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**“The USA Patriot Act and its Civil Rights Implications on Muslim Americans:  
An Analysis of Actual and Virtual Impact”  
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The USA Patriot Act is considered to be one of the most sweeping acts in modern American jurisprudence and history, with its intent to provide government authorities with unprecedented powers in their efforts to curb security threats to the nation. Yet, the actual impact of the Patriot Act on civil liberties is minimal relative to public perceptions; this is due in part to the obfuscation of the Act's true scope and confusion as to its applicability in matters outside its purview, as well as the government's unwillingness to grant access to records of the Act's implementation. The Patriot Act has therefore, assumed a mythos unto itself, projecting larger - and more pervasive and penetrating - than its actual scope. This “Virtual” Patriot Act has significant consequences to American society, in general, and to the Muslim American community in particular. This paper seeks to explore the actual modalities for application of the USA Patriot Act and – perhaps more importantly - the Act's perceived impact. This “Virtual” Patriot Act's profound implications upon the cultural and collective psyche, especially within the Muslim American and Arab American communities, create a disparity between The Patriot Act as a real, functional legal device and the Patriot Act as a chimera creating consternation and fear among those communities seen as its implied targets. Finally, this paper shall assess whether the true repercussions of the USA Patriot Act will be felt even if it is repealed or modified by Congress, as a culture of fear has been established among suspect groups.