Negative Case: National Security

“Distrust and caution are the parents of security.”[[1]](#footnote-2) It is because I agree with Benjamin Franklin that transparency is key to security, that I stand *Resolved: When in conflict, the right to individual privacy IS NOT more important than national security.*

For the purpose of clarification in this debate round, I will provide one definition and a second as my value:

1. **Privacy** is defined by *Collins English Dictionary* as, “The condition of being secret; secrecy.” [[2]](#footnote-3)

# Value: National Security

The value I choose to uphold today is that of National Security. National Security is defined by the Random House Dictionary as, “A collective term for the defense and foreign relations of a country, protection of the interests of a country.”[[3]](#footnote-4)

Before I move on to my contentions, I would like to make an observation.

## Observation 1: Resolutional Analysis

**A) Burden:** As the negative in today’s debate round, I am asked to prove the resolution false: that individual privacy is not more important that national security. If I can show this to be the case, then a negative ballot is warranted.

**B) Resolutional Scope:** One of the areas where privacy is often discussed is in the relationship between the people and the government. In order to provide clarity in today’s debate round, I have chosen to specifically look in my case at how privacy is upheld on a national level, often at the expense of our national security.

# Contention 1: National Security Is Important

National security ensures that a America remain safe from foreign attacks. The 2015 White House briefing on national security states:

Any successful strategy to ensure the safety of the American people and advance our national security interests must begin with an undeniable truth—America must lead. Strong and sustained American leadership is essential to a rules-based international order that promotes global security and prosperity as well as the dignity and human rights of all peoples. The question is never whether America should lead, but how we lead.[[4]](#footnote-5)

The scope of “how” is not what I will attempt to define, nor is it a requirement of this resolution. My point is to show that national security should be valued above individual privacy when the two come into conflict. This is the primary job of our government, which I show in my second contention.

# Contention 2: The Government’s Job Is to Protect National Security

While it is important to limit governmental powers, it is also crucial to prevent national security breaches where there is no government interference. In conflict situations, individuals may have privacy upheld, but there would be lack of national security and accountability. Part of a functioning society includes transparency to ensure that there is a working relationship between the government and the people. People and the government are less likely to intentionally make poor decisions if they know that the other will have access to any incriminating information.

# Contention 3: National Security and Individual Privacy Conflict

When our government makes decisions, they base those decisions on values. Too often, our government focuses on upholding privacy rather than our security. However, we can look to the example of the Supreme Court case involving former President Richard Nixon to see the importance of the government making decisions based on National Security instead of privacy.

## Application: *United States vs. Nixon*

During the Watergate Scandal, President Nixon was taken to court because of his involvement. *United States vs. Nixon* addressed the issue of privacy as it related to “executive privilege” and whether or not President Nixon could withhold tapes from other branches of government and the public. According to the Chicago-Kent College of Law,

“The Court held that neither the doctrine of separation of powers, nor the generalized need for confidentiality of high-level communications, without more, can sustain an absolute, unqualified, presidential privilege. The Court granted that there was a limited executive privilege in areas of military or diplomatic affairs, but gave preference to ‘the fundamental demands of due process of law in the fair administration of justice.’”[[5]](#footnote-6)

History as shown us that executive privilege in regards to withholding information from the public is a dangerous slippery slope that can hurt the interest of a nation, therefore threatening national security. As George Bernard Shaw said, “If history repeats itself, and the unexpected always happens, how incapable must Man be of learning from experience.”[[6]](#footnote-7) Historical lessons show that national security ought to be valued higher than individual privacy.

In conclusion, because national security is vital to a nation and upholding privacy too highly can hurt national security, I continue to stand resolved that *when in conflict, the right to individual privacy is more important than national security.*

1. “Security Quotes.” *BrainyQuote*. 2015. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/security.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. “Privacy.” *Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition*. HarperCollins Publishers. Dictionary.com. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/privacy>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. “National security.” *Dictionary.com's 21st Century Lexicon*. Dictionary.com, LLC. Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/national-security>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. White House. “National Security Strategy.” Febraury 2015. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. “The Road to Impeachment.” *Kinsella v. Jaekle* (CTSC 1984). <http://ct-n.com/civics/impeachment/Precedents.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. George Bernard Shaw. *BrainyQuote.com*. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/g/georgebern163236.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)