Negative Case: Security

If you had a choice between your life and your house, which would you choose? Though there are certainly some crazies that would be desperately trying to rescue their grandmother’s silver from the cabinet while their house burnt down around them, all sane people regard their security as the most important thing. It is because I believe that security is even more important than privacy that I stand opposed to the resolution, and instead argue that national security is more important than individual privacy.

For clarity, I would like to present the following definitions:

* **Privacy: “**the condition of being private or withdrawn; seclusion, the condition of being secret**”** (Collins English Dictionary[[1]](#footnote-2))
* **Value: “**to regard or esteem highly” (Dictionary.com[[2]](#footnote-3))

The value I will be seeking to uphold is **Security**, which is defined by Dictionary.com as “freedom from danger, risk, etc.; safety.[[3]](#footnote-4)” Security is of paramount importance to each individual, and thus, should be the paramount value of any society.

My criterion is that of **Information**. Though we often think of government as being the primary protector of our personal safety, knowing enemies and threats is even more important. As my contentions will show, Security is the most important value, and over valuing individual privacy harms national security by making it hard for governments to gather important information.

# Contention 1: Security Is the Highest Value

Security, the protection of our lives, is the most important value and is the reason government exists. Though there are certainly many things we value, all of them, even our freedom, are less important than protecting the security of ourselves and the people around us.

## Example: America’s Wars

An example of this would be in any war or military conflict America participates in. We fully expect our government to do all the spying it must on insurgents who are a threat to our nation. When national security is on the line, we negate the resolution and value what is the higher value. That is national security, not individual privacy.

# Contention 2: Information Is Necessary to Ensure Security

If you’ve ever seen a mystery movie or TV crime series, there is always a critical piece of information that the main character uses to solve the crime. It’s the same with real life law enforcement. To keep us secure, government officials need to be able to collect information on suspects to solve a case. That’s why we have entire departments like the CIA dedicated to collecting information on enemies and criminals.

## Example: Osama bin Laden

The United States, using undercover operatives and satellites, spent years spying on people in Afghanistan and Pakistan, robbing them of their privacy, to find information on bin Laden. In the end, the information collected led to the discovery of his hiding place and brought one of history’s most feared killers to justice. If it wasn’t for the information our government collects, thousands of evil men like Osama Bin Laden would never be captured, leading to a less secure world.

# Contention 3: Valuing Individual Privacy Over National Security Hinders Vital Information

If you value individual privacy too much, you may restrict crucial intelligence. While a certain level of this is certainly nice, privacy laws value privacy at the expense of collecting information vital to protecting safety.

## Example: Americans Do Not Feel Safer

In 2010, the Heritage Foundation reported that “Since September 11, 2001, at least 30 planned terrorist attacks have been foiled, all but two of them prevented by law enforcement.” They note that it was presicely the US PATRIOT Act that gave government the authority to gather information to allow them the foil these crimes. [Quote]

“Bottom line: The system has generally worked well. But many tools necessary for ferreting out conspiracies and catching terrorists are under attack. Chief among them are key provisions of the PATRIOT Act that are set to expire at the end of this year.”[[4]](#footnote-5) [UNQUOTE]

That was 2010. But the PATRIOT ACT was replaced with the US FREEDOM ACT, a bill that restricted our intelligence gathering for the sake of individual privacy. Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas expressed his concern:

“Congress should have reauthorized the expiring provisions of the Patriot Act because they saved Americans lives and protected Americans rights. Instead, the so-called “FREEDOM Act” would replace an effective, Constitutional intelligence collection system with an untested hypothetical one. Worse, it returns us to a dangerous pre-9/11 mindset at a time when America is still at war with radical Islam.”[[5]](#footnote-6)

Do you feel safer today now that we’ve valued individual privacy over national security? I don’t, and neither do most Americans. After the deadly San Bernardino attacks, a poll asking Americans of how important national security was reveals how you should vote in this debate:

“According to a new NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, 40 percent of Americans say that national security and terrorism is the top priority for the federal government. That's up 19 points from when this question was asked in April.”[[6]](#footnote-7)

If you agree that our national security is paramount in importance, I urge you to join me in negating this resolution.

1. "privacy." *Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition*. HarperCollins Publishers. 10 May. 2012. Dictionary.com<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/privacy>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. "Value." *Dictionary.com*. Dictionary.com. Web. 10 May 2012. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/value>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. "Security." *Dictionary.com*. Dictionary.com. Web. 10 May 2012. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/security?s=t>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Jena Baker McNeill, James Jay Carafano, Ph.D. and Jessica Zuckerman. “30 Terrorist Plots Foiled: How the System Worked.” Heritage Foundation, April 29, 2010. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2010/04/30-terrorist-plots-foiled-how-the-system-worked> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Patrick Brennan. “Senate Passes Patriot Act Replacement.” National Review, June 2, 2015. <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/419214/senate-approve-patriot-act-replacement-patrick-brennan> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Kelsey Thomas. “Poll: Americans see terrorism as number one problem.” 3News, 12/15/15. <http://www.news3lv.com/content/news/local/story/Poll-Americans-see-terrorism-as-number-one-proble/eOlSAI3Vj0WoMIboaJX8Hg.cspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)