ECHELON Program: Global Surveillance

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Jheric Byrd

Zack Minshew

Overview

- The National Security Agency (NSA) routinely tracks telephone, fax, and e-mail transmissions from around the world and passes on useful corporate intelligence to American companies through an electronic surveillance system called ECHELON.

- While many details about the program remain secret, officials familiar with it say the NSA eavesdrops without warrants on up to 500 people in the United States at any given time. The list changes as some names are added and others dropped, so the number monitored in this country may have reached into the millions since the program began. Overseas, about 5,000 to 7,000 people suspected of terrorist ties are monitored at one time.

Allegations

- Personal Privacy:
  - "The NSA gathered metadata from some 15 million telephone conversations and 10 million internet datasets." -Edward Snowden
- Industrial Espionage:
  - NSA gave information to Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, enabling the companies to beat out Airbus for a $6 billion contract.
  - Raytheon received information that helped it win a $1.3 billion contract to provide radar to Brazil, edging out the French company Thomson-CSF.
  - NSA worked with Israel to create STUXNET, malware that targeted the SCADA systems of Iran's nuclear program.

Example Scenario

In February of 2000, 60 Minutes published a report detailing the existence and scope of ECHELON. Mike Frost, a former spy for Canada's NSA-equivalent, CSE, told the host just how large the program's reach really was, "Echelon covers everything that's radiated worldwide at any given instant."

Frost also recounted a tale of how exactly the program was being used:

"While I was at CSE, a classic example: A lady had been to a school play the night before, and her son was in the school play and she thought he did a–a lousy job. Next morning, she was talking on the telephone to her friend, and she said to her friend something like this, 'Oh, Danny really bombed last night,' just like that. The computer spit that conversation out. The analyst that was looking at it was not too sure about what the conversation w–was referring to, so erring on the side of caution, he listed that lady and her phone number in the database as a possible terrorist."

IEEE Principles Violated

1. The government still denies the full scope and purpose of the ECHELON program.

2. The government used the program to boost the probability of US based companies winning contracts over other international companies.

3. For the majority of its existence, the government has denied that ECHELON existed.

NSPE Principles Violated

1. The government has no regard for the public's welfare when it comes to privacy.

3. Untruthful public statements were issued regarding the existence of ECHELON.

5. Much of the general public is deceived by thinking that their calls and other actions are private to them only.

6. The evolution of the ECHELON program has led to it becoming very unethical.

Main People & Conflicts

- Intelligence agencies of United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, & New Zealand. (Five Eyes)
- George Bush

- Temporary Committee on the ECHELON Interception System (European Parliament)
- Edward Snowden

- The general conflicts are the breech of individuals personal privacy and industrial espionage.
- These conflicts are ongoing and will probably never be resolved.

Resolution?

- The ECHELON program's unethical actions will more than likely never be addressed.
- This was observed when Edward Snowden confirmed the actions of the NSA with private documents he released. He knew whistleblowing itself would not have any effect on the NSA or the ECHELON program.
- Snowden was trying to rally the general public to make a stand against ECHELON. However the public failed to care about the matter and now Snowden has to live in Russia.

  Without a mass joint effort by the general public, how could the ECHELON program be stopped?