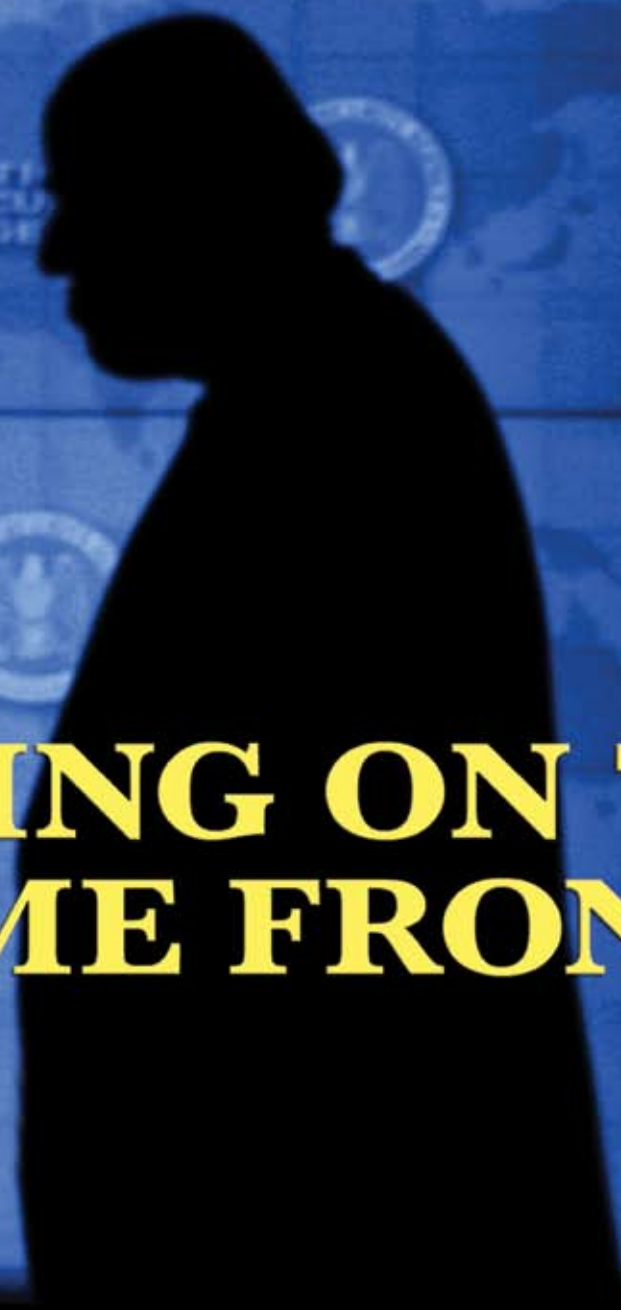




NATIONAL SECURITY  
AGENCY



# SPYING ON THE HOME FRONT

1 x 60



International

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1 x 60

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9/11 indelibly altered America. Some Americans are starting to earnestly question whether perpetual orange alerts, barricades, body frisks at the airport and most importantly, greater government scrutiny of people's records and surveillance of their communications are increasing their safety enough to justify the intrusion into their lives.

President Bush described his anti-terrorist measures as narrow and targeted, but *Spying on the Home Front*, a new FRONTLINE investigation, has found that the National Security Agency (NSA) has engaged in wiretapping and sifting of Internet communications of millions of Americans. Even government officials with experience since 9/11 are nagged by anxiety about the risk that a war without end against unseen terrorists poses to our way of life and our personal freedoms.

"I always said, when I was in my position running counterterrorism operations for the FBI, 'How much security do you want, and how many rights do you want to give up?'" Larry Mefford, former assistant FBI director, tells correspondent Hedrick Smith. "I can give you more security, but I've got to take away some rights..."

Although the president told the nation that his NSA eavesdropping program was limited to known Al Qaeda agents or supporters abroad making calls into the US, comments of other administration officials and intelligence veterans indicate that the NSA cast its net far more widely. John Yoo, the Justice Department lawyer who wrote the official legal memos legitimizing the president's warrantless wiretapping program, told FRONTLINE, "The government needs to have access to international communications so that it can try to find communications that are coming into the country where Al Qaeda's trying to send messages to cell members in the country. In order to do that, it does have to have access to communication networks."

*Spying on the Home Front* also looks at a massive FBI data sweep in December 2003. On a tip that Al Qaeda "might have an interest in Las Vegas" around New Year's 2004, the FBI demanded records from all hotels, airlines, rental car agencies, casinos and other businesses on every person who visited Las Vegas in the run-up to the holiday. A check of all 250,000 Las Vegas visitors against terrorist watch lists turned up no known terrorist suspects or associates of suspects. The FBI told FRONTLINE that the records had been kept for more than two years, but have now all been destroyed.

In the broad reach of NSA eavesdropping, the massive FBI data sweep in Las Vegas, access to records gathered by private database companies that allows government agencies to avoid the limitations provided by the Privacy Act, and nearly 200 other government data-mining programs identified by the Government Accounting Office, experienced national security officials and government attorneys see a troubling and potentially dangerous collision between the strategy of pre-emption and the Fourth Amendment's protections against unreasonable search and seizure.

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CREDITS

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A FRONTLINE co-production with Hedrick Smith Productions, Inc. for WGBH/Boston