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The USA PATRIOT Act

Terrorism has become a global concern. The United States of America has been in the forefront of fighting this global vice for about a decade. Consequently, the country has made even more enemies with terrorist linked groups. On October 26, 2001, the USA PATRIOT Act was enacted as a law by the then U.S. president, George W. Bush (Carrigan et al 34). The abbreviations depict the U.S. aim and means to combat terrorism. According to the act, law enforcements have been given what are referred to as 'special powers' to fight against terrorism during investigations (Carrigan et al 34). This paper intends to explain how the special powers granted by the USA PATRIOT Act enable the U.S. law enforcements to fight terrorism.

The law permits federal agents to request the court for the provision of an order so that they can get access to records of the national security about terrorism (Dias 38). It is widely known that these records are highly confidential, and very few people have access to them. However, when granted the permission, federal agents can access these records to help the nation curb terrorism. Examining or going through the records provides investigators with an upper hand of solving terrorism. The records can provide clues that are vital in combating terrorism (Levy 67). For example, during the investigation of the Zodiac gunman case, the security agents were allowed the access to the records that enabled them to achieve success in the case.

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The USA PATRIOTIC Act permits law enforcement to carry investigations by not tipping off terrorist. Cases have been witnessed where terrorism suspects are tipped off unusually early in an investigation (Carrigan et al 37). This may allow criminals to flee, distort or destroy evidence, and even go to an extent of intimidating or killing witnesses. They may also change contact or avoid arrest. The federal courts thus in few circumstances grant law enforcements the ability to delay the arrest for a given time after a judicial search warrant is executed. This delay enables the law enforcements to identify associates, get rid of threats that may be poised to a community, and then organize an arrest (Levy 48). The state securities have been using these delayed notification warrants since the law was enacted in such crime areas as terrorism and drug trafficking.

The law also grants the law enforcements the permission to utilize surveillance to counter terrorist crimes (Dias 34). Before this law was signed, the court allowed the state securities to carry out electronic surveillance when investigating crimes (Levy 44). Security agents were also able to get wiretaps to examine crimes committed by terrorists. This act has enabled the law enforcement to collect and investigate more information while investigating a wide range of terrorism cases.

The USA PATRIOTIC Act has intensified the penalties on individuals that commit terrorism-related crimes. This is a clear intention of combating terrorism by the United States (Dias 37). The law enforces these strict penalties on individuals that commit and support terroristic operations domestically and internationally (Levy 44). This is facilitated by its prohibition of harboring terrorists. The law comes up with a new type of offense that does not allow keeping persons who are about to commit or have committed a terrorist act. The law also

defines the punishment of bioterrorists. These intensified penalties have helped in the reduction of terroristic activities in the country.

Terrorism is a global issue. Each year, the world loses so many lives and property worth millions because of terrorism. The US as a super power has to be in the forefront in combating terrorism. When President George W. Bush signed the law, it marked a new era of development in fighting terrorism (Levy 47). The special powers that the law grants to the law enforcement when combating terrorism allows law enforcers to acquire more information that are vital in the cases. Consequently, the law has enabled the US to control terrorist threats. Aside from this, confidentiality is a major concern regarding the law. Combating terrorism using the law can only be successful if a high level of discretion is guaranteed so that no information, which may interfere with the investigation process, is leaked (Carrigan et al 36).

In as much as the law registers a high level of success in helping to fight terrorism, it remains unpopular among many Americans. There is a great concern that the law is not successful in the most important cases (Levy 40). One would expect that the law enforcement having been granted extra-judicial powers should thus be successful in combating crime. However, this is not the case. In spite of these extra powers, the act does not help them find solutions to many cases. At this point, most Americans question the essence of the extra powers in the first place.

The law is also unpopular among some Americans, since it threatens the liberty of Americans too. For example, the law enables the law enforcement to extend their investigation to certain library records (Dias 37). If an American goes through a book or reading material that is under investigation in the library, the authorities are likely to conclude his or her association with a certain case. That is a breach of Americans' rights and freedoms.

It is important to make the United States safe (Levy 44). The safety of the nation is paramount. However, the extra powers given to the law enforcement need to be questioned. The law enforcement is granted access to discrete information about the national security. People are not sure that all agents in the law enforcements are trustworthy. It is not pessimistic to think that way, but it is a logical perspective. Some law enforcers may be unscrupulous enough to conspire with terrorists and obstruct justice. I believe that the law enforcement can combat terrorism even without their special powers. They have to work harder, as giving them these powers makes their work easier.

Work Cited

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