
Subject: Marco Rubio Wants to Permanently Extend NSA Mass Surveillance
Posted by [CyberkNight](#) on Wed, 15 Apr 2015 18:27:33 GMT

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Sen. Marco Rubio wants Congress to permanently extend the authorities governing several of the National Security Agency's controversial spying programs, including its mass surveillance of domestic phone records.

The Florida Republican and likely 2016 presidential hopeful penned an op-ed on Tuesday condemning President Obama's counterterrorism policies and warning that the U.S. has not learned the "fundamental lessons of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001."

Rubio called on Congress to permanently reauthorize core provisions of the post-9/11 USA Patriot Act, which are due to sunset on June 1 of this year and provide the intelligence community with much of its surveillance power.

"This year, a new Republican majority in both houses of Congress will have to extend current authorities under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, and I urge my colleagues to consider a permanent extension of the counterterrorism tools our intelligence community relies on to keep the American people safe," Rubio wrote in a Fox News op-ed.

Rubio for years has positioned himself as a vocal defense hawk in Congress, and he has repeatedly defended the NSA's spy programs revealed to the public by former agency contractor Edward Snowden.

But Rubio's call to permanently extend the legal framework that allows the NSA to collect the bulk U.S. phone metadata--language that Congress has tweaked and in many cases made more permissive since 9/11--is particularly forceful. It comes in the wake of terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists in France at a satirical newspaper and a kosher deli that left 17 dead--violence that has prompted European officials to publicly consider whether more forceful surveillance laws are needed.

It also underscores the divisions among Rubio and his fellow Republican senators expected to jockey for the White House--namely, Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Rand Paul of Kentucky.

Cruz was one of only four Republicans to join with Democrats in November in voting to pass the USA Freedom Act, a bill that would have reformed several aspects of the NSA spying regime and would have barred the government from dragnet collection of Americans' phone records. Rubio voted against the measure, and so did Paul--though for divergent reasons. While Rubio warned that the bill could hamper intelligence agencies and bolster terrorists, Paul voted it down because he said it did not go far enough.

Paul has vowed to work to block the Patriot Act's reauthorization entirely this year, though many privacy and civil-liberties advocates have questioned the legitimacy of his strategy.

Many supporters of the Patriot Act have said one of the bill's strongest points is that its periodic sunsets force Congress to reconsider the authorities as it strives to balance civil liberties with security.

Full article: <http://www.nationaljournal.com/tech/marco-rubio-wants-to-permanently-extend-nsa-mass-surveillance-20150127>
