



SAN DIEGO COALITION FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

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We Will Not Be Intimidated By Pentagon Spying

The Department of Defense database on domestic dissent released by NBC News shows that the DoD has engaged in widespread intelligence gathering aimed at thousands of people engaged in constitutionally protected political speech. The excerpt from the database that was made available by NBC includes one entry from San Diego: a report on a support demonstration for war resister Pablo Paredes during his Court Martial at the 32nd Street Naval Station last May. Other entries had to do with 'counter-recruitment' activities and anti-war protests around the country.

This foray into domestic spying on political activists is a sign of the intense politicizing of the Defense Department and of intelligence that has been a hallmark of the Bush presidency: it is one more thread in a fabric that includes planted 'news' leaks, 'news' articles written, paid for and planted in newspapers, intentional misinformation, and other 'psy-ops' techniques that have been used to shore up war policies that cannot stand on their merits.

The purposes of these 'psy-ops' have nothing to do with security at home. Rather, they have everything to do with advancing a failing political agenda in the public marketplace while intimidating those with the temerity to speak out.

But the peace movement will not be intimidated. We will continue to support war resisters and to make sure that our young people know the facts about war, despite the deceptions of the Bush administration. Counter-recruitment is the fastest-growing and most popular component of the peace movement at this moment, and Americans will continue to speak out to prevent our youth from being sent to foreign lands to kill and to die for false reasons.

The small portion of the DoD database made available by NBC (8 pages out of a reported 400) has one entry from San Diego. How many others are there? How was this data collected? Is there a new generation of infiltrators spying on political organizations? Have we fallen back to

the Vietnam-era days of COINTELPRO and a domestic spying alliance between the military, FBI and local police? Where do our local officials stand on this issue? Will our Mayor and Chief of Police take a public stand? Will they tell us if they are asked to participate in this spying or to share their own data with the military?

The entries made public by NBC involve surveillance of people exercising political speech that is their right—and the right of everyone in America. Some entries were about activities that may have involved civil disobedience, another long-standing and cherished tradition of American dissent.

If there were a “noble cause,” these unseemly and undemocratic control mechanisms would not be necessary. Their very existence tells us that U.S. war policies are indefensible by any reality-based standard and are recognized as such by those who promote them. It also inspires us: 3 years ago, President Bush compared peace demonstrations to focus groups. Now, he’s afraid of us.