed up on an Indian Ocean island was from a Boeing 777, meaning the part is almost certainly from missing flight MH370.

The debris, part of a plane wing, could provide the first tangible clue towards unlocking the mystery surrounding the Malaysia Airlines plane, which disappeared in March last year with 239 people on board.

"I believe that we are moving closer to solving the mystery of MH370. This could be the convincing evidence that MH370 went down in the Indian Ocean," Malaysia's deputy transport minister Abdul Aziz Kaprawi told AFP.

However, authorities have warned one small piece of plane debris was unlikely to completely clear up one of aviation's greatest puzzles.

The Malaysia Airlines flight was one of only three Boeing 777s to have been involved in major incidents, along with the downing of the MH17 over Ukraine last year and the Asiana Airlines crash at San Francisco airport in 2013 that left three dead.

The wing component found on the French island of La Reunion bears the part number "657 BB", according to photos of the debris.

"From the part number, it is confirmed that it is from a Boeing 777 aircraft. This information is from MAS (Malaysia Airlines). They have informed me," the minister told AFP.

Martin Dolan, chief commissioner of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, which is leading the MH370 search, said greater clarity on the origin of the part should be confirmed "within the next 24 hours".

"We are increasingly confident that this debris is from MH370," Dolan told AFP.

Abdul Aziz said a team of Malaysian investigators had arrived in Paris where the wreckage is due to arrive Saturday at 06:20am (0420 GMT) before heading to the city of Toulouse.

The debris will be analyzed "next week", according to a source in the French investigations team.

Flight MH370 was travelling from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing when it mysteriously turned off course and vanished on March 8 last year.

An Australian-led search has spent 16 months combing the southern Indian Ocean for the aircraft, but no confirmed physical evidence has ever been found, sparking wild conspiracy theories about the plane's fate.

The fruitless search in January led Malaysian authorities to declare all on board were presumed dead.

For relatives of those aboard, torn between wanting closure and hoping beyond hope that their loved ones were still somehow alive, the discov-

ery was yet another painful turn on an emotional rollercoaster.

Australian Jeanette Maguire, whose sister Cathy was on board, said the discovery of the wreckage was "a very bittersweet feeling for all of the family, it's quite emotional."

"We're really hoping for answers that we get from this wreckage that it is MH370 so that we have some idea and another part of our puzzle as to where our family and everyone else on board has gone, and have ended up, unfortunately," she added.

Speculation on the cause of the plane's disappearance has focused primarily on a possible mechanical or structural failure, a hijacking or terror plot, or rogue pilot action.

The discovery of the piece of plane debris by a cleaning team on Wednesday sparked fevered speculation which was heightened with the discovery on the same rocky beach of a piece of torn luggage, a detergent bottle with Indonesian markings and a Chinese bottle of mineral water.

Australian officials played down the discovery of the luggage saying it "may just be rubbish".

Scientists say there are several plausible scenarios in which ocean currents could have carried a piece of debris from the plane to the island.

Australian Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss said while the part "could be a very important piece of evidence" if it was linked to MH370, using reverse modelling to determine more precisely where the debris may have drifted from was "almost impossible".

Australian search authorities, which are leading the hunt for the Boeing 777 aircraft in the Indian Ocean some 4,000 kilometres (2,500 miles) from La Reunion, said they were confident the main debris field was in the current search area.

Dolan said the discovery of the debris, which experts said could be a flaperon from a Boeing 777 aircraft, did not mean other parts would start washing up on La Reunion.

"Over the last 16 or 17 months, any floating debris would have dispersed quite markedly across the Indian Ocean," he said.

Truss said accident investigators would be keen to examine the part to try to find out how it may have separated from the rest of the jet and "whether there's any evidence of fire or other misadventure on the aircraft."

But Dolan cautioned it would be difficult to determine why the plane disappeared from the debris.

"There's limits to how much you can determine from just one piece of debris," he added.

"We know that the main debris field associated with MH370 is going to be on the bottom of the ocean, not floating on the surface."



NEW DELHI (Press TV) - India has executed the only death row convict in the country's deadliest terror attack, the 1993 Bombay bombings, which killed a total of 257 people.

Yakub Abdul Razak Memon was hanged early Thursday after Indian President Pranab Mukerjee rejected a last-minute mercy plea, state TV stations reported.

Memon, 53, was executed inside a prison in western India, where he had been incarcerated since 1994.

An accountant by profession, he was convicted in 2007 of helping raise funds for the serial blasts that rocked Mumbai, the financial capital of India, over two decades ago. The city was known as Bombay until 1995, when its name was officially changed to Mumbai.

By late Wednesday, authorities said, Memon exhausted all the legal possibilities to escape the death penalty.

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ANKARA (Reuters) - The leader of Turkey's pro-Kurdish opposition accused President Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday of launching air strikes in Syria and Iraq to prevent Kurdish territorial and political gains, and of using the war against Islamic State as a cover.

Turkey launched near-simultaneous air strikes on Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) camps in northern Iraq and Islamic State fighters in Syria last Friday, in what Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has called a "synchronized fight against terror".

Western allies, including NATO and the United States, have voiced political support for Turkey's actions but several nations have also urged it not to use excessive force or to let years of peace efforts with Kurdish militants collapse.

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TEHRAN (Press TV) - Tunisia has extended by two months a state of emergency it imposed following a terror attack on foreign tourists in the Mediterranean resort of Port El Kantaoui last month.

"After consultations with the prime minister and the speaker, the president has decided to extend the state of emergency in force nationwide for two months from August 3," President Beji Caid Essebsi's office said in a statement on Friday.

On June 26, a Tunisian student used an MK-47 assault rifle to kill tourists at a hotel in Port El Kantaoui, near the city of Sousse, to the south of the capital, Tunis.

Eyewitnesses said the gunman was mowing down screaming tourists as they ran for their lives. The gunman, who was ultimately shot dead by police, reportedly yelled to locals to stay away, saying, "I didn't come for you."

Among the 38 victims were tourists from Germany, Belgium, and Portugal; however, most of the tourists killed were from the UK.

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RIO DE JANEIRO (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - The Brazilian government plans to use drones to strengthen its fight against slave labor in rural areas, the Labor Ministry has said.

Labor inspectors, who investigate properties that are suspected of employing workers in slave-like conditions, will use six drones equipped with cameras to monitor suspicious activities starting next month in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

"Drones don't substitute the inspector's physical presence, but they will be useful out in the country, in the case of farms that are hard to reach by road, for example," said Bruno Barcia Lopes, coordinator of Rural Supervision at Rio de Janeiro's Labor Secretariat.

The Inspire 1 drones, made by China's DJI, have cameras that can shoot 4K resolution video and capture 12 megapixel photos. After Rio, other Brazilian states will start using similar equipment, the Labor Ministry said in a statement last week.

## U.S. Imposes More Russian and Ukrainian Sanctions

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States imposed further Russia and Ukraine-related sanctions on Thursday, adding associates of a billionaire Russian gas trader, Crimean port operators and former Ukrainian officials to its list of those it is penalizing in response to Russia's actions in Ukraine.

The U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed measures against eight entities and people it said were providing support to Gennady Timchenko, a prominent gas trader previously sanctioned.

It also targeted two entities it

said were providing support to Boris Rotenberg, a Russian businessman and ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The measures are meant to compel Russia to comply with peace-keeping commitments signed this year in Minsk that would end fighting in eastern Ukraine, in which pro-Russian separatists are battling Ukrainian forces.

"Today's action underscores our resolve to maintain pressure on Russia for violating international law and fueling the conflict in eastern Ukraine," Acting OFAC Director John Smith said in a statement.

The United States on Thursday

also sanctioned four former Ukrainian officials and their close associates linked to former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, who fled to Russia last year after being toppled by months of street protests.

Five Crimean port operators and one ferry operator were sanctioned for operating in the Crimea region of Ukraine, which was annexed by Russia in 2014.

The United States also identified several entities it said were subsidiaries of VEB and Rosneft, the Russian state development bank and flagship oil giant, which were sanctioned last year.

## UN Ebola Mission Winds Down, WHO Takes Reins in West Africa

LONDON (AP) — The United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response was officially winding down Friday, handing its leadership role and senior staff to the Geneva-based World Health Organization as efforts to contain the deadly virus continue.

The temporary body, also called UNMEER, was established last year as WHO struggled to get a handle on an outbreak which has killed more than 11,000 people, mainly in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. WHO had been strongly criticized for fumbling its response to the epidemic and the creation of UNMEER was

widely seen as a rebuke to its leadership.

Speaking to reporters Friday, UNMEER chief David Nabarro said he'd seen signs that WHO had already absorbed some of the lessons of the Ebola disaster, recovering its leadership role in West Africa and deploying more 1,000 staffers to the field.

"This is an example of the new WHO at work," he said.

Speaking alongside him was WHO boss Dr. Margaret Chan, who said her agency was working to reform itself — especially by establishing an emergency arm which would operate independently.

But Charles Clift, a public health expert at the London policy institute Chatham House, was unsure if adding another department to WHO might help.

And despite the health agency's repeated vows to hold itself accountable, Clift was unconvinced. He noted that some of the WHO leaders in Africa blamed for the slow response to Ebola have since been moved to other countries.

"Getting sacked doesn't really happen at the UN," he said.

Chan acknowledged that WHO was slow and that she was "absolutely accountable" for everything the agency does.