

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:648

ANSWERED ON:07.08.2013

INTERNET SPYING ON INDIA

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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the USA and some other countries have been indulging in internet spying against India;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in the matter so far;
- (c) whether the USA has justified the spying and intends to continue with it;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether it is a violation of sovereignty of India; and
- (f) if so, the steps taken to ensure such violations do not take place in future?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) In June 2013, Mr. Edward Snowden, a contractor working with the U.S. National Security Agency, released to media classified information about the Agency's extensive electronic surveillance programmes. Media reports stated that these programmes included collection of telephony metadata and interception of internet content.

(c) & (d) U.S. officials have defended the disclosed surveillance programmes, stating that these programmes monitor only broad patterns of internet traffic with the objective of thwarting terrorist attacks, and that the content of data is not being accessed or monitored. U.S. President Barack Obama said that such surveillance programmes are a trade-off between security and civil liberties, and all three arms of the U.S. Government, the Executive, the Congress and the Judiciary, were fully aware of these programmes. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry also defended these programmes by stating that it had led to uncovering of terrorist plots.

(d) to (f) Government has expressed concerns over reports of access by U.S. agencies to internet communications emanating from India. Government views any violation of Indian laws relating to the privacy of information of ordinary Indian citizens as unacceptable. The Indian Embassy in Washington DC has raised these concerns with the U.S. Department of State. Government will also raise these concerns with the U.S. in the bilateral dialogue mechanisms on cyber issues.