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Peace Activists Protest Domestic Spying

(1/30/06) — Some anti-war activists Monday brought domestic spying to the federal government's doorstep. Protesters pretended to spy by aiming cameras and binoculars at a downtown skyscraper that houses government offices, including the FBI. Members of the Northeast Ohio Anti-War Coalition and the American Friends Service Committee were among about 25 people on a public sidewalk in front of the downtown Celebrezze Federal Building.

The spoof rally also was meant to make a point. The groups announced last week that they suspect their meetings have been under government surveillance and sought government records to document their concerns. "Frankly, you know, I think they need to lighten up," said Tim Smith, 42, a member of NOAC. "We're a bunch of peaceniks. That's all we are, and you are going to spy on us? Come on, give me a break." The protesters did not infringe on federal property. The building has tight security. President Bush and his administration have said domestic spying is legal and justified because of the need to guard against terrorist attacks.