

EU PARLIAMENT REJECTS INTERIM SWIFT DEAL

The EU Parliament voted today—by big margins—to end the temporary deal allowing the US access to data from SWIFT.

The European Parliament on Thursday broadly rejected an agreement with the United States on sharing information on bank transfers that was aimed at tracking suspected terrorists through their finances. The vote in Strasbourg, France, underlined differences between the United States and the European Union over how to balance guarantees of personal privacy with concerns about national and international security.

A resolution to reject the deal passed 378-196, with 31 abstentions. The vote means that the agreement, which provisionally went into force at the beginning of February, cannot be used as planned.

The agreement would have freed the United States from having to seek bank data on a country-by-country basis. But Washington still could press for access to the data through such avenues.

Remember, this deal would have given European citizens more protections than Americans currently get from their banks (because it would have allowed them to check whether their data had been accessed).

This rejection also comes just as the Administration, following yesterday's release of language concerning the treatment of Binyam Mohamed, is making a show of complaining about information sharing.

On Wednesday, the White House said, "We're deeply disappointed with the

court's judgment today, because we shared this information in confidence and with certain expectations."

Dennis Blair, U.S. director of national intelligence, condemned the release of the information.

"The protection of confidential information is essential to strong, effective security and intelligence cooperation among allies," he said. "The decision by a United Kingdom court to release classified information provided by the United States is not helpful, and we deeply regret it."

Obviously, particularly following the Undie Bomber attempt, the Administration is going to do anything it can to continue sharing information, both on detainees and data analysis. But it's going to have to start playing well with others to do so.