

Big Brother Is Listening To You

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit against the National Security Agency to halt domestic spying in the United States. The lawsuit filed in the Eastern District of Michigan condemns the US Government for listening to private conversations of US citizens without prior judicial approval.

In the US, the Government may apply judicially to listen to conversations of suspected criminal activity by a valid procedure called wiretapping. Many Jamaican-Americans convicted in Federal Court in the last decade in South Florida have been electronically aggrieved through wiretapping. Attempts to use patois or coded conversations to defeat monitoring by law enforcement have not prevented convictions in most Federal cases.

A Good Example

The visit by a highly qualified medical team from New York to Jamaica can only benefit our country. The members are Jamaican-American and the visit is facilitated by the Organization for International Development. It will ensure that members of our inner communities have exposure to cutting edge medical care. One remembers the tremendous impact of the UN affiliated HOPE ship on our medical care in earlier times. Recently, a student at the Law School advised me that the public hospitals in Jamaica did not have adequate supplies of sheets, cotton or gauze. I was also informed that patients in the hospital have to supply most of their own medication and food. Could these facts be true? It would be interesting to compare the budgetary estimates for health and education with the amount spent for alleged road repairs.

Conservative Immigration Policy

Immigration continues to be a significant agenda item for the US Congress this year. Nearly 300,000 Central Americans will be deported from the US in 2006 if it revokes their Temporary Protected Status (TPS). TPS may be granted to individuals temporarily living in the US who have been the victims of natural disasters or political violence in their own country.

The Justice Department has announced plans to terminate the TPS status of Hondurans and Nicaraguans displaced after Hurricane Mitch; and Salvadorans displaced by earthquakes. Many of these undocumented individuals live in South Florida. Liberians will probably have their TPS status revoked next. (Jamaicans and Haitians have never been granted TPS status.) The revocation plan is being criticized sharply in academic and political circles. The Bush Administration has decided to stamp out crime associated with non-resident aliens. The Department of Homeland Security returned to Cuba earlier this week a boatload of Cubans who were marooned on a Bridge in Key West, taking the position that the Bridge was not dry land for the purpose of the "wet foot dry foot" policy.

Jamaican musical artistes who have travelled on H-1 Visas may find themselves denied entry to the US if they have previously been convicted of narcotics offences, crimes of violence or if they have overstayed their visas in the past. In fact the Jamaican reputation for criminal activity

is so poor that any Jamaican artiste who is a non-resident alien who has the slightest criminal record will probably be denied entry to the United States.

Individuals in Florida who accept probation rather than jail time for first offences and who are non-citizens may find themselves in Removal proceedings because of the close co-operation between the State of Florida Probation Services and Border Patrol Intelligence. Non-citizen Rastafarians in particular appear to be targeted.

Unions

An interesting development in the United States may point the way for the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) and the National Workers Union (NWU) in the future.

The new federal rules initiated by the US Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao force American Unions to disclose in great specificity how they spend members' dues. These new rules will restrict some of the largest American Unions in their spending.

The National Education Association will have to explain how it spends its US \$61 million payroll. Jesse Jackson's PUSH coalition will have to explain how it spent \$30 million per year.

Most Favoured Nation

China has used its status as Most Favored Nation in trade matters with the United States very effectively. Later this year the Geely CK motorcar will be on sale in the United States for US\$9,000 per car. The Geely will be about the size of a Honda Civic. It is a pity that Jamaica has never been able to use its CBI status to develop any form of automotive export business.

Marion Barry, the former Washington D.C. Mayor has tested positive for cocaine in a mandatory drug test required after he pled guilty to tax evasion last year. Barry's problems continue after being caught by video cutting cocaine deals with FBI Agents while serving as Mayor of Washington D.C. Barry is a vocal critic of the outsourcing of American jobs to China.

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