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**What is more important: Our Privacy or National Security?**

**Introduction**

Attempting to balance the national security with the privacy of individuals is a challenging task that, in the foreseeable future, does not pledge a friendly alternative. Various debates surrounding this issue are going on where people with alternative perspectives strive to make sure that their opinions are influential. National Security is a concept according to which the nation uses everything in its power to defend itself from global attacks, protect its citizens, institutions, and economy. Initially, the concept was perceived as the defense in contradiction of military assaults. However, eventually, it started to grow, and now it has expanded to non-military extents such as crime control, energy security, economic security, food security, environment security, and cybersecurity (“National Security”). Individual privacy refers to the secrecy of one’s personal information and how they choose to disclose it. The extent of what is considered private depends on the individual or culture in some cases. Now the question is, what is more important: our privacy or national security? It is the sensitive nature of both concepts that make it extremely difficult to decide which one is more significant. However, National security is prioritized over an individual's privacy, given the statistic that individuals generally respect national security. I will support my claim with the evidence of the Legal status of Individual privacy vs. National Security issue, Expert Opinion, and the Effects on international relations. The essay will also include the counterarguments and refute derived from my evidence, which will prove that national security is prioritized over individual privacy.

**Discussion**

Politics regarding national safety and privacy came into existence following the acts of terrorism on the World Trade Center situated in the United States of America on September 11, 2001. This incidence has been known as the 9/11 attack all over the world. This problem, nevertheless, has existed for a longer period, while it has had a negligible effect on the privacy of citizens. The 2001 act of terrorism was accountable for the fierce debate on whether to abandon personal privacy for national defense. Following the attacks, reforms were introduced that enforced the representatives to enact the United States of America Patriot Act (The Data Base Book, 2010). This had been done deliberately to provide a constitutional platform to security personnel for perusing and detaining the assailants of terrorism. Numerous opinions were expressed on this legislation, with supporters asserting that protecting citizens before contemplating the confidentiality of individuals was crucial.

According to a study conducted between IT specialists in the year 2008, findings depicted that relative to personal privacy, national security earned firm support. Fifty-three percent of 474 IT specialists throughout this study claimed that national security was crucial in the countries. The analysis further coincided with the claim as sixty-nine percent of central, national, and regional IT intelligence agencies reported identity management was paramount (Jones, 2008). They demonstrated that individual identity management is especially significant in terms of the entire population's life. These prospects would guarantee that a criminal could be monitored by security agencies and likely stop a certain operation that would threaten people with security. Managing this data will not include any social-level posting. This guarantees the confidentiality of the information gathered by the security bodies. Maybe that is why forty-five percent of the specialists claimed that financial support for this security precaution would rise as opposed to a pitiful five percent who did not believe this.

The strong opinions held by the US government further reflect priority for national security above personal privacy. The US, as well as EU, have participated in comprehensive discussions to exclude residents of the EU from the anti-terror actions taken by the US against those who travel to the US (Homeland Security, 2011). EU is seeking to obtain a broad agreement, which will guarantee that its residents are not victimized to critical monitoring. The US made it obligatory for all international airlines to disclose private information about their travelers in contrast to this counterforce by the EU. It was intended to discourage the intrusion of perpetrators into the land. The US approach, though, demonstrates that he is not ready to make concessions on its national safety. Such confrontation indicates that this stance will not be backed down by national security. That is because personal security is ensured too, while national security is certain. The United States is not the only country where national security is supported. Demographics in several other regions of the globe usually depict that national security is prioritized to Individual confidentiality, for most nations have enacted legislation that aims to prioritize national security.

The counterargument suggests that critics were highly outspoken in arguing that implementing such legislation would breach the constitution declared civil rights. This depicted that these regulations are unconstitutional. In American Society, Individual Privacy is considered a right according to the American constitution (Mitrano, 2013). While individual privacy supporters invoke the federal statute that protects civil liberties, they might be misguided. The Constitution of America does not acknowledge privacy as a fundamental right. Since the constitution does not even use the term 'privacy.' Therefore it is potentially inaccurate to assert that personal privacy is protected by the constitution. Security, with this perspective, is a basic need to which everyone has the right. National security thus exceeds Individual Privacy and earns the first place.

As often as people debate regarding promoting national security over the privacy of people, the advancement of technology can determine the course. Many security personnel is now able to retrieve personal information online without the owner's permission. It coincides with the fact that individuals are mainly unaware of what is happening at the backend as they are more prone to surveillance. Dr. Clark of Australian National University states that It solely might be due to the 9/11 attack (Quiddington, 2001). The evidence to justify this assumption can be given by the advancement in Information technology and due to this information technology state can achieve the overall security of a nation by surveying people efficiently. As far as surveillance is concerned, several studies depict that no data is made available to the public. However, Dr. Clark opposes the idea by believing the 9/11 attack may be used intentionally to introduce invasive methods to make it justifiable. He further adds that much as security officials say that they are only monitoring the suspects, they may forget their purpose and start monitoring every single one of us. As the procedure is alike for every person regardless of foreigners, it might create a bad impression of a country and may affect its relationship with other countries. The basic agenda of fighting terrorism will lose its authenticity as everybody will be treated as a suspect. Although this seems to make sense, these measures are vital to ensure the overall security of a nation as it is prone to harm for the outside. As this surveillance is monitoring everyone alike, the fact rules out the factor of discrimination as supports the fact that this is solely for security purposes. Individuals may only be able to exercise their rights if there is a nation to protect them from outside forces. Individual security is right, while national security is key to survival. What is the point of Individual security when there is no security to ensure survival? Thus, it is justifiable to prioritize national security over individual privacy.

Moreover, further counterarguments suggest that prioritizing national security or individual privacy may lead information into the undesired hands as not all agencies are owned by the government (Quiddington, 2011). There are also private intelligence agencies; thus, there is a question mark on their authenticity. Although, this is true but many governments take extra measures in providing license to these agencies by making sure that they are safe and authentic. Thus it proves my point that security is ultimately provided by the state to ensure the safety of individuals. It also proves that nation security covers a broad range of responsibilities, including the security of its citizens.

**Conclusion**

Fundamentally, every individual deserves the right to privacy. Although, asserting whether individual privacy is given preference over national security is quite complicated. According to various studies, it was quite evident that national security is prioritized over personal privacy. That is why the United States of America has adopted several legislatures to give access to intelligence agencies to obtain personal information solely for security purposes. It would be not wrong to assert that national security is prioritized because individual privacy does not exist without national security. If national security is ensured, there will be individual privacy, whereas individual privacy is denied if national security is not protected. Individuals may only be able to exercise their forces if there is a nation to protect them from outside forces. Individual security is a right, while national security is a key to survival. What is the point of individual security when there is no security that ensures survival? As far as surveillance is concerned, several studies depict that no data is made available to the public. Therefore, it is proved that National security is more important than individual privacy because individuals generally respect national security.

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