
Leviathan for Liberty: a Defense of the Usa Patriot Act

On 11 September 2001, the terrorist group Al-Qaeda perpetrated a series of attacks against the United States. This group flew two planes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in NYC and a third plane into the Pentagon just outside Washington, D.C. The fourth plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania as those aboard attempted to regain control. Nearly 3,000 people died as a result. As fear spread through the populace, the American government was quick to institute new legislation that would address the issues facing the nation. On October 26, 2001, the Bush administration passed the USA PATRIOT (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act, typically just referred to as the "Patriot Act".

With the advancement of technology brings a myriad of new positive changes in our society; however, it can also be exploited for more heinous purposes. Terrorism, from these technological advancements, has become increasingly difficult to prevent and investigate. Before the attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S. had not updated legislation sufficiently to combat terrorism that may employ technology. For instance, technology allows for easy communication between people within a country and even overseas. Though it may be perpetrated in one place, terrorism can be planned in my different areas. Law enforcement would have to obtain multiple warrants- wherever the terrorist crimes was perpetrated. Now, under the Patriot Act, law enforcement can obtain a warrant in any of the districts a terrorist crime was committed even if they don't execute it in that same district. The Patriot Act also updates the law in regards to technology by providing law enforcement with more abilities in assisting victims of hacking. If an individual was the victim of burglary, he could invite law enforcement onto their property to gain evidence, thus being able to ultimately make an arrest. The Patriot Act treats those who trespass electronically the same as those who do it physically. Meaning, victims of hacking can allow law enforcement to gain access to their computer. Changes such as these helped to aid in the ease and efficiency of achieving national security. Law enforcement no longer has to go about investigating and arresting terrorists in a tedious manner; the law helps to create a more swift passageway for law enforcement, ensuring the security of our nation from terrorist threats or attacks.

In the pursuit of investigating and prosecuting organized crimes and drug trafficking, law enforcement had certain abilities to aid them. Before the passage of the Patriot Act, these powers, which were constitutionally used for decades, were not available to investigators of terrorism. Now, those powers have been extended to investigators of terrorism. One of these powers is the "reasonable delay" for notification of search warrants. This means that, under certain circumstances, law enforcement can postpone disclosing to the subject that a search

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warrant has been executed. This prevents criminals from being tipped off and taking actions to prevent law enforcement from being able to prosecute them- fleeing, destroying evidence, etc. Another power that the Patriot Act gives to investigators of terrorism is that they can now are able to receive a court order to obtain business records in terrorist cases. These can be crucial in an investigation of terrorism, showing, for instance, a suspected terrorist purchasing materials to construct a bomb. These powers provide more effective means of safeguarding the security of the United States by allowing law enforcement to act more forcefully and making it harder for terrorists to evade law enforcement.

In a press release in 2001, Senator John Edwards said, "...we simply cannot prevail in the battle against terrorism, if the right hand of our government has no idea what the left hand is doing." Meaning that in order to wage an effective war against terrorists, the US government must at cohesively. The USA PATRIOT Act brought forth new changes that allowed more cooperation between various government agencies. This accelerates the investigation and prosecution of terrorism by the removal of legal barriers that previously had prevented government agencies from communication and coordinating properly.

The loudest voice of opposition to the Patriot Act is the one that proclaims the act is unconstitutional and unnecessarily encroaches on the rights of American citizens. A citizen's freedom of speech is usually the first to take the hit; however, it may not stop there. Historically, the US government has had a tendency to become more authoritative in times of war so that law and order may be maintained. It is crucial to remember that terrorism can take many forms, and there has been numerous cases of terrorism since the attacks of 9/11, including terrorist attacks by Americans on American soil. It is the duty of our state to ensure our safety and security; its suspending of some liberties is only in defense of greater liberty. Because of the USA PATRIOT Act, the US can remain stable so that its citizens can freely enjoy the many rights still protected and freely participate in a democracy.

Many terrorist attacks are not planned or even conducted by only one person. The Patriot Act seeks to address these by increasing the penalties of crimes related to terrorism, such as conspiring to commit or harboring. This helps to break up terrorist calls and ensure those who aid terrorism are prosecuted. It also helps to prosecute terrorists who have someone else actually commit the crime they planned. This makes it easier to prosecute terrorists who perform in more discreet ways and helps to bring down those who work in groups. In this way, the Patriot Act allows the government to more effectively combat terrorism and therefore, aids in national security.

Though it was rather quickly signed and put into action, the Patriot Act's importance is not diminished. The events of September 11, 2001 highlighted how poorly the American government was equipped to deal with such threats. This act allows for more ease, efficiency

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and effectiveness in combating terrorism- both foreign and domestic; therefore enabling America to provide the utmost security for her citizens. It does this by updating existing legislation to keep up with modern technology, giving more powers to investigators of terrorism, allowing increased cooperation among government agencies, and instituting harsher penalties for terrorist crimes and those associated with it.

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