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ALERTES GROUPE 3 - 17/05/2006 11:53
TDIP COMMITTEE / CIA RELATED SUBJECTS

17:36

Sammeln von Telefondaten löst Kontroverse in USA aus =

Washington (dpa) - Das gezielte Sammeln von Milliarden Daten von Telefongesprächen amerikanischer Bürger durch den Geheimdienst NSA hat eine heftige Kontroverse in den USA ausgelöst. Der demokratische Senator Joseph Biden verlangte am Freitag eine Untersuchung des Kongresses. Dagegen bezeichnete der designierte CIA-Direktor Michael Hayden das gezielte Datensammeln als gesetzeskonform. Die Bürgerrechtsorganisation ACLU sprach vom bislang ungeheuerlichsten Machtmissbrauch der Regierung von US-Präsident George W. Bush.

Unmittelbar nach der Enthüllung der US-Tageszeitung "USA Today", dass heimlich Daten über die Telefongespräche von Millionen von amerikanischen Bürgern gesammelt worden seien, stellte sich das Weiße Haus demonstrativ hinter Hayden. Man gehe mit Volldampf in die Anhörungen im Senat in der kommenden Woche, sagte Sprecherin Dana Perino am Donnerstag (Ortszeit).

Hayden, der als Architekt der beiden bislang bekannten Abhörprogramme des Geheimdienstes NSA gilt, versuchte die Öffentlichkeit erneut zu beruhigen. Einziges Ziel der Aktivitäten der Behörde sei es, die Sicherheit und die Freiheit der amerikanischen Menschen zu bewahren, sagte Hayden. Der General sprach vor seiner geplanten Anhörung am Freitag mit einflussreichen Senatoren. Der republikanische Senator Chuck Hagel unterstützte danach den Vorschlag des Vorsitzenden des Justizausschusses, Verantwortliche der Telefongesellschaften vor den Justizausschuss zu laden.

Nach einem Bericht der "Washington Post" haben die betroffenen drei Telefongesellschaften, die Datensätze zur Verfügung stellten, 224 Millionen Kunden. 2005 hätten die drei Gesellschaften 500 Milliarden Gespräche vermittelt. Seit Ende 2001 seien es rund zwei Billionen gewesen.

Der demokratische Senator Joseph Biden will jetzt geklärt wissen, was mit den Informationen über jene Bürger geschehen ist, die nichts mit dem Terrornetzwerk El Kaida zu tun hätten. "Ich muss deine Gespräche nicht abhören um zu wissen, was du machst. Wenn ich jeden Anruf von dir kenne, kenne ich jede Person, mit der du gesprochen hast. Ich kann ein Muster deines Lebens erhalten, das sehr, sehr zudringlich ist", sagte Biden.

Die Bürgerrechtsorganisation ACLU verurteilte das gezielte Datensammeln. Es sei der bislang ungeheuerlichste Machtmissbrauch der Bush-Administration, heißt es in einer Erklärung.
dpa da xx mu

17:34

EEUU-ESPIONAJE (previsión) Hayden busca apoyos en Congreso pese a nuevo escándalo escuchas

Piedad Viñas

Washington, 12 may (EFE).- Michael Hayden, el candidato a dirigir la CIA y promotor del programa de escuchas a millones de ciudadanos que ha provocado un nuevo escándalo en EEUU, prosigue hoy sus contactos en el Capitolio para sumar apoyos a su confirmación.

La Casa Blanca mantiene que es la persona idónea para llevar las riendas de la Agencia Central de Inteligencia (CIA), pese a que fue él, en su etapa de director de la Agencia Nacional de Seguridad (NSA, en inglés), quien lanzó el polémico programa que sirvió para espiar a ciudadanos sin autorización judicial.

Pese al escándalo, a un 66 por ciento de los estadounidenses no les importa que el Gobierno les grabe sus llamadas telefónicas o controle sus correos electrónicos, a jugar por los resultados de una encuesta publicada hoy.

La encuesta, elaborada este jueves por el diario "The Washington Post" y la cadena de televisión ABC, revela que un 63 por ciento considera aceptable ese programa de espionaje como vía para investigar amenazas terroristas.

Un 44 por ciento lo califica de inaceptable y un 24 por ciento se opone de forma rotunda. Y para la gran mayoría, un 65 por ciento, la investigación de potenciales amenazas es más importante que su propia intimidad.

Según la misma encuesta, la mitad de los 502 adultos entrevistados aprueba la forma en que el presidente, George W. Bush, gestiona los asuntos relacionados con la privacidad de los ciudadanos.

Bush compareció ayer ante la prensa para reiterar lo que ya dijo en varias ocasiones, que el trabajo de la comunidad de inteligencia es y siempre fue legal, y que el programa de escuchas que ahora está en tela de juicio se puso en marcha, con su visto bueno, con el propósito de "proteger" a los ciudadanos.

Ese programa se lanzó tras los atentados del 11 de septiembre del 2001 en Nueva York y Washington cuando el general Hayden estaba al frente de la NSA.

La NSA es un organismo que se ha hecho con una inmensa base de datos de sospechosos de terrorismo pero también de ciudadanos de a pie, según desveló el diario "USA Today".

La información publicada ayer por este periódico, según la cual la administración fue mucho más allá de los potenciales terroristas, ha reavivado una polémica que ya viene de lejos pero que ahora amenaza con complicar la confirmación del nombramiento de Hayden en el Senado.

"Todo lo que hace la NSA es legal", aseguró el candidato a director de la CIA tras entrevistarse con varios legisladores a los que trata de convencer para que le den su voto.

Pero hay muchos, tanto demócratas como republicanos, que no lo tienen nada claro y que ya han adelantado que aprovecharán las

audiencias de confirmación, para indagar hasta dónde pudo haber llegado el Gobierno y hasta qué punto lo que hizo fue o no legal.

"La verdadera cuestión aquí es qué hicieron con la información recolectada que no tiene nada que ver con (la red terrorista) Al Qaeda", dijo el senador demócrata y miembro del Comité Judicial del Senado, Joseph Biden.

En declaraciones a la cadena de televisión CBS, Biden aseguró que, a pesar de que considera a Hayden como un candidato "de primera", la polémica de las escuchas va a dificultar su nombramiento.

El presidente del Comité Judicial del Senado, el republicano Arlen Specter, ha adelantado su intención de llamar a declarar a los responsables de las compañías telefónicas que facilitaron los datos de sus clientes a la administración (AT&T, Verizon y BellSouth) "para descubrir exactamente qué es lo que está ocurriendo".

Los demócratas también quieren respuestas antes de dar su voto de confianza a un candidato que también ha suscitado recelos entre la clase política por su condición de militar y, por lo tanto, porque podría poner en riesgo la independencia de una agencia civil como la CIA. EFE

Les Européens déçus par les explications sur les vols de la CIA

583 words

13 May 2006

Le Monde

La délégation du Parlement européen qui est allée chercher à Washington des informations sur les vols secrets de la CIA a assuré, jeudi 11 mai, qu'elle ne s'était pas déplacée pour rien. " Nous repartons avec des informations utiles ", a expliqué Claudio Fava, rapporteur de la commission d'enquête spéciale qui, dans un rapport intermédiaire, avait conclu à l'existence de 1 000 vols non déclarés depuis 2001, au-dessus du territoire européen. Certains d'entre eux auraient transporté clandestinement des prisonniers soupçonnés d'activités terroristes. " Il y a eu un nombre exorbitant de "no comment", mais même un "no comment" peut être une information utile ", a ajouté, déçu, l'eurodéputé socialiste italien.

La délégation de 13 députés s'est plainte de ne pas avoir été reçue ni à la CIA - dont le directeur venait de démissionner -, ni au Pentagone, ni par des élus républicains du Congrès. Elle a néanmoins obtenu un entretien au département d'Etat, avec le secrétaire d'Etat adjoint chargé des affaires européennes, Daniel Fried, et le conseiller juridique, John Bellinger.

" PAS LA MOINDRE PREUVE "

Ce dernier rentrait d'une tournée en Europe, où il a contesté la version des 1 000 vols. Il a demandé à ses visiteurs de l'aider à rectifier les " allégations " qu'il lit dans la presse. " Malgré des enquêtes approfondies de la part des journalistes et des ONG, personne n'a suggéré qu'il y ait eu plus de deux ou trois exemples " de transferts secrets, a-t-il dit. Il a estimé que ses interlocuteurs n'avaient " pas la moindre preuve ".

Dans sa conférence de presse, M. Fava a réaffirmé que son rapport parlait d'un millier de vols, " mais nous n'avons jamais dit qu'il s'agissait de 1 000 détenus ", a-t-il ajouté, soulignant que l'administration Bush avait refusé d'évoquer des cas précis. L'eurodéputé a encore jugé " très important " le fait d'avoir pu se faire confirmer que la Maison Blanche avait " exercé des pressions " sur la presse américaine pour qu'elle ne cite pas les pays d'Europe de l'Est concernés par les vols secrets.

M. Fava tiendra une autre conférence de presse, à Strasbourg. D'ici là, les autres institutions européennes veulent jouer la discrétion. Elles avaient déjà réagi avec prudence aux déclarations de John Bellinger, préférant retenir son " appel au calme ".

Dans l'entourage de Franco Frattini, commissaire pour la justice, la liberté et la sécurité, on dit attendre les rapports définitifs du Parlement européen et du Conseil de l'Europe, en soulignant que " la nécessaire vérité " est de l'intérêt de tous " et aussi de la relation transatlantique ". Les Européens mettent en avant les déclarations de George Bush, qui a estimé samedi 6 mai que " le partenariat entre les Etats-Unis et l'Europe est vital et transcende la guerre contre le terrorisme ".

Un expert bruxellois résume ce qu'il estime être l'enjeu : " Washington va s'en tenir à la position que les "restitutions extraordinaires" n'ont pas dépassé une dizaine de cas. Le Parlement européen ne pourra avancer de preuve décisive et, de toute façon, il est difficile d'imaginer qu'aucun service européen n'ait jamais rien remarqué. " Dès lors, affirme ce diplomate, " on conseillera aux députés d'interroger aussi les Etats membres, ce qui s'avérera plus que difficile et entraînera la fin des hostilités... ".

Turkey must know about CIA flights, Euro MP Özdemir says

649 words

12 May 2006

Turkish Daily News

Rice, Republicans shun European Parliament team in Washington Ümit Enginsoy
WASHINGTON - Turkish Daily News

Turkish authorities, and at least the intelligence apparatus, must have been aware of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) reported rendition flights via Turkish airports, said a leading European Parliament (EP) member involved in an inquiry of clandestine CIA counterterrorism operations in Europe.

"Flights landed in Turkey, and it's very likely that Turkish authorities must have known something about these flights," said Cem Özdemir, a German EP member of Turkish origin. "Those people not only stood there for gas, they spent days there."

Özdemir, a Green Party member, said on Wednesday, "It's likely that at least the Turkish intelligence is involved in these actions." However, he did not present evidence.

Özdemir is a member of an EP committee visiting Washington to investigate reports of secret CIA prisons in Europe and clandestine rendition flights for alleged terrorists.

"As far as I know, there's no inquiry committee in Turkey so far. ... It's a question for our colleagues in Turkish Parliament to find out whether (Turkish) officials are involved," Özdemir,

the EP committee's deputy chairman, told a news conference at the New America Foundation, a Washington-based think tank.

Turkish media reports earlier said that several CIA-related flights had taken place via Turkish airports in the past few years. The government denies formal knowledge of any clandestine CIA activity of this kind through Turkey.

The European delegation's Washington tour apparently was facing a cold reception in Washington.

Some key U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her predecessor, Colin Powell, and top Republican lawmakers have refused to meet with the EP team, delegates complained. Such members of Congress included Sen. Pat Roberts, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; Sen. Arlen Specter, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee; Sen. John McCain; and Representative Peter Hoekstra, chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

The EP committee members were due to have talks with Rice's legal adviser, John Bellinger, and some Democratic lawmakers.

"Not everybody thinks that it's very important to accept a delegation of the European Parliament. We understand this is an election year and that everybody is quite busy," said Özdemir.

He also emphasized it was highly unlikely that European governments were oblivious to the movement of prisoners. "We cannot say that we're not involved in these actions," Özdemir said. "But how can we criticize other countries with human rights violations if we violate them in the first place?"

While U.S. President George W. Bush's administration questioned the number of flights earlier reported by the EP committee, he said, it has not denied that flights took place.

In an interim report released late last month, the EP committee said it had gathered information suggesting that the CIA had flown nearly 1,000 flights over European territory since 2001. Some flights, the investigators said they believed, took suspects who had been kidnapped in Europe to countries that use torture, including Jordan, Egypt and even Syria. However, most of the interim report was based on data gathered from air safety regulators, human rights groups, journalists and a few eyewitnesses.

Özdemir said terrorism was not a threat unique to the United States and that in any case democratic governments should not abandon democratic methods while fighting terrorism. "There is a threat posed by terrorism, and we know it in Europe," he said. "But the fight against terrorism must always be democratic."

Özdemir said some European nations had been notably uncooperative in the investigation, adding that U.S. pressure appeared to be partly to blame. He particularly named Albania and Macedonia among those uncooperative countries.

He said there were serious doubts over the presence of secret CIA prisons in Poland and Romania.

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U.S. seeks to block German national's lawsuit over rendition

By DERRILL HOLLY

Associated Press Writer

449 words

12 May 2006

16:46

Associated Press Newswires

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia (AP) - The U.S. government on Friday urged a federal judge to block a lawsuit filed by a German national who says he was illegally held in Afghanistan for four months and tortured under the CIA's rendition program.

U.S. Attorney R. Joseph Sher said government secrets could be exposed, compromising national security, if Khaled al-Masri were allowed to proceed with his lawsuit.

Sher said al-Masri's allegations "can neither be confirmed or denied"

U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis has said that he will issue a ruling in the case as soon as possible, based upon documents and arguments presented to the court.

The lawsuit was filed against former CIA Director George Tenet and 10 unidentified CIA employees as defendant. While the Central Intelligence Agency was not named as a defendant, the agency intervened to uphold its states' secret privilege.

The American Civil Liberties Union, the private civil rights organization representing al-Masri, rejected claims that secrets would be exposed. Ben Wizner, an attorney for group, noted foreign governments are investigating al-Masri's claims.

A committee of the European Parliament has found that the CIA has been involved in clandestine operations that have included the detention of individuals who were taken to Afghanistan and other countries, where torture has been used in the past.

Al-Masri said he was taken into custody after being mistaken for an associate of the Sept. 11, 2001, hijackers. He said Macedonian authorities arrested him when he crossed the border on New Year's Eve 2003 and turned him over to the CIA after three weeks.

He said he was then flown to Afghanistan where he was "dragged off the plane and thrown into the trunk of a car" and beaten by his captors. He was held at a CIA-run facility known as the "Salt Pit," an abandoned brick factory north of the Kabul business district used for detention of high-level terror suspects.

Al-Masri said that when he became ill, "they didn't pay any attention." He said he went on a hunger strike that ended after 37 days when his captors force-fed him. He said he had lost more than 60 pounds (27 kilograms).

After Tenet was notified that this was a case of mistaken identity, al-Masri was held for two more months, his lawsuit alleges.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other State Department officials have declined to address the al-Masri case. However, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said the United States has acknowledged making a mistake in his arrest.

EU gets little data in U.S. on CIA flights

Brian Knowlton

International Herald Tribune

12 May 2006

International Herald Tribune

Members of a European Parliament committee studying allegations that the CIA established secret prison camps in Europe have said here that some European countries had been notably uncooperative, and asserted that U.S. pressure appeared to be partly to blame.

In an interim report released April 26, the committee said Wednesday that it had gathered information suggesting that the CIA had flown 1,000 flights over European territory since 2001. Some flights, the investigators said they believed, took suspects who had been kidnapped in Europe to countries that use torture.

Most of the interim report was based on data gathered from air safety regulators, human rights groups, journalists and a few eyewitnesses. But as the European committee now attempts to turn to government sources, it has been frustrated, said Cem Ozdemir, a deputy chairman of the panel who is a member of the German Parliament.

At a news conference organized by the New America Foundation, a public policy institute, Ozdemir said that some government officials had told the commission that "they're confronted with an incredible amount of pressure from the administration" not to cooperate. He declined to provide details.

But Ozdemir, a Greens Party deputy in the German Bundestag, named two governments that he said had been particularly unhelpful: Macedonia's and Albania's. But he praised a decision by Berlin to cooperate, which he suggested might provide leverage to gain assistance elsewhere. A Greens Party adviser to the group, Jean-Luc Robert of Belgium, said the panel had had mixed luck in Washington. "We tried to have some meetings and we have been refused," he said.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice rejected a request for a meeting, but one of her top lawyers agreed to talk. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell turned the group down, Robert said. But Robert said the panel would meet with R. James Woolsey, President Bill Clinton's first CIA director, and three Democratic congressmen. The group said it was "regrettable" that no Republicans would meet with them.

At the news conference, Ozdemir conceded that there was much the group had not been able to prove. It had records and witnesses documenting many flights by CIA-linked planes, but mostly indirect data about what ultimately happened to prisoners. Ozdemir also emphasized that it was highly unlikely that European governments were oblivious to the movement of prisoners. "We cannot say that we're not involved in these actions," Ozdemir said.

While the Bush administration has questioned the numbers of flights reported by the committee, he added, it has not denied that flights had taken place.

Another committee member, Sarah Ludford of Britain, acknowledged that the panel had little real power, but she said she hoped the power of publicity would help it gain influence. After the April report, she said, a member of the Italian carabinieri came forward to say he had taken part in a CIA abduction of a suspect, Abu Omar, in Milan in 2003.

Prisons secrètes de la CIA: des eurodéputés regrettent le manque de coopération de Washington

CP

352 words

12 May 2006

02:26

La Presse Canadienne

French

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WASHINGTON (AP) -- Le président de la délégation de parlementaires européens venus à Washington obtenir des informations sur les vols clandestins de la CIA en Europe a jugé jeudi ne pas avoir eu suffisamment de contacts avec l'administration Bush et les parlementaires américains.

"Cela ne contribue pas à une meilleure compréhension des points de vue de chacun, pas plus qu'à la nécessaire réaffirmation des valeurs communes que nous sommes censés partager des deux côtés de l'Atlantique", a déclaré le Portugais Carlo Coelho lors d'une conférence de presse.

Il a ajouté que la coopération entre les Etats-Unis et l'Union européenne était essentielle dans la lutte contre le terrorisme. "Mais cette coopération doit avoir lieu dans la transparence la plus complète et en évitant d'avoir recours aux pratiques utilisées par les terroristes et qui ne peuvent que conduire à la haine et à la poursuite du phénomène", a-t-il souligné.

Au dernier jour de sa visite entamée lundi, la délégation européenne a notamment rencontré le président de la Commission judiciaire du Sénat, le secrétaire d'Etat adjoint aux Affaires européennes et eurasiennes Dan Fried, le conseiller juridique du département d'Etat John Bellinger, l'ancien directeur de la CIA James Woolsey, et des organisations non-gouvernementales.

En revanche, les parlementaires n'ont pas pu rencontrer Porter Goss, le patron de la CIA qui a démissionné la semaine dernière.

De son côté, le conseiller juridique du département d'Etat John Bellinger a déclaré avoir demandé aux Européens de démentir les allégations selon lesquelles plusieurs centaines de vols transportant des terroristes présumés auraient transité en Europe. Rien ne peut prouver "les allégations selon lesquelles les vols étaient au nombre de 1.000, 100 ou même 10", a-t-il affirmé.

La visite de parlementaires intervient alors que la commission d'enquête du Parlement européen a rendu public fin avril un rapport d'étape selon lequel plus d'un millier de vols clandestins auraient transité par le Vieux continent depuis 2001. AP

jp/v1028

EU lawmakers complain of US stonewalling on CIA flights, prisons

JZ

618 words

12 May 2006

01:10

Agence France Presse

English

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WASHINGTON, May 11, 2006 (AFP) -

European lawmakers probing the illegal detentions and transport of terror suspects in Europe by the CIA on Thursday complained of stonewalling by US officials.

They also regretted that only four members of the US Congress had agreed to meet with the 13-member delegation from the European Parliament.

"We regret that no more congressmen or members of this administration and of the former one we had asked to meet have accepted or been in a position to meet our delegation," Carlos Coelho, chairman of the group, told a news conference.

Giovanni Claudio Fava, an Italian member of the delegation, said senior State Department officials who met with the group Thursday would neither confirm nor deny the existence of secret CIA prisons for terror suspects in Europe.

The officials, he said, also remained mum on allegations that some 100 detainees were secretly flown by the CIA through Europe to countries like Syria and Egypt where they could be tortured, a practice known as "extraordinary rendition".

Nonetheless, Fava said the delegation would head back to Europe on Friday on a positive note, as even a "no comment" can be construed as valuable information.

In addition to meetings with members of the US administration, the delegation has held talks with human rights organizations, lawyers and journalists.

Cem Ozdemir, deputy chairman of the group, said it was clear from the discussions with State Department officials that they did not see eye to eye.

"We agreed we need to fight terrorism but we did not agree on the means to fight terrorism," Ozdemir, of Germany, said.

Last month the EU lawmakers released an interim report that said there have been more than 1,000 clandestine CIA flights through Europe since the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States. It is unclear, however, whether any of the flights were transporting terror suspects.

Clandestine prisons or flight transporting detainees to countries where they face torture would be in breach of EU human rights conventions.

John Bellinger, the State Department's senior legal advisor, has acknowledged that the CIA operated flights over Europe but he has dismissed reports that most of the flights carried detainees.

"Despite a good deal of digging on the part of the press and non-governmental organizations, I don't think anybody has ever suggested that there were more than two or three or four renditions that ever went through Europe," Bellinger said Thursday after meeting with the EU parliamentarians.

"So the suggestion that there have been 1,000 or 100 or even 10, I think there is not any support for any of these allegations."

He refused to elaborate on whether any terror suspects were taken to countries where they could be tortured or whether the CIA ran secret prisons in Europe.

Bellinger also denied reports that Washington was applying pressure on East European countries that allegedly housed secret prisons -- such as Romania and Bosnia-Herzegovina -- not to cooperate with the EU probe.

"The United States government has certainly not pressured other countries or other individuals not to cooperate with this enquiry," he told reporters.

Allegations about the CIA prisons and flights first surfaced last November, prompting outrage in many European countries and undermining trans-Atlantic ties.

Baroness Sarah Ludford, a British member of the EU delegation, said she hoped the group's four-day visit to Washington would prompt debate in the United States and raise awareness among the US public.

She added that she felt US officials were now looking to put the issue behind them.

"What I detect is at least a desire for an exit strategy," she said.

CIA/Prisons-Un eurodéputé accuse Bush de pressions sur la presse

12 May 2006

02:39

Reuters - Les actualités en français

WASHINGTON, 12 mai (Reuters) - La Maison blanche a exercé des pressions sur des journalistes afin qu'ils taisent le nom de pays européens dans leurs articles sur les centres de détention ou les transferts de prisonniers de la CIA en Europe, a accusé jeudi Claudio Fava, rapporteur de la commission d'enquête du parlement européen.

L'élue italienne s'est toutefois abstenue de désigner les journalistes ou les organes de presse sur lesquels l'administration du président George Bush aurait exercé des pressions.

"Nous pensons que la confirmation détaillée dont nous disposons au sujet des pressions exercées par la Maison blanche sur des journalistes afin qu'ils ne citent pas certains pays européens est un élément extrêmement important de notre travail", a dit Fava, présent à Washington au sein d'une délégation de 13 députés européens.

Le Washington Post a révélé en novembre que la CIA dirigeait des prisons secrètes en Europe de l'Est dans lesquelles étaient détenus des membres présumés d'Al Qaïda. Le parlement européen a décidé d'ouvrir une enquête à la suite de ces révélations, qui n'ont jamais été ni démenties ni confirmées par les Etats-Unis.

La délégation européenne, qui achèvera vendredi sa visite d'une semaine à Washington, s'est plaint en outre du mutisme des responsables américains qu'elle a rencontrés.

"Il y a eu un nombre exorbitant de 'no comment'", s'est plaint Fava à la sortie d'une heure d'entretiens avec des responsables du Département d'Etat.

"Mais nous rentrons en Europe avec de précieuses informations et nous estimons que même un 'no comment' peut être interprété comme une information précieuse", a-t-il ajouté. /BB

Prisons secrètes de la CIA: des eurodéputés regrettent le manque de coopération de Washington

348 words

12 May 2006

02:24

AP French Worldstream

French

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Il a ajouté que la coopération entre les Etats-Unis et l'Union européenne était essentielle dans la lutte contre le terrorisme. "Mais cette coopération doit avoir lieu dans la transparence la plus complète et en évitant d'avoir recours aux pratiques utilisées par les terroristes et qui ne peuvent que conduire à la haine et à la poursuite du phénomène", a-t-il souligné.

Au dernier jour de sa visite entamée lundi, la délégation européenne a notamment rencontré le président de la Commission judiciaire du Sénat, le secrétaire d'Etat adjoint aux Affaires européennes et eurasiennes Dan Fried, le conseiller juridique du département d'Etat John Bellinger, l'ancien directeur de la CIA James Woolsey, et des organisations non-gouvernementales.

En revanche, les parlementaires n'ont pas pu rencontrer Porter Goss, le patron de la CIA qui a démissionné la semaine dernière.

De son côté, le conseiller juridique du département d'Etat John Bellinger a déclaré avoir demandé aux Européens de démentir les allégations selon lesquelles plusieurs centaines de vols transportant

des terroristes présumés auraient transité en Europe. Rien ne peut prouver "les allégations selon lesquelles les vols étaient au nombre de 1.000, 100 ou même 10", a-t-il affirmé.

La visite de parlementaires intervient alors que la commission d'enquête du Parlement européen a rendu public fin avril un rapport d'étape selon lequel plus d'un millier de vols clandestins auraient transité par le Vieux continent depuis 2001.

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17:24

UE-HOMOSEXUALES El Parlamento Europeo celebrará un seminario contra la homofobia

Bruselas, 12 may (EFE).- El Parlamento Europeo (PE) celebrará el próximo miércoles un seminario sobre la homofobia con motivo de la jornada mundial contra este fenómeno, informaron hoy fuentes de la Eurocámara.

El seminario contará con la participación de varios especialistas, del presidente de la institución, Josep Borrell, y del comisario europeo de Justicia, Libertad y Seguridad, Franco Frattini.

Además, Borrell, el presidente de la Comisión de Libertades Civiles, el francés Jean-Marie Cavada, y el presidente del intergrupo sobre los derechos de los homosexuales y lesbianas, el británico Michael Cashman, ofrecerán una conferencia de prensa antes del inicio del seminario.

El PE aprobó el pasado 18 de enero una resolución de condena de la homofobia, en la que pidió que los países de la UE aseguren que "las personas del mismo sexo disfruten del mismo respeto, dignidad y protección que el resto de la sociedad".

La Conferencia Episcopal Española (CEE) se opuso hoy a esa resolución, por considerar que "incide negativamente en el ámbito de las conciencias" en relación con las uniones de personas homosexuales.

El Comité Ejecutivo de la CEE divulgó una nota en la que afirma que "esta resolución, con el pretexto de evitar la discriminación de las personas homosexuales, lanza indirectamente la idea de que han de tratarse de la misma manera las uniones entre hombre y mujer que las uniones de personas homosexuales".

La eurodiputada socialista Elena Valenciano manifestó hoy su "más firme rechazo" a esa posición de los obispos españoles al señalar que la resolución del PE "responde al espíritu de la Unión, a los valores de igualdad, justicia y no discriminación que representan instituciones como el Parlamento Europeo".

Valenciano añadió, en un comunicado, que en estos, como en otros muchos temas, el Episcopado español se empeña en dar la espalda a la

realidad y necesidades de la sociedad, "y lo que es mucho más grave, no respeta las decisiones que se adoptan en los parlamentos democráticos". EFE

EU CONSTITUTION / FUTURE OF EUROPE

How to overcome Europe's crisis of legitimacy LARRY SIEDENTOP.

By LARRY SIEDENTOP

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The question of a constitution for Europe is back. German presidency of the European Union will see to that. The government of Angela Merkel, chancellor, is said to favour either resuscitating the constitutional treaty rejected by voters in France and the Netherlands or salvaging some of it. This is hardly surprising. Germany has long advocated at least a quasi-federal outcome for European integration.

But it also appears that, after initial discussions, the member states and the European Commission cannot see a way beyond the current impasse - and that a "period for reflection" should therefore continue.

So we face a familiar stand-off. In one camp are the pragmatists, led by Britain, who are relieved to see the constitutional project die. They prefer to get on with developing a single market, allowing the political form of the EU to be settled later "by events". In the other camp are the formalists, who believe that adopting common policies over a wide range of issues and creating a rechtsstaat - a constitutional state - in Europe require a coherent constitutional outcome.

Is there no way beyond the dilemma? I think there is a way. It is the only way that responds to the nature of Europe's crisis, which is a crisis of legitimacy. Unlike democratic deficits - always to be found in systems of representative government, to a greater or lesser extent - a crisis of legitimacy occurs when there is no widely understood and accepted framework for public decision-making. That is Europe's plight today.

Transfers of power to Brussels have weakened national political cultures and the fragile sense of democratic empowerment they sustained. This was a largely unintended consequence of integration. The European parliament has not succeeded in acquiring any hold over public opinion. So it is unable to offset these national developments. The result is a threat to representative government and to a culture of consent across Europe.

What can be done? The key lies in thinking in terms of a process rather than an outcome. A process aimed at creating a limited constitutional sense across the EU is needed. It will take years to do that. For it will amount to a refounding of the EU - that is, founding it more firmly on public understanding and consent. Nothing is more likely to confirm suspicions that the EU has become an elitist adventure than ignoring the French and Dutch referendum results and pushing ahead with the constitutional treaty.

What kind of process would match this formidable challenge? The EU should put together a calendar of issues for debate by the member states - inviting them to draw public attention to one particular issue each year. By privileging one issue per year, and asking both national political classes and representatives of civil society to debate that issue thoroughly, the EU could avoid the overstretch of the Convention on the Future of Europe.

The need is to concentrate minds. For the convention concerned itself with too many questions simultaneously. By combining the rationalisation of earlier treaties with the drafting of a constitutional document, the convention made it impossible to mobilise and shape public opinion. It could not even begin to create a constitutional sense across Europe.

Let me suggest some of the topics that might be put forward in the calendar. Should the role of national parliaments within the EU be strengthened - and if so, how? Can deliberations of the Council of Ministers be made both more efficient and more public? Should the European Commission retain a monopoly on legislative initiatives? What attributes of a state, if any, should the EU acquire? What rights are fundamental, deserving protection in all member states? How can the principle of subsidiarity be given real teeth?

Serious national debates about these and other questions, one at a time, might begin to create a constitutional sense across Europe. Of course, it will not be easy. For it involves reconciling attitudes shaped by different forms of the state and different legal traditions.

National political classes must take the lead in putting these questions to themselves and to their constituents. They must provide guidance. That would help to overcome what has proved to be the radical weakness of the EU in its present form. The existence of the European parliament has served as an excuse for

national political classes to distance themselves from the European project. That, in turn, has seriously undermined the legitimacy of the whole project.

The writer is an emeritus fellow of Keble College, Oxford

14:00

Finnish parliament votes for EU constitution

HELSINKI, May 12 (Reuters) - Finland's parliament voted in favour of the European Union's stalled constitution on Friday, clearing the way for formal ratification which the government wants as soon as possible.

The Nordic country, which takes on the 25-nation EU's rotating presidency in July, is set to become the 16th state to ratify the charter. It must still be approved by the cabinet and formally endorsed in another parliamentary vote.

However, even the most ardent backers say Finnish ratification, which Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen said was likely in early June, will make little difference to the fate of a treaty rejected by Dutch and French voters last year.

Parties in the ruling coalition as well as some opposition legislators in the 200-seat parliament voted for the charter, designed to streamline EU institutions and improve decision-making to cope with the bloc's enlargement.

Estonia ratified the treaty on Tuesday, but it requires unanimity to enter into force and several countries that have promised to hold referendums are holding off because of uncertainty following the French and Dutch "noes".

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said this week the EU had to win back its credibility before it could think about salvaging the constitution.

While he said he hoped the expanding EU could manage some kind of reform of its institutions by 2009, he did not say if he considered the constitution dead or alive.

Vanhanen, who wants Finland to ratify the constitution before taking the EU presidency, admitted its fate was probably sealed.

"It is realistic to see Finland's decision does not significantly change the destiny of the constitution, but it can have a positive impact on the atmosphere in the EU and in the long run also on the content of the agreement," he wrote in Friday's Turun Sanomat newspaper.

He said Finland had to decide for itself on the constitution, which provides for a long-term EU president and more say for national parliaments.

"If we didn't ratify the constitution because of two other countries' decisions, then we would let them decide for us," he wrote.

His government is somewhat at odds with Finnish President Tarja Halonen, who has questioned the wisdom of pressing ahead with the treaty. She said this week that states that had rejected the charter were unlikely to change their minds simply because more countries had given it their stamp of approval.

Teija Tiilikainen, director of European studies at Helsinki University, said ratification would make Finland's position clear if it had to deal with the charter once it took over the EU presidency.

"I think it's simply a question of where we stand. If we are in a situation where we are expected to do something for the treaty, for the project, then we have more credibility once we have ratified it," she said.

Germany will assume the EU presidency after Finland in January next year and Chancellor Angela Merkel has made it clear that reviving the treaty will be her chief focus.

IMMIGRATION

12:34

UE-LATINOAMERICA - Fox dice que la migración supone una "gigantesca oportunidad"

Viena, 12 may (EFE).- El presidente de México, Vicente Fox, aseguró hoy en Viena que la migración es "una gigantesca oportunidad" para todos, pero que se debe encauzar con orden y dentro de la ley.

"La migración es entonces un factor estratégico en el siglo XXI, y seguramente aquí lo trataremos porque es un tema que tiene que ver con el mundo entero", agregó Fox en rueda de prensa durante el transcurso de la IV Cumbre Unión Europea-América Latina y Caribe.

Fox dedicó gran parte de su intervención a este fenómeno social y recalzó que "la migración no tiene por qué ser un problema, la migración es una gigantesca oportunidad y el mundo tiene que aprovecharla productivamente".

El mandatario mexicano agregó que "se trata de una responsabilidad compartida tanto de los países emisores como receptores" y que se tiene que dar "seguridad a los emigrantes", sin "violencia ni vejación a los derechos humanos".

El presidente mexicano precisó que la migración "se debe de hacer de forma legal, ordenada, planeada", un asunto sobre el que afirmó que están trabajando de "forma perseverante".

Por eso, dijo Fox, "vemos con entusiasmo la reunión convocada por España en las próximas semanas" y puso su esperanza en que de ese foro salgan nuevas ideas "para hacer de la migración un asunto estratégico en el desarrollo".

En julio próximo está previsto un Encuentro Iberoamericano de las Migraciones en Madrid, donde participarán no sólo los gobiernos sino también representantes de la sociedad civil.

Los contactos con EEUU para tratar de encauzar la migración pueden ser también punto de partida para la reflexión sobre este problema en otras zonas del planeta, añadió Fox.

Por otro lado, el presidente mexicano remarcó que su país aboga por la integración económica continental, pero advirtió de que antes hay que consolidar los procesos regionales.

"México está muy lejos de haberse comprometido únicamente con Estados Unidos", dijo Fox, cuyo país, recordó, también coopera con Mercosur (integrado por Argentina, Brasil, Uruguay y Paraguay) y la Comunidad Andina de Naciones (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador y Perú).
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