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Commentary: U.S. unchecked spying bound to be self-defeating

by Tian Dongdong

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European fury is further mounting and its ties with Washington are further strained as Spain found itself Monday, like other U.S. European allies, also become prey of the National Security Agency (NSA).

Condemned such behavior as "inappropriate" and "unacceptable," Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia Margallo has said if the

alleged espionage reports were true it would break the "climate of trust" between the two countries.

It is true that spying is not new in the global community, but wholesale spying is still a taboo.

After the continuous revelation of U.S. indiscriminate spying, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, chairwoman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, stood out Monday to call for a "total review of all intelligence programs."

Nevertheless, damage has been done.

First of all, the reckless U.S. spying left Europeans feeling betrayed by an ally, as they unexpectedly and ultimately found that they were not seen by Washington as partners, but as a threat.

Secondly, U.S. abuse of espionage has made its excuse that its spying programs were carried out for fighting against terrorism was unjustified.

Even worse, its recklessness has triggered backfire, which might really put its own national interests in danger.

Some American scholars have said the spying program has staged a direct assault on U.S. national security by undermining Washington's ability to act hypocritically and get away with it, eroding its own diplomatic strength which heavily relies on its allies' support.

In fact, Washington was beginning to swallow the first bitter pill it made. In response to the revelations of NSA snooping on German Chancellor Angela Merkel's phone, German officials said Monday that Washington could lose access to an important law enforcement tool used to track terrorist money flows.

Moreover, the feelings of betrayal and mistrust will be bound to cast a pall over future cooperation between the long-time transatlantic alliance.

Martin Schulz, president of the European Parliament has asked, "If we go to the negotiations and we have the feeling those people with whom we negotiate know everything that we want to deal with in advance, how can we trust each other?"

Despite their fury, the European countries will still tread cautiously given their political, economic and security interdependence with Washington, trying to strike a balance between dignity and business.

Therefore, some EU officials have called on Washington to rebuild trust with Europe.

It is also wise for Washington to drop sophistry and to regain trust by first learning to respect others.