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On February 9, 2014 (during Meet the Press), U. S. Ambassador to Russia Mike McFaul tells David Gregory about the capacity of the Russian government to bug American visitors. The ambassador admits that he has been bugged on several occasions, and American visitors should expect the same thing when they visit Russia. However, unlike here in the U. S. where citizens have the right to secrecy and privacy, it is a different case in Russia. The law in Russia gives the government tremendous capacity to intercept calls and emails.

McFaul goes further to state that he is a primary subject of interest to the Russian government, and they have leaked his conversations on several occasions. Therefore, it is little wonder that the Russian government has even gone ahead to leak the ambassador's private conversations. Later, McFaul condemns the leaking of a tape in which an American diplomat is heard saying " F*ck the EU."

McFaul's interview raises questions about governments leaking private phone calls of foreign diplomats. The revelation also raises questions about the ability of the Russian government to respect the privacy of citizens.

Morally, that would be wrong and unacceptable. However, the issue can be looked at from a different perspective: the perspective that secret police in almost every nation tap phone conversations, and hack emails and networks in an attempt to gather intelligence. While nations such as Russia can justify the need for bugging (by stating that bugging is necessary for the purpose of securing their country), morals issues regarding such acts are bound to arise.

In addition, although the ambassador is justified in questioning the

government's intention in tapping phones of foreign diplomats, McFaul's interview also raises the question of double standards. Late last year, the issue of governments spying on leaders of other governments caused a furore. This followed the revelation that the U. S. government spied on Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel. Although that information is classified, and the government never leaked the tapped phone calls, the government's defense of the secret US surveillance contradicts what McFaul is crying foul about. To some, the ambassador has no moral grounds to cry foul because the government also engages in an elaborate surveillance, albeit illegally. Nevertheless, the implications for spying on foreign leaders of a foreign nation are far reaching. On one hand, it would be near impossible for leaders to pass confidential information to other leaders for fear of being bugged. On the other hand, leaders of nations would be at a loss when determining their real friends. Lastly, it would also be hard to respect the government's word. Despite all the arguments and counterarguments, the fact is nations have interests. Some nations have the same interests, and they can work together while others are always suspicious of the other. Again, intelligence gathering still focuses on the use of old dirty tricks. For example, it is not odd to realize that some governments eavesdrop, tap phones and hack networks all in the quest to gather intelligence. Therefore, in the wake of the latest revelations, there should be no shock and surprise especially considering the history of Russia.

In meet the press, U. S. ambassador to Russia Mike McFaul expresses the fear that the Russian government carries out surveillance on American citizens visiting the country. Using his example, McFaul cautions that the

trend will probably go on unchecked because it is in their (Russian) law.

Nevertheless, leaking private phone conversations of foreign diplomats is an issue that will continue to arouse debate in the near future.

Bibliography

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