

## Department of Defense spied on locals, Akron group says

By Jim Carney

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An Akron-based group charged Monday that the Department of Defense spied on area residents at a peace rally March 19.

The Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee said documents uncovered by NBC News in a Wednesday report revealed that information about the Akron gathering was included in the data.

"This is chilling," the Quaker-affiliated group said in a press release.

Department of Defense spokesman Maj. Paul Swiergosz said in an e-mail that "DoD policy for intelligence and counter-intelligence organizations prohibits the reporting, processing or storing of information on individuals or organizations not affiliated with the DoD, except in limited circumstances that are defined and codified by law."

In May 2003, he said, the TALON (Threat and Local Observation Notice) reporting system was established at the Defense Department. He added that the department uses counterintelligence and law-enforcement information properly collected by law-enforcement agencies.

While not discussing any specific intelligence issue, he said "the use of any information is subject to strict limitations, particularly the information must be related to missions relating to protection of DoD installations, interests and personnel."

Swiergosz said that one of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations was that the U.S. government share information more readily, and while TALON is not a direct result of that, it is an attempt to move from a "need to know to a need to share."

AFSC said the NBC story focused on a 400-page report, of which eight pages had been publicly released. A second Northeast Ohio event referred to in the eight-page report, the AFSC said, involved a November 2004 meeting in Cleveland by an AFSC staff member "to plan for a local counter-recruitment action and a bus trip to demonstrate at the presidential inauguration."

AFSC is asking area members of Congress and Sens. George Voinovich and Mike DeWine to investigate.

"This should be totally unacceptable in a democratic society," the group said.

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