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## **Peace Activists Beware: Homeland Security May Be Reading Your E-Mail, and Passing it on to the Pentagon**

by **Matthew Rothschild**

More information keeps coming out, thanks to the ACLU, about the Bush Administration's equation of protest with terrorism—and the snooping it then engages in.

Homeland Security is monitoring peace groups and even peering at their e-mails.

“This information is being provided only to alert commanders and staff to potential terrorist activity or apprise them of other force protection issues.”

It then shares that information with Joint Terrorism Task Forces, which include the FBI and state and local law enforcement, as well as with the Pentagon's notorious Talon (Threat and Local Observation Notice) program.

For instance, an April 12, 2005, Talon document, just released by the ACLU, shows that the Pentagon was concerned about “suspicious activity” at an upcoming event sponsored by the Broward Anti-War Coalition in Florida.

This peace group, according to the document, was planning—hold your breath here—“guerrilla theater and other forms of subversive propaganda” at the Fort Lauderdale Air and Sea Show.

The source of the information was the Miami-Dade Police Department, and members of Army Recruiting and the Miami Joint Terrorism Task Force were briefed on it, the document states.

Another Talon document, dated March 1, 2005, released by the ACLU, reveals that Homeland Security agents are monitoring e-mails of such scary groups as the Quakers.

“The source received an e-mail on 25 Feb 05, subject: upcoming peace/anti-war events. The e-mail was from the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in Northeast Ohio,” the document states. And that source is identified as “a special agent of the Federal Protective Service, US Department of Homeland Security.” The document adds, “Source is reliable.”

The Joint Terrorism Task Force of Dayton, Ohio, was briefed on this one.

The planned activity of the Quakers that so concerned the Pentagon, Homeland Security, and the Joint Terrorism Task Force was this: “On 19 Mar 05, there will be a ‘Stop the War NOW!’ rally in commemoration of the second anniversary of the U.S. Invasion/Occupation of Iraq. The Akron rally will have a march and reading of names of war dead. . . . The Akron march begins at noon and goes past a local military recruiting station and the FBI office. The march will end at the Federal Building in Akron, for a rally, followed by reading of names of U.S. and Iraqi war dead.”

A third Talon document, dated March 7, 2005, also relies on an e-mail from the Quakers. “Source received an e-mail from the American Friends Service Committee” about “actions at military recruitment offices with the goals to include: raising awareness, education, visibility.” The source is again identified as “a special agent of the Federal Protective Service, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Source is reliable.”

All three Talon documents state at the top: “This information is being provided only to alert commanders and staff to potential terrorist activity or apprise them of other force protection issues.”

“Potential terrorist activity.” Isn't that delightful?

Word to the wise: If you're a peace activist, the government may be watching you and reading your e-mails.

Something just to keep in mind.

*Matthew Rothschild has been with The Progressive since 1983. His [McCarthyism Watch](#) web column has chronicled more than 150 incidents of repression since 9/11.*

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