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ENGL1010-D22

4/14/04

With Liberty, No Justice, At All (parody of pledge)

The Fight That Has Nothing to Do with Terrorism

Control: Now:: Freedom: Past

PATRIOT ACT: Now:: Bill of Rights: Past

Before September 11, 2001, America had no invasions since the Pearl Harbor incident that forced Americans to join World War II. There was an impulsive reaction to Pearl Harbor by imprisoning all the Japanese-Americans. There was a comparable reaction after September 11 by imprisoning most of America's free rights. This backlash became a law and is an acronym called Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act, or USA PATRIOT Act. The USA PATRIOT Act is a three hundred forty-two-page document presented before the Senate in a one and a half hour hearing given by Attorney General Ashcroft. He took no questions and gave no opportunity for testimony from opponents. The USA PATRIOT Act was voted to be a law in a record breaking forty-five days because America wanted to know that the government would do something to protect the citizens. Most representatives will now agree that it was an unread proposal. The USA PATRIOT Act is a violation of everything America stands for, and it needs to be exceedingly modified.

The USA PATRIOT Act infringes the Bill of Rights. The USA PATRIOT Act states that the government can monitor all roving forms of communication.

It means the bureaucracy can wiretap the phones of the terrorists, their friends, and their businesses. Anyone's body or place of residence can be searched without a warrant. All financial matters, including credit reports and bank transactions, have to be reported by the financial institutions.

It even goes as far to say that librarians have to tell what books were checked out without revealing it to the suspected criminal or suffer the penalty of imprisonment. If the subject were to be apprehended, it could be done without a reason or even a suspicion for arrest. While being held, the government can refuse the right to a lawyer and refuse the right to let the family know where one is. This is a direct contamination of our first, fourth, and sixth amendments of The Bill of Rights.

The government has defined checks and balances, and the USA PATRIOT Act disregards them. The government is split up into three agencies that are assigned to watch one another to avoid abuse of power. The USA Patriot Act allows the Executive branch of the government to take authority by searching a person's home without a warrant, which does not allow the Judicial branch to decide if it overthrows the Executive branch's authorized power. The Justice department has a secret court with a panel of judges to decide who is a terrorist and who is not. Kelley O'Meara, author of " Losing the War For Civil Liberties; Civil Libertarians Contend Politicians Have Pulled A Bait And Switch By Using The War On Terrorism To

Implement Intrusive--And Unconstitutional--Security Measures," interviews several authoritative figures and discusses a police state. John Whitehead, founder of a civil rights institute, feels that we have set the groundwork for a police state with this bill that has been trying to be passed for years (O'Meara 4-5).

The USA PATRIOT Act is so broad that it can be used for anyone.

" Domestic terrorism is defined very broadly as 'any action that endangers human life that is a violation of any Federal or State law'" (Ramasastry 2). It could be anything from speeding to someone making a bad phone call about a person, and that person is a " suspected terrorist." In " Show Me the Money: PATRIOT ACT Helps The Feds In Cases With No Tie To Terror",

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Isikoff discusses a Las Vegas man accused of a crime. The man, a local casino owner, is suspected of bribing local officials to prevent a lap dance ordinance from occurring. The USA PATRIOT ACT allowed the FBI to submit the name to the Treasury Department to get all financial records; whereas before they would have to go from bank to bank with a warrant.

This

allowed them to look up records and indict a handful of people involved in it. Isikoff also explains that out of 6, 397 records pulled, only two-thirds were in money-laundering cases with no terror connection (Isikoff 36). Many government organizations can use the tools that were originally intended for terrorist activities.

The USA PATRIOT Act is a dilemma leading America toward a police state, and the law needs to be substantially modified. Whether one has a liberal or conservative view, the results will be against all wishes of this country if nothing changes. However, steps are being made in the correct direction. CNN had a news report titled " Federal Judge Rules Part of PATRIOT Act Unconstitutional" where the judge outlawed the right to ban expert advice and assistance. In " A Federalism Role Reversal," Matthew Segal discusses America fighting back. He states how Alaska, Hawaii, Vermont, and over one hundred forty-five communities are passing resolutions to refuse to help federal agents in ways that violate the rights guaranteed to the Americans. The main problem with the USA PATRIOT ACT is that it has little to do with fighting terrorism. The USA PATRIOT Act is a good concept that needs to be modified and narrowed down to protect the general public, not to endanger their freedom.