

The Reauthorization of McCarthyism

The recent approval by the United States Senate to reauthorize Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) has reignited debates surrounding civil liberties and national security. This controversial surveillance program, which enables US intelligence agencies to conduct electronic surveillance without judicial warrants, has long been a focal point for concerns among civil liberties organizations. The bill's passage, with a vote of 60-34, underscores the ongoing tension between security imperatives and American civil liberties.

Section 702 grants US intelligence agencies the authority to sweep up communications of non-Americans outside of US territory, including those involving US citizens communicating with foreigners. Essentially, this provision allows US intelligence agencies to intercept and collect communications between individuals who are US citizens and non-citizens, regardless of whether the US citizen is the target of the surveillance or not. This could include phone calls, emails, text messages, or any other form of communication.

Blanket surveillance, abuse, and infringement on privacy rights are not at all new to the US; in fact, it is the norm. The decision to reauthorize Section 702 is glaring evidence of the US undermining citizens' liberties over what it deems are "security concerns." The Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Christine Abizaid addressing the Senate Committee on Homeland Security, said, "as evidenced by the events of the past month, the terrorist threat landscape is highly dynamic and our country must preserve [counterterrorism] fundamentals to ensure constant vigilance." She made repeated references to Hamas's attack on 'Israel' and urged the Congress to "reauthorize this vital authority."

Therefore, Section 702 will continue to provide the excuses needed to target specific groups based on their religion, ethnicity, or political grievances, unconcerned with the individual liberties it tramples upon. The push to extend the government's surveillance powers comes as elected officials call for investigations into pro-Palestine groups. Already in Virginia, the attorney general has initiated an investigation into Palestine's fundraising activities, including allegations that it supports Hamas. Clearly, behind the reauthorization are efforts to silence dissent and suppress opposition, specifically in regard to ongoing events in Gaza. The recent vote comes amidst growing frustration with the US administration and its role in the genocide in Gaza. The US needs to maintain unchecked government surveillance and will do it at any price. This is a means to subdue Muslims into accepting America's policies and part of its ongoing war on Islam. As Muslims, we cannot allow these draconian measures to frighten us and we must continue to speak the Haq. Indeed the light of Islam will prevail.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَسَيُفْقَهُنَّهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ﴾

"Indeed, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to avert [people] from the way of Allah. So they will spend it; then it will be for them a [source of] regret; then they will be overcome. And those who have disbelieved - unto Hell they will be gathered." [Al-Anfal 36]

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