

FBI chief to urge Senate panel to renew US global surveillance power

WASHINGTON, Dec 5 (Reuters) - FBI Director Christopher Wray will press a Senate committee on Tuesday to renew the authority of the U.S. government to conduct warrantless surveillance outside the United States, arguing that failing to do so would be “a form of unilateral disarmament.”

Wray is expected to cite threats from Iran and China to argue that the sweeping surveillance powers authorized under Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which is set to expire at the end of this month, are vital to U.S. national security.

“Stripping the FBI of its 702 authorities would be a form of unilateral disarmament,” Wray will tell the Democratic-led Senate Judiciary Committee during an oversight hearing, according to excerpts of his testimony released by the FBI.

The surveillance power of the U.S. government has come under scrutiny from U.S. lawmakers on both the right and left in recent years, particularly the ability of federal law enforcement to search for data on U.S. citizens picked up as part of surveillance of foreign targets.

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