

**ANDRE MALRAUX
MODEL UNITED NATIONS**



January 10th - 12th, 2019

First Edition

Security Council

“Mass Surveillance in Russia”

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I. Historical Background

Echelon is a surveillance program and monitored by the United States and the UKUSA Security Agreement signatories (United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand). Its initial target was to intercept communication between the USSR and its allies during the Cold War. It was created around 1965 but wasn't conventionally established until 1971. Echelon is one of the first and major form of Mass Surveillance that has been confirmed, and it had already faced an important phase of criticism. Critics already claimed that Mass surveillance is a principle going against their personal rights and may endanger them instead of helping them putting an end to the Wars.

II. Current Situation

By definition, *Mass surveillance is the distributive close observation of an entire population, or a substantial fraction of the entire population.* Mass surveillance is most of the time organized by the Government, and justified by multiple purposes mainly linked to the national security.

Nowadays, Mass surveillance has been proven to be significantly growing as the number of countries operating it is increasing. However, the rise of this number does not directly imply the quality of the surveillance. Therefore, Mass surveillance is considered a controversial subject, since it presents equally valid arguments both in favor and against it.

The Russian Federation has been known for making substantial efforts in order to « keep an eye » on its citizens, and this in various manners, including the Police force directly seeking into citizens' personal phones, or even the use of Intelligent Video-Surveillance System. Russia also adopted a set of counterterrorism amendments requiring 'organizers of distribution of information on the internet' to permit the Government to collect all data they possibly need. The Russian's cyber police has access to a lot, almost all personal information to « provide security to all Russians and Russia's inhabitants ».

On the other hand, Mass surveillance has many times led to conflicts due to leaky storage, or even just the population's lack of knowledge concerning how and by who are treated their personal data. Indeed, only a defined portion of the population data is legally collected by the Russian Government, but some researchers have tried to prove that the Russian Federation had been carefully tracking Russians on a much bigger scale, both in and outside the country, and this illegally.

III. Some In Favor and Against Parties Involved

Federation of Russia : President Vladimir Putin says « Modern means of communications are used by criminal elements, including terrorists, for their criminal activity. And of course, special services should accordingly use modern means in the same circumstances, including fighting crime of a terrorist nature ». The Russian Government allows itself the right to have access to all the inhabitant's personal data in order to protect its country against both crime and terrorism.

United States of America : Mass surveillance on the American territory has been carried since the Second World War and kept on growing, even more efficiently since the September 11th events of 2001. This surveillance is carried on by multiple organizations, the most famous being the NSA and the FBI. Ex-President Barack Obama confirmed that all the data collected by these organizations are well-kept and treated so that it won't have any negative impact on the population. The United States of America have also stated that this Surveillance isn't by any way a form of abuse of their personal lives and is only a matter of National Security and fighting against terrorism.

The European Union : Many initiatives have been taken by the European Union, some forcing European countries to limit Surveillance on their territory. The Data Protection Directive, for example, forces its signatories to give the protection of personal data and to have respect for private life. Therefore, countries such as France, Netherlands or even Sweden must follow the terms enforced by these European Legislations.

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