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Monitoring US Citizens' Phone Conversations to Detect Potential Terrorist Threats of the of the Concerned June 27, 2011 Monitoring US Citizens' Phone Conversations to Detect Potential Terrorist Threats 9/11 was a conclusive turning point in the way the Americans envisaged and planned their national security. This catastrophe not only brought to fore the potential terrorist threats to the US lives and property, but also resulted in the placement of Homeland Security concept aimed at mitigating such threats (White, 2005). Yet, this in no way justifies the monitoring of US citizens' phone conversations to detect potential terrorist threats. Such provisions threaten the quintessential American way of life. Liberty and freedom have always been a fundamental part of the American ethos and values. The very spirit of American political life and popular expectations simply do not allow the state to extend its sway beyond a point where it not only interferes with the personal and professional lives of people and individuals, but rather tempers with the privacy of their private and professional phone conversations. National security is really very important. However, the concerns for national security cannot be allowed to irrationally expand to a level where they start hampering the normal activities of the citizens. The act of monitoring the phone conversations of citizens is also unconstitutional and violates the Fourth Amendment rights of the citizens, which constitute a part of the Bill of Rights (Dripps, 2007). Superficially speaking, the Fourth Amendment to the constitution of the United States of America intends to protect the citizens from illegal search and seizures. Surprisingly, the very purpose of this Amendment was to check the abuse of general search warrants in the American Revolution (Dripps, 2007). In the historical *Katz v. United States* judgment, the US Supreme Court declared any state intrusion into an area <https://assignbuster.com/monitoring-us-citizens-phone-conversations-to-detect-potential-terrorist-threats/>

where a citizen has the reasonable expectation and right to seek privacy, to be an illegal search and a violation of the Fourth Amendment (Dripps, 2007). Thus, monitoring of the phone conversations of the US citizens is a legal and ethical violation of their privacy. This in no way means that the law enforcement agencies simply cannot have an access to the phone conversations of the people doubted of having terrorist links. They can do so as per the ways and procedures laid down by the US laws. As per the Fourth Amendment, the law enforcement personnel can resort to a legal search (here monitoring of phone conversations), provided such a procedure is pursuant to a valid court warrant sanctioned on the basis of the information provided by a law enforcement personnel to the court, under an oath (Bloom, 2003). Hence the US constitution allows the monitoring of phone conversations, provided such acts are subject to accountability to a court of law. So, a blanket monitoring of phone conversations under the guise of national security is merely an abuse of state machinery and totally unethical. History is replete with many horrendous acts committed in the name of national security. So, such a proposal deserves to be opposed and resisted by all the law abiding and ethical American citizens. Reference List Bloom, Robert M. (2003). Search, Seizure and Warrants. Westport, CT: Praeger. Dripps, A Donald. (2007). Reconstructing the Fourth Amendment. Constitutional Commentary, 2. 4, 533-544. White, Jonathan R. (2005). Terrorism and Homeland Security. New York: Wadsworth Publishing.