

## *Special Report*

### **NSA intercepts for Bolton masked as 'training missions'**

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April 25, 2005—According to National Security Agency insiders, outgoing NSA Director General Michael Hayden approved special communications intercepts of phone conversations made by past and present U.S. government officials. The intercepts are at the height of the current controversy surrounding the nomination of Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton as ambassador to the United Nations.

It was revealed by Senator Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) during Bolton's Senate Foreign Relations Committee nomination hearing that Bolton requested transcripts of 10 NSA intercepts of conversations between named U.S. government officials and foreign persons. However, NSA insiders report that Hayden approved special intercept operations on behalf of Bolton and had them masked as "training missions" in order to get around internal NSA regulations that normally prohibit such eavesdropping on U.S. citizens.

It is noteworthy that in the fictional movie "Enemy of the State," it was under the authority of a "training mission" that renegade NSA officials targeted U.S. civilians for eavesdropping. United States Signals Intelligence Directive (USSID) 18, the NSA's "Bible" for the conducting of surveillance against U.S. persons, allows "U.S. material," i.e., listening to U.S. persons, to be used for training missions. However, USSID 18 also requires that all intercepts conducted for such training missions are to be completely destroyed after completion of the training operation.

In the case of Bolton and other Bush administration hardliners, the material in question was not deleted and was transmitted in raw intercept form to external agencies for clearly political purposes—a violation of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and USSID 18, which only allows such raw training mission intercepts to be transmitted when evidence of criminal activity is uncovered during the training mission.

Unlike signals intelligence (SIGINT) data stored in the "Anchory" (formerly known as the SIGINT On-line Intelligence System or "SOLIS") database, training intercepts are completely off-the-books and, in the case of raw intercepts provided to Bolton and others, the NSA and its Signals Intelligence Directorate (SID) can claim "plausible deniability" in stating that only "official" intercept transcripts were provided to users outside the agency. Because they are to be destroyed after completion of training missions, the training intercepts do not appear in any agency logs and cannot be obtained by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unless they are subpoenaed directly from Bolton and his colleagues.

Hayden breezed through Senate confirmation hearings as the new deputy director of National Intelligence, where he will serve as John Negroponte's chief assistant and have authority over the entire U.S. Intelligence Community.

Intelligence community insiders claim that a number of State Department and other government officials may have been subject to NSA "training" surveillance and that transcripts between them and foreign officials likely ended up in the possession of Bolton and his neoconservative political allies, including such members of Vice President Dick Cheney's staff as David Wurmser (a former assistant to Bolton at State), John Hannah, and Lewis "Scooter" Libby.

Possible affected individuals include: Secretary of State Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and their conversations with their counterparts and officials around the world; Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs William Burns and his telephone conversations with International Atomic Energy Agency director general Mohammed el Baradei and Britain's top non-proliferation official William Ehrman (Bolton was frozen out of negotiations between Burns, Britain, and Libya over the stand-down of the Libyan weapons of mass destruction program) (also Burns's conversations with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq al Shara over charges by Bolton that Syria possessed WMD, and conversations between Burns and former chief UN Iraq weapons inspector Hans Blix); various phone calls made by Chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board Brent Scowcroft; U.S. Special Envoy on North Korea Charles "Jack" Pritchard and his telephone conversations with U.S. ambassador to South Korea Thomas Hubbard, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs James Kelly, and Richard Armitage; New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and his telephone conversations with Secretary of State Powell and North Korea's deputy UN ambassador Han Song Ryol; phone conversations between Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Joseph Biden and his Iranian counterpart, Majlis foreign affairs chair Mohsen Mirdamad, and between Biden, his staff, and William Burns and Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman; and President Jimmy Carter's phone conversations with Cuban officials before and during his May 2002 trip to Cuba (Carter said he found no evidence to support Bolton's claims of Cuban biological weapons development).

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