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## Government Surveillance -- Good or Bad?

### Outlines:

#### 1- Introduction

##### 1.1 Background

##### 1.2 General statements

1.3 Thesis state: In a country like Pakistan, government surveillance is inevitable. It has unresolved issues with its neighbour. Its border is porous. Hence, Government surveillance is required for national security, crime prevention, public safety and effective response, and for cyber attacks prevention.

#### 2- National Security

##### 2.1 Non-state actors involvement

##### 2.2 Terrorism threats

##### 2.3 Proxy wars

#### 3- Crime Prevention

##### 3.1 The safe city projects

##### 3.2 Reduction in crime

##### 3.3 Helps to find culprits and to find missing persons

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4- Public Safety and effective response:

4.1 - Public events → religious gatherings, political rallies, cricket matches

4.2 - Natural disasters → Earthquake, floods

5- Cyber attacks' Protection

5.1 Digital era.

5.2 Government's duty to provide effective and protective environment

6- Balance between government Surveillance and right of Privacy of citizens

6.1 Pakistan as signatory to international instruments regarding the privacy of people

6.1 Privacy and Surveillance laws in Pakistan

6.3 Need for clear guideline

7- Conclusion

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Government Surveillance is a process of controlling information by a country's government for various reasons. It is not a new phenomenon. However, this phenomenon has got strength now-a-days. The history dates back to the world-war II and the cold war era. During that time countries started increase surveillance through intelligence agencies. In 21<sup>st</sup> century, people of different countries have divided opinions regarding government surveillance. In America, there are two types of people. Some people consider it as a breach of people's right of privacy. Whereas, others believe it is necessary for national security. In China, people of China has embraced the phenomenon of govern<sup>ment</sup> surveillance. However, in Pakistan, people have divided opinions. Some people believe that excess government surveillance is a threat to their right of

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privacy and speech. Whereas, others argue that government surveillance is inevitable during this digital era. In the constitution of Pakistan, there are laws that permit government of Pakistan to access the data required for protection of the country either against internal threats or external. In a country like Pakistan, government surveillance is inevitable. Pakistan has unresolved issues with its neighbour country, India. It has threats of terrorism due to its porous border with Afghanistan. Hence, Government surveillance is required for National Security, crime prevention, public safety and effective response, and for reduction of cyber attacks.

Government surveillance is required for national security. Militant insurgency in Pakistan demands that there should be complete control of data by

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intelligence agency. In the past, success of operations such as Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasad was mainly due to surveillance of intelligence agency of Pakistan. However, there are again terrorism attacks' threats in Pakistan. Mobile phone and internet monitoring is required to have a check and balance on these threats. Pakistan cannot afford another school to be attacked by terrorists. Besides, non-state actors involvement and terrorism threats, there is another phenomenon called proxy wars that demand government's access to data for the national security. Proxy wars are the wars that are fought indirectly. Intelligence agencies breach the privacy of other countries, and countries use different propaganda to fight such a type of war. To protect one's country from proxy wars, government surveillance becomes

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a necessity.

Secondly, government surveillance is required for crime prevention. The safe city projects have shown that crime rate can be reduced by effective surveillance. For example, after the safe city punjab projects, reduction in crime rate has seen. In this project, thousands of CCTV cameras were installed across the province to reduce the crime rate. There has been reduction in crimes such as robbery, theft, murder, and kidnapping. Secondly, this type of government surveillance also helps to find culprits through CCTV cameras. In addition to this, missing persons through kidnapping can also be traced by the safe city projects. Hence, government surveillance is good for effective crime prevention.

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Thirdly, government surveillance is required for public safety and effective response towards ~~permanent~~ threats. Pakistan has diverse ethnicity and culture. To ensure public safety during gatherings such as Muharram, it becomes necessary to ~~we~~ have a access of data of mobile phones. Furthermore, other religious gatherings, political rallies, cricket matches, and peaceful protests in the country need protection. This can only be possible through internet surveillance. Besides ~~gatherings~~, public safety, government surveillance systems can also assist in natural disasters such as earthquake or floods. Lives of people can be saved through emergency and effective response.

Fourthly, government surveillance is required for prevention of cyber attacks. In this digital era, where everything is digital, there is a

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Strong need of cyber security.  
Now-a-days, government has  
duty to provide cyber  
security along with  
border security. Because  
things have changed now.  
Countries have cyber threats.  
To fight against enemy  
country and to fight  
against internal criminals,  
it has become necessity  
to have cyber security.

There has been increasing  
cyber thefts such as  
identity thefts, online  
harassment, and hacking.  
It is government duty  
to provide its citizens  
protective environment to do  
their businesses. This can  
only be possible through  
effective government surveillance.

There is no doubt that  
government surveillance is inevitable.  
But, as Pakistan is  
signatory to multiple  
ratified international instruments  
regarding the privacy actions



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Such as "Universal Declaration on Human Rights", "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights", and "Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam", there should be balance between government surveillance for security issues and citizen's right of privacy and freedom of speech. According to the "Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016", interception and surveillance is only permitted when there is a threat to national security through terrorist activities and misinformation. There is a need of a clear guideline to have this balance.

In Conclusion, One can say that government surveillance is required for national security, crime prevention, public safety and emergency response and for protection against cyber attacks. Without government surveillance, it becomes difficult

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for government to protect the country. It is government duty to provide safe environment to its citizens.

This can only be possible if government has access to relative data for surveillance. To combat against terrorism attacks, street crimes, public safety in gatherings To and combat against terrorism attacks, street crime and to ensure public safety and protection against cyber attacks, government need monitoring of mobile phones and internet surveillance. This is necessary for protective environment. However, balance is required for good government surveillance. Through transparency and clear guideline, government can achieve trust of its citizens and this is necessary for the prosperity of a country.