

NZ involved in West's global spying network — author

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By Brad Walker

A secret New Zealand spying organisation, largely unknown even to the Prime Minister, is eavesdropping on government and civilian communications throughout the Pacific region, the author of a controversial new book says.

Wellington-based researcher Nicky Hager, whose book *Secret Power* was published in New Zealand in August, has received international attention for his startling assertions of a huge global intelligence system.

British television network Channel Four has interviewed him for a soon-to-be-screened documentary and stories have appeared in leading British newspapers.

In New Zealand, the book's revelations concerning the extent to which this country is involved in international intelligence gathering has seen it become a Top 10 seller.

Among the most stunning of its assertions is evidence that a top-secret government intelligence organisation — known as the Government Communications Security Bureau — has been operating in New Zealand as part of the Western alliance's global spying system since the end of World War 2.

According to Hager, the organisation was initially set up as part of the United States-led Cold War campaign — known as UKUSA — against the Soviet Union and China, but more recently has been extended to spying on Japanese embassies and other government and civilian targets in the Pacific region.

It now operates as part of a huge global intelligence system set up to eavesdrop on worldwide telecommunications.

Hager says the organisation has been run so secretly — largely under instruction from intelligence agencies in the United States — that its operations are largely unknown even to the Prime Minister.

During the mid-1980s when New Zealanders were told the United States had cut off its supply of intelligence in

retaliation to the anti-nuclear policy, the GCSB's operations continued unabated.

"Most New Zealanders think that because of the nuclear-free policy and the end to Anzus, New Zealand has gone its own way a bit; that we were cut off from US intelligence.

"But in the secret world, everything has been going on exactly as before."

Hager also alleges that on several occasions New Zealand prime ministers, including most recently Jim Bolger, have lied to Parliament about the functions of GCSB.

"I think New Zealanders will be shocked to realise that this country has spied on all sorts of countries, and is having an effect on those countries because of that, without the public even knowing what is going on," Hager says.

"The conclusion you reach after looking at all the operations of this organisation is that because it is so secret, it has effectively been able to run a parallel foreign policy to what the public and government thinks is actually going on."

In the book Hager presents his case in minute detail, researched, he says, over a period of 12 years.

"Because this organisation has managed to be so invisible, I realised that the only way to put it on to the political agenda was to expose it in such a comprehensive way that no one could deny that what I was saying was true," he says.

"I had to get down to a level of detail that was traumatising for the organisation concerned.

"With that much detail, no responsible person could look at the book and think that it was only speculation."

Hager says that in the later years of his research, much of his information came from sources within the organisation itself.

"These were people who either had serious misgivings about what was going on, or much more commonly were just uncomfortable that it was so secret and people weren't allowed to know what was happening."



Author Nicky Hager: much information leaked from within spying organisation.