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US security agency 'collecting Verizon phone records' - posted by Heydave (), on: 2013/6/6 3:46

The US National Security Agency is collecting the telephone records of tens of millions of Americans, according to the Guardian newspaper.

The British paper published what it said was a secret court order directing the Verizon company to hand over electronic data on all its customers on an "ongoing daily basis".

Civil liberties groups said the details of the report were "stunning".

The US government and Verizon have not commented on the report.

The US Center for Constitutional Rights said it appears to be "the broadest surveillance order to ever have been issued".

The document published by the Guardian was signed by Judge Roger Vinson of the secret Intelligence Surveillance Court on 25 April and lasts until 19 July.

It requires Verizon - one of the largest phone companies in the US - to disclose to the NSA the details of all calls it processes, both domestic and international.

The data includes telephone numbers, calling card numbers, International Mobile Subscriber Identity numbers (IMSI), International Mobile station Equipment Identity number (IMEI) as well as the time and duration.

The contents of the call, nor the names, addresses or financial information of the callers are not required.

The order also contains a gagging order, requiring that "no person shall disclose to any other person that the FBI or NSA has sought or obtained tangible things under this Order".

The Guardian said the document "shows for the first time that under the Obama administration the communication records of millions of US citizens are being collected indiscriminately and in bulk - regardless of whether they are suspected of any wrongdoing".

The paper said the NSA, the White House and the Department of Justice had all declined to comment. A spokesman for Verizon, Ed McFadden, told the Associated Press the company had no comment.

The White House was heavily criticised last month for gathering the phone records of journalists at the Associated Press.

The story prompted both questions from both Republicans and Democrats in Washington about how the White House was balancing the need for national security with privacy rights.

From BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-22793851>

Did you notice this paragraph?: "The order also contains a gagging order, requiring that "no person shall disclose to any other person that the FBI or NSA has sought or obtained tangible things under this Order"!"