

British authorities seek personal data

by UPI

LONDON - Security agencies in Britain are seeking new anti-terrorism powers that would allow authorities to track individuals' whereabouts, a report said. The observer reported that among information up for grabs is data gathered from the 17 million Britons who use smart cards to travel by underground, bus and train. Authorities say such information could help them identify patterns of suspicious behavior. The request for more access to individuals' information comes as Prime Minister Gordon Brown's government is putting finishing touches on its new national security strategy. The report is expected to outline threats to the British Commonwealth, including those from computer hacking and the possibility of international conflicts arising from a lack of water, the newspaper reported. Critics say allowing the government more access to Britons' private information would cast too wide a net to catch terror suspects. "It's looking for a needle in a haystack, and we all make up the haystack," said former Labor Minister Michael Meacher. "Whether all our details have to be reviewed because there is one needle among us - I don't think the case is made."

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