White House Panel Suggests Limits for NSA Snooping

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A group of presidential advisers asked to review the National Security Agency's (NSA) surveillance and data collection polices is advising the White House to limit and put an end to some

of the agency's programs.

The panel's report out today suggests eliminating the agency's ability to store American's phone records and also adding stricter court clearance for the NSA to pull call and data records.

The New York Times said [1] the 300-page report also suggests that more rigid oversight is needed to authorize any espionage of foreign leaders to more carefully determine possible damage to foreign relations or economic implications.

As the Associated Press points out, although President Obama ordered the advisers to study and report on the NSA's practices, the White House is not under obligation to act on the panel's recommendations.

This week, a federal judge decided that the NSA's huge cellphone data collection efforts are likely unconstitutional. In choosing against handing down an injunction, U.S. District Court Judge Richard Leon anticipated the appeals process will be a lengthy one and could eventually reach the Supreme Court.

Following reports of the NSA demanding phone records from Verizon Wireless, the

Wall Street Journal added that the NSA was getting similar records from both AT&T and Sprint [2]. In addition to U.S. mobile operators, the NSA has collected personal information from web services and manufacturers like Google, Apple and Yahoo.

The information in question that is being culled from wireless carriers was described in an NSA order as “metadata,” which does not include the actual content of calls and messages.

The current scrutiny of NSA practices began earlier this year when NSA employee Edward Snowden leaked to the press information detailing a surveillance and data collection program called PRISM.

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