



The National Security Agency routinely shares raw intelligence data with Israel without first sifting it to remove information about US citizens, a top-secret document provided to the Guardian by whistleblower Edward Snowden reveals.

Details of the intelligence-sharing agreement are laid out in a memorandum of understanding between the NSA and its Israeli counterpart that shows the US government handed over intercepted communications likely to contain phone calls and emails of American citizens. The agreement places no legally binding limits on the use of the data by the Israelis.

The disclosure that the NSA agreed to provide raw intelligence data to a foreign country contrasts with assurances from the Obama administration that there are rigorous safeguards to protect the privacy of US citizens caught in the dragnet. The intelligence community calls this process "minimization", but the memorandum makes clear that the information shared with the Israelis would be in its pre-minimized state.

The deal was reached in principle in March 2009, according to the undated memorandum, which lays out the ground rules for the intelligence sharing.

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