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Reuters

Pakistan spied on Germans in Afghanistan: report

10/30/2011

BERLIN: Pakistan's secret service spied on German security forces in Afghanistan, raising fears sensitive information could end up in the hands of the Taliban, a German paper reported on Sunday. Without citing its sources, mass-selling weekly Bild am Sonntag reported that Germany's BND foreign intelligence agency warned its interior ministry that Pakistan had spied on 180 German police officers deployed in Afghanistan to train locals. The interior ministry told Reuters the BND suspected a German email had been intercepted but could not give confirmation. The ministry added it was not aware of any comprehensive interception of German police data. Pakistan's interior and foreign ministries and military were unavailable for comment.

Bild am Sonntag said private telephone calls, messages to the ministry, military mission orders and lists of police officer names had been intercepted. "On the basis of experience we must expect that the Pakistan intelligence agency ISI is continuing to give sensitive military information to the Taliban," Bild cited an unnamed Berlin security expert as saying. The BND declined to comment on the report. The United States has long suspected Pakistan, or elements within the ISI, of supporting militant groups in order to increase its influence in Afghanistan, particularly after NATO troops leave in 2014. Pakistan supported the Afghan Taliban before the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. It was one of only three countries to have diplomatic relations with the Islamist group.

Citing security sources, Bild wrote that German police officers in Afghanistan have communicated in the past via non-secure means as they cost less. "We have opened the floodgates to the enemy," Bild cited a high-ranking Berlin ministry official as saying. Bild said shortly after the BND warning and before a visit by the German president to Afghanistan, the German police mission was equipped with brand new laptops with the latest software for secure

communication. The interior ministry confirmed the police laptops and broadcasting technology were tested and equipped with new software between Sept.13 and 23. A spokesman said this was a regular I.T.-checkup and was not linked to the spying claim.