President Kennedy prophesized “a future in which our country will match its military strength with our moral restraint, its wealth without wisdom, it power without purpose”, and envisioned a nation that could balance liberty and security. There are 311, 591, 917 people living in the United States in this balance. Those three hundred million rely on a federal government to protect their constitutionally granted freedoms in exchange for their limited regulation, proving the balance of protection of life, and liberty.

The government can protect both the digital life and digital freedom of its people by trimming certain entitlements that pose a security threat. The Constitution directs the government to “provide for the common defence”. No one citizen can scour the internet for cyber threats both domestic and foreign, so the publicly elected representatives are charged with that duty. Being highly interested in my digital commerce and communication with governments opposed to the interests of my government is perfectly understandable.

“To insure domestic tranquility”, the government can monitor digital liberties for the sake of digital security (electronic commerce and communication with those hostile to said tranquility). As any power has the potential to be abused, this monitoring requires public ethical restriction policies. This issue has come up in modern times with the proposals of the United States Congress bills known as SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) and PIPA (PROTECT IP Act). One problem found in these bills, designed to prevent copyright infringement, is that the laws would have placed the burden of showing ownership on the alleged copyright infringer rather than on the one reporting infringement. They also could have set the stage for Internet censorship from a federal level. Many protested this flaw, as it could halt information flow declared a “copyright infringement” based on a loosely defined concept of “intellectual property”. Refereeing the fight for digital property is a duty of the federal government.

The government may never violate the basic rights represented by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution because they are the bedrock of our society. “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” cannot be restricted so much that the meaning disappears. This “Life” exists in the conscious and cyber worlds simultaneously; “Liberty” is the only incremental exception due to the need for security. We all can exist in either world, but what we are not unaccountable in either. This harmony is achieved only by the tenable actions of the monitoring agencies forced to defend them.

This nation depends on an accountable elected government to safeguard inherited liberties and offers conditional restrictions in return. This is a realized working of Kennedy’s vision of a balanced system of government. Protecting its interests in all areas (foreign, domestic, cyber, intellectual) is the American government’s birthright. Acceptable regulation of commerce and communication maintains societal serenity. American documents of political philosophy have proven to be the safeguards needed for a country of people with as many identities as they have opinions on how to live them.