

Mr Laurence Robertson
MP for Tewkesbury
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Wednesday, June 12th

Adam Langley
24 Grosvenor Square
London
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Dear Mr Robertson,

I am writing to you to express my extreme concern about the draft order to be debated before Parliament next Tuesday (the 18th of June) which will vastly expand the range of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

You may, or may not, be aware that the RIP Act grants the police powers to demand, without a court order, that phone companies, internet service providers and the postal operators disclose detailed information on individuals. This information includes the source and destination of emails, a list of webpages read, phone calls made and the location history for mobile phones. In the case of location data this allows most of the population to be tracked with within a couple of hundred feet, 24-hours a day (and much more precisely in the case of more modern GRPS phones). I include with this letter a leaked Europol document detailing more precisely the information which will be collected Europe-wide after the European Parliament's adoption of the new protection and privacy rules on the 30th of May.

The RIP Act was widely condemned when it was introduced:

The Times, 12/6/00: *"...so misguided as to be practically unamendable. It would be better for 'the economic wellbeing of the United Kingdom' to throw it out"*

The Financial Times, 14/7/00: *"...the best way of dealing with this misconceived piece of legislation would still be to scrap it"*

Despite the government's repeated assurances that the powers would be strictly controlled and monitored, Alan Beith MP had this to say at the recent Commons annual debate on Intelligence Agencies (29/3/01):

"The new amalgamated tribunal deals with a wide range of public complaints about security and intelligence issues. The several bodies involved are dependent on a tiny support structure which is quite incapable of carrying out the job. As we reported, there was not even anybody to open the mail, let alone process it, for many months. That was ludicrous."

The draft order to be debated (also included) expands the list of public authorities able to demand information on members of the public to include (not a complete list):

- Seven Whitehall departments
- Every local authority in the country
- NHS bodies in Scotland and Northern Ireland
- Other public bodies ranging from the Environment Agency to the Food Standards Agency

In short I feel this order is a gross invasion of civil rights and that such sweeping powers should be tightly controlled.

I therefore request that you, as my elected representative in Parliament, take action to ensure that this order is not permitted to pass and that the original Act is strictly regulated, or preferably, repealed.

Yours sincerely

Adam Langley