



Submission No 39

Inquiry into potential reforms of National Security Legislation

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Organisation: Private Capacity

From: Bob
Sent: Thursday, 2 August 2012 5:24 PM
To: Committee, PJCIS (REPS)
Subject: Submission re Inquiry into potential reforms of National Security Legislation

Mr Robert Varney

Submission to the Inquiry into potential reforms of National Security Legislation

Dear Sir/Madam,

I feel that I must state my opposition to the proposed reforms of the national security legislation. Any proposed reforms should, I believe, be confined to making ASIO and other secretive Australian security organizations more accountable for their actions, with the responsibility to disclose after a period of time, details to Australian citizens affected of any investigations and more direct actions, for example home invasions, directed against Australian citizens. It must be noted, in the case of the latter, that ASIO already has extremely intrusive powers. For example, the power to enter homes and copy, modify and erase computer data and virtually, when necessary, steal the same computers. ASIO operatives are allowed to be armed during these escapades lest some householder object to the blatant intrusion of his or her home.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of Australians believe that the above mentioned ASIO powers would not be likely to be used against them but rather against Islamics and those of Middle-Eastern origins. The proposed changes to legislation however, pose a threat to the privacy and wellbeing of all Australians, most of whom are totally undeserving of such attentions. Following are some of my own suggested disadvantages of the new proposals.

Hoaxers can target ASIO and other security organizations - as happened with the Echelon Project in the US - resulting in considerable cost to the Australian taxpayer.

It is time to halt the advance of such repressive legislation, given that successful legislation of this nature will encourage repressive governments to enact more atrocious legislation at a later date.

Surely the security organizations such as ASIO have their share of corruption, just as has any Australian Police organization or Public service is found to contain from time to time. More powers and a continuing lack of accountability will enhance this possibility further. But corruption in ASIO for instance, could have more national repercussions than in other organizations.

At this stage I cannot help wondering if my name will appear on an ASIO list of those with suspected adverse opinions regarding Australia's security services.

Yours sincerely,

R Varney