

“Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism”

PATRIOT I

Just six weeks after the September 11 attacks, a panicked Congress passed the USA Patriot Act, an overnight revision of the nation's surveillance laws that vastly expanded the government's authority to spy on its own citizens, while simultaneously reducing checks and balances on those powers like judicial oversight, public accountability, and the ability to challenge government searches in court.

Most of the changes to surveillance law made by the Patriot Act were part of a longstanding law enforcement wish list that had been previously rejected by Congress, in some cases repeatedly. Congress reversed course because it was bullied into it by the Bush Administration in the frightening weeks after the September 11 attack.

The Senate version of the Patriot Act, which closely resembled the legislation requested by Attorney General John Ashcroft, was sent straight to the floor with no discussion, debate, or hearings. Many Senators complained that they had little chance to read it, much less analyze it, before having to vote. In the House, hearings were held, and a carefully constructed compromise bill emerged from the Judiciary Committee. But then, with no debate or consultation with rank-and-file members, the House leadership threw out the compromise bill and replaced it with legislation that mirrored the Senate version. Neither discussion nor amendments were permitted, and once again members barely had time to read the thick bill before they were forced to cast an up-or-down vote on it. The Bush Administration implied that members who voted against it would be blamed for any further attacks—a powerful threat at a time when the nation was expecting a second attack to come any moment and when reports of new anthrax letters were appearing daily.

Congress and the Administration acted without any careful or systematic effort to determine whether weaknesses in our surveillance laws had contributed to the attacks, or whether the changes they were making would help prevent further attacks. Indeed, many of the act's provisions have nothing at all to do with terrorism.

— *The American Civil Liberties Union*

HISTORICAL NOTES...

Eugene Debs

“Debs was a political and social activist born in 1855. He was an active union leader and socialist candidate for the Presidency 5 times. About war Debs said: ‘The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives.’ Debs was convicted under the Espionage Act and sentenced to 10 years in prison. By the time he was sentenced the war had ended and Debs was 64 years old.” *From the Eugene V. Debs Foundation*

www.eugenevdebs.com

The Palmer Raids

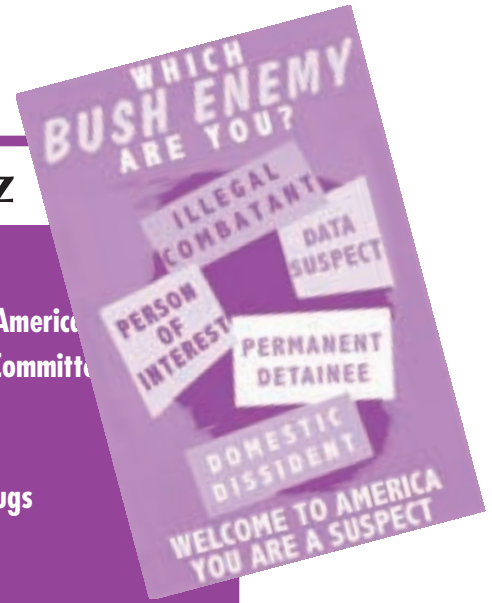
“In 1919, a series of politically motivated bombing attempts culminated in an explosion at the Washington home of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. The federal government responded by rounding up thousands of suspected subversive immigrants across the country. They were held in unconscionable conditions, interrogated incommunicado, and in some cases tortured. In the end, more than 500 were deported, not for the bombing, but for their political associations. The Palmer Raids were led in part by a young J. Edgar Hoover, then head of the Justice Department's Alien Radical division.” *From The Ashcroft Raids by David Cole on the Amnesty International website.*

PATRIOT II: THE DOMESTIC SECURITY ENHANCEMENT ACT

- Patriot II mandates that all arrests in connection with “international terrorism” investigations are secret until an indictment is filed. Never in our history have we permitted secret arrests. Gag orders will be imposed on the subjects of terrorism investigations.
- Patriot II gives the Attorney General unchecked power to deport foreign nationals, including lawful permanent residents, whenever he determines that their presence is inconsistent with our “national security,” which is defined to include “economic interests” or “foreign policy.”
- “Expedited Removal:” low level immigration officials will have the power to deport immigrants convicted of a broadening range of minor crimes, with no judicial review. The requirement for a receiving nation to “accept” a deportee would be eliminated. This has implications for thousands of previously non-deportable Lao, Vietnamese, Somali and Cuban refugees, and it opens up vast opportunities for human trafficking wherever the U.S. can identify warlords or mercenaries prepared to receive deportees for a fee.
- Patriot II can strip citizenship for one's political associations. Even activity that is currently legal, such as belonging to or supporting the lawful activities of a group designated “terrorist” would be presumptive grounds for losing one's citizenship.
- The distinction between domestic terrorism, traditionally treated as a criminal matter, and international terrorist acts, which are subject to broader surveillance, will be eliminated. The act would authorize creation of a DNA database on “suspected terrorists,” expansively defined to include mere association with suspected terrorist groups, and noncitizens suspected of everyday crimes or of having supported any group designated as “terrorist”. The bill would terminate any state or local legislation limiting abuse of police spying that was entered before September 11, 2001.

— *Hate Free Zone Campaign*

History of the USA PATRIOT Act Quiz



See how well you can match these up:

- 1 Suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus (the right of a person in jail, prison or detention to challenge the legality or constitutionality of that detention) and declaration of martial law by _____ during the Civil War.
- 2 War during which socialist and pacifist Eugene Debs was sent to prison for denouncing the War as a capitalist plot.
- 3 Fears that the Bolshevik revolution would spread to the US led to the _____. Homes and businesses of immigrant labor organizers, socialists and anarchists were ransacked without warrants.
- 4 War during which the Supreme Court approved the relocation and internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans.
- 5 The Committee that ruined the lives of screenwriters, actors and directors by asking the question "are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the Communist Party?"
- 6 The name of the program used by J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI which subverted the law in an attempt to disrupt and destroy the Civil Rights movement, the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, Students for a Democratic Society, Puerto Rican nationalists and others.
- 7 Examples of unwarranted targets of FBI surveillance in the 80's and 90's.
- 8 Includes the harassment, surveillance and cataloging of "suspected" gangmembers - primarily low income youth of color.
- 9 Prior to September 11, the Portland City Council agrees to set up a _____ between the Portland Police, the FBI, the INS and other agencies
- 10 The year the US Senate passes the USA Patriot Act 98-1. The US House of Representatives passes the same Act 357-66.

A.

- B. House Un-American Activities Committee
- C. War on Drugs
- D. World War II
- E. CISPES and ACT UP, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador & AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power
- F. COINTELPRO
- G. President Lincoln
- H. Joint Terrorism Task Force
- I. World War I
- J. Palmer Raids

House Un-American Activities Committee

"The Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was originally established in 1937 under the chairmanship of Martin Dies. The main objective of the HUAC was the investigation of un-American and subversive activities. The HUAC originally investigated both left-wing and right-wing political groups. Some called for the leaders of the Ku Klux Klan to be interrogated by the HUAC. Martin Dies however was a supporter of the Klan and had spoken at several of its rallies. Other members of the HUAC such as John Rankin and John S. Wood were also Klan sympathizers. Eventually Ernest Adamson, the HUAC's chief counsel, announced that: 'The committee has decided that it lacks sufficient data on which to base a probe.' John Rankin added: After all, 'the KKK is an old American institution.' Instead, the HUAC concentrated on investigating the possibility that the American Communist Party had infiltrated the Federal Writers Project and other New Deal projects."

From:

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USA/huac.htm

This training tool was developed by the Western States Center trainer/organizer staff.

ANSWER KEY: 1=G 2=I 3=J 4=D 5=B 6=F 7=E 8=C 9=H 10=A