Federal Act Against Terrorism

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As a consequence of the horrible acts of September 11, 2001, Congress in an astonish 98-1 voting and the House with a majority of 357-66 votes in favor, the United States of America Patriotic Act was enacted into law on October 25, 2001. ("Department of Justice," n.d.)

The act, helps the federal government to use the most up to date technology in the market to follow leads in suspected terrorism activities. Also an important tool against drug trafficking, and any other organized crime without giving the criminals a heads up on the current investigation; also allowing governments from other countries to work side by side with the United States Government. The main idea behind the act is to counteract and to cripple, criminal and terrorist attacks before they happened.

In the video by ABC Nightline News, (2003) Mr. Ted Koppel raises the question about how the Patriot Act is violating civil liberties. Mrs. Barbara Comstock explains that all the Constitutional rights still stand, and under the Patriot Act a search warrant signed by a judge still very much need it. Is the act violating the individual's Fourth Amendment right? In the case of Dalia v. United States (1979), the court decided for delayed notification stating "officers need not announce their purpose before conducting an otherwise [duly] authorized search if such an announcement would provoke the escape of the suspect or the destruction of critical evidence." This case set precedence for more cases to come to give law enforcement officers and the Federal Bureau of Investigation the tools to prevent criminal acts without given them heads up about an investigation.

Delayed notification in the case as mentioned above was detrimental, but what happened to an individual’s right to speedy trial or the right to counsel protected by the Bill of Rights Amendments? In the ABC Nightline News, (2003) Mr. Koppel states, “ some people have been put away in jail, and not permitted to have an attorney or talk to their families…” Mrs. Comstock describes the situation of 3 individuals in that case, and that they do not fall under the Patriot Act, they are considered “enemy combatants” is a law standing war power and under Presidential authority that allows our authorities to detained them.

Another interesting case where section 213 of the Patriot Act has made a difference, United States v. Villegas, the case of a cocaine factory by delaying, noticed the authorities were able to wait and find out who all the key players in the operation were, in this particular case the court understood the need for the delay, to catch everyone involved in the drug factory.

Section 218 of the Patriot Act, has been questioned by the American Civil Liberties Union. Like the section that authorizes the government illegal searches and wiretaps ("American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Virginia," 2005) The truth is that under section 218 of the Patriot Act, law enforcement, and federal government can exchange information and work together in a case.

As seeing in the case of Virginia Jihad network where Muslim men were just playing paintball games, however, in reality, they were training and learning military tactics. Actually in the case mentioned above eleven people were charged, and six of them pleaded guilty. As (Markon, 2006) for the Washington Post states, “The group's spiritual leader, Ali al-Timimi, was convicted last year on charges that included soliciting others to levy war against the United States and contributing services to Afghanistan's former Taliban rulers. He was sentenced to life in prison.” Even though they couldn’t prove they were planning attacks against the United States, once in court some of them actually confessed to having plans on carrying attacks and as (Markon, 2006) states, “ Muhammed Aatique, said at his guilty plea hearing in 2003: "The United States could have been one of the possible opponents if the conspiracy had gone ahead."

It’s a necessity to prevent attacks on our nation, and as many states, the government uses the Patriot Act to violate citizen’s civil liberties, but if another attack like September 11, 2001, occurs who is going to take the blame for it? Did the people that got killed in the terror attacks of September 11, 2001; had the chance to fight for their civil liberties? Everything comes with a price tag and it is our nation and our citizens ready to pay the price of being safe and protected against terrorists, then they should stand in favor of the Patriot Act.

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