

# THE EPOCH TIMES

## How the Postal Service Fuels the Surveillance State

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October 4, 2022

When the United States Postal Service (USPS) was established in 1971, it dealt in nothing more than packages, parcels, envelopes, and stamps. Fast forward five decades and the Postal Service has changed dramatically. Just like the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ), both of which have been weaponized by the current administration, the USPS has become yet another tool used by the establishment to target innocent citizens.

As first reported by The Washington Times, between September 2020 and April 2021, the Postal Service regularly surveilled protesters across the country. To be more specific, the USPS created the Internet Covert Operations Program (iCOP)—a social media surveillance program—to spy on U.S. citizens. According to Yahoo News, the program involved analysts trawling various social media sites and identifying “inflammatory” postings. These postings were then shared with several government agencies, including the DHS.

As the Yahoo News piece noted, iCOP analysts monitored social media channels closely, scanning countless postings for “potential threats.” Analysts promised government officials they would “disseminate intelligence updates as needed.”

Rather astonishingly (pardon the sarcasm), right-leaning Americans were monitored more closely than their left-leaning counterparts. For example, conservative groups that marched to the U.S. Capitol following the results of the 2020 election were closely surveilled.

As Cato Institute senior fellow Patrick Eddington, a man intimately familiar with the Postal Service’s questionable endeavors, told The Washington Times, the USPS “cannot reliably deliver mail to my own home, yet they can find the money and people to effectively digitally spy at scale, including on Americans engaged in First Amendment-protected activities.”

Indeed, they most certainly can.

Worryingly, but not in the least bit surprisingly, the USPS isn’t the only agency spying on you. According to its website, the U.S. Customs Border Protection (CBP) “takes a comprehensive approach to border management and control, combining customs, immigration, border security, and agricultural protection into one coordinated and supportive activity.”

Then, one wonders, why is it spying on innocent Americans? As Wired’s Andrew Couts recently wrote, if you happen to be a law-abiding U.S. citizen and you happen to have crossed either the

Mexican border or the Canadian one in recent years, there's more than a slight chance "all your text messages, contacts, call records, and more are now stored in a database built by Customs and Border Protection."

Yes, the CBP, the largest federal law enforcement agency of the DHS, harvests data "from as many as 10,000 devices per year," according to the Wired report. Moreover, the agents are searching digital devices without warrants. The stolen content is "stored in a central database accessible to 2,700 Department of Homeland Security personnel." This is clearly a direct violation of U.S. citizens' constitutional rights.

This isn't the CBP's first time at the surveillance rodeo. As [Yahoo News](#) reported earlier this year, the CBP has also "trawled through the travel and financial records of journalists and lawmakers," and there's reason to believe that the agency "is still monitoring Americans."

The Counter Network Division, a special division of the CBP, directly monitors U.S. citizens, including some participants in the Jan. 6 riot. The special division still monitored these citizens many weeks after Jan. 6, according to Yahoo News. All in the name of safety, some will say. Others, I'm sure, would beg to differ.

We're witnessing the weaponization of once objective, reasonably nonpartisan agencies. By weaponization, I mean it both figuratively and literally. After all, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) now has thousands of guns and millions of rounds of ammunition. No need to panic, we're assured; this is just business as usual. But it's not. The IRS was designed to collect taxes and administer the Internal Revenue Code, not kick down doors, locked, loaded, and ready to go. Yes, the IRS conducts criminal investigations, but the actual gun handling used to be reserved for specially trained officers.

Right now, there's very little difference between the DHS, USPS, and the IRS on close inspection. The three are surveillance agencies masquerading as something much more benign. These agencies, ostensibly designed to uphold the law, appear to have violated it—repeatedly, I might add.

In a recent essay, titled "[The Future of Surveillance Investment](#)," I outlined the many ways Big Brother is getting considerably bigger. The United States is fast becoming a country in which citizens, be they law-abiding or otherwise, are reduced to nothing but data points. This has very little, if anything, to do with keeping you safe. It has far more to do with keeping government officials safe. After all, the more information they have on you, the easier you are to control. Big Brother's expanding waistline can be explained by his data-rich diet.

Over the coming years, expect that waistline to keep on expanding.