

# Military, Homeland Security, Spies on Planned Parenthood, Other Domestic Groups | The Progressive

By Matthew Rothschild, March 1, 2010

The Pentagon and the Department of Homeland Security have been spying on Planned Parenthood, as well as anti-abortion groups and other domestic groups.

On February 2, 2002, a Joint Forces Command “update” to the FBI’s Olympic Intelligence Center provided information on “US Persons” and organizations, including Planned Parenthood and a white supremacist group, and their “involvement in protests and literature distribution,” according to a May 1, 2002, memorandum from a Pentagon deputy inspector general. The memo was part of a trove of documents that the Electronic Frontier Foundation ([eff.org](http://eff.org)) recently pried loose in a lawsuit. The information about Planned Parenthood was “clearly outside the purview of military intelligence,” the deputy inspector general said.

This wasn’t the only—or the most recent—time the government has peered into the workings of Planned Parenthood.

The Department of Homeland Security “conducted a threat assessment of local pro- and anti-abortion activists,” reported the Wisconsin State Journal on February 8, relying also on a document made public by the Electronic Frontier Foundation. The report was shared “with police in Middleton and with the director of the Wisconsin Statewide Information Center,” the State Journal noted. It “was compiled prior to a February 2009 meeting in Middleton by the University of Wisconsin Hospital board to decide whether to open a clinic that would offer late-term abortions.”

The Wisconsin ACLU condemns this spying.

“Without probable cause that a crime is being committed or is about to be committed, police or the federal government don’t have the right to snoop on activists,” says Stacy Harbaugh, the community advocate of the Madison-area office of the ACLU of Wisconsin. “Having the feds investigate organizations on both sides of the abortion debate doesn’t make us all safer: it simply victimizes more individuals’ freedom and privacy rights.”



The Electronic Frontier Foundation’s lawsuit against the Defense Department has uncovered “hundreds of reports of possibly illegal intelligence activities,” the group says.

One example involves Alaskans for Peace and Justice. NORAD/NORTHCOM “specifically indentified a United States Person (USP) group (Alaskans for Peace & Justice), which was planning a peaceful demonstration” on September 24, 2005. It then “retained the information” in its files, and it may have included that information “in a command briefing.”

Another example involves a staff officer at the U.S. Army Reserve Command at Fort McPherson, Georgia, who “routinely collected and retained information from open sources concerning domestic U.S.-person protest groups exercising their freedom of speech/assembly,” said a 2007 Pentagon document. “There was no indication that the information contained a foreign nexus or otherwise represented a legitimate force protection threat to the U.S. Army.”

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