



Criminalizing Dissent

The FBI's *Project Megiddo*, which warns against millennial terrorism, paints constitutionalists, devout Christians, hate groups, and militias with the same broad strokes.

Project Megiddo, the FBI's "strategic assessment" of potential millennium-related domestic terrorism, represents a significant victory in the radical left's "long march through the institutions" of U.S. law enforcement. The report, which was unveiled on November 2nd at a news conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police at Charlotte, North Carolina, has been distributed to law enforcement agencies nationwide. While no author is mentioned in the publicly available version of *Project Megiddo*, its contents are largely indistinguishable from the materials generated by leftist "watch dog" organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), which regularly furnish law enforcement agencies with lurid reports intended to catechize law enforcement agencies about the supposed threat posed by the "radical right."



This fact was not lost upon John Foster "Chip" Berlet of Political Research Associates (PRA), a Marxist pressure group based in Boston. Berlet's vita includes such distinctions as his role in founding the "Chicago Area Friends of Albania," a stint as contributing writer for the drug culture periodical *High Times*, and participation in numerous Communist front groups, including the National Lawyers Guild. In a November 1st e-mail message to the "Militia Watchdog" mailing list (a restricted list whose membership includes law enforcement and military personnel), Berlet complained that the FBI's *Megiddo* report "recapitulate[s] previously released reports and conference papers" from both the PRA and the SPLC, among other sources.

To his credit, Berlet correctly pointed out that "the way the *Megiddo* report has been leaked creates a hysterical atmosphere where law enforcement is likely to overreact. Because of superficial reporting, the public is learning to lump together 'hate groups,' militias, terrorists, and devout Christians." As one of the "experts" on "right-wing extremism" frequently consulted by both the media and law enforcement officials, Berlet has done a great deal to advance the notion that Christian conservatives and constitutionalists occupy the same continuum as terrorists and hate groups. Thus Berlet's objections should be viewed not as an illustration of his reasonableness, but rather of the FBI's



radicalism.

Megiddo Genesis

During a May 13, 1997 Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on terrorism, FBI Director Louis Freeh disclosed the existence of Presidential Decision Directive 39, which designated the FBI the “lead agency” for counter-terrorism efforts. Freeh also explained that the FBI’s new counter-terrorism center “contains representatives of 16 other federal agencies and . . . is dedicated for the first time to a central collection [or] analytical point in the federal government for threats, particularly those regarding domestic terrorism.”

During the same hearing, as reported in these pages more than two years ago, Freeh stipulated that the chief domestic terror threat emanates from “various individuals, as well as organizations,” who possess “an ideology which suspects government and particularly the federal government, of world-order conspiracies — individuals who, for various reasons, have organized themselves against the United States.” Possession of “ideologies inconsistent with principles of federal government,” declared Freeh, could be construed as a marker of criminal or terrorist intentions.

While the Megiddo report is clearly a product of the FBI’s counter-terrorism center, there are strong indications that the State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training (SLATT) program was involved as well. As THE NEW AMERICAN recently reported, SLATT is funded, through the Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR), by a grant from the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The SLATT program is an outgrowth of the 1996 post-OKC bombing anti-terrorism act; its purpose is to provide “anti-terrorism preparedness training” to state and local police agencies, including “pre-incident awareness” training to help identify potential terrorist threats.

Documents obtained by THE NEW AMERICAN under a Freedom of Information Act request suggest that SLATT may have played a substantial role in composing Megiddo. IIR’s 1998 proposal for the “continuation and expansion” of the SLATT program states that the program’s main purposes include providing “state and local law enforcement . . . [with] a general awareness and working knowledge of domestic terrorist and ‘political’ extremist movements (including ideologies, illegal activities, tactics, and strategies), and provid[ing] an initial assessment of the threat potential posed by extremists....” The document refers to “individuals adhering to ‘patriot’ extremist or other domestic terrorist philosophies,” indicating that, by SLATT’s definitions, those who espouse “extremist” views are ideational co-conspirators with those who commit crimes against persons or property.

Among SLATT’s purposes, according to the IIR’s grant proposal, are “early identification of extremist-generated illegal activities and tactics; recognition of extremist movements operating within a jurisdiction and lawful monitoring of such movements.” It recommends the “establishment of an effective working relationship with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the designated lead agency,” and points out that “the SLATT Program and the many activities and tasks set forth herein are based on the continued participation of the FBI.”

In light of the FBI/SLATT relationship, it is significant that the “Background” section of the grant proposal reads very much like an early draft of Megiddo. That section asserts that “right-wing political and racist extremist groups have re-emerged [in recent years], mostly with new names, in somewhat different forms, and with variations in organization and differing tactics” than those used by previous groups in the 1980s. “Extremists” can be recognized, according to the SLATT grant proposal, as those who “identify with one or more of the following philosophies: anti-tax, anti-federal government, anti-state government, anti-authority, anti-world alliances, pro-racial purity, pro-white supremacy, anti-



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Semitic, and a fear of loss of Constitutional rights . . . with an equal fear of a one world order....” Under SLATT’s definitions, any American who looks upon the central government with educated mistrust, who has concerns about the protection of his individual rights, or who believes that we should dis-entangle ourselves from entangling alliances abroad espouses a “domestic terrorist philosophy” and should be monitored by the police as a potential terrorist.

The section of the grant request referring to “Identification and Delivery of Technical Assistance” mentions “behavioral science extremist profile presentations” to be made to state and local police by SLATT officials. The Megiddo report, which draws upon analyses of “extremists” and “cultists” prepared by the FBI’s behavioral science unit, emphasizes that “the FBI only focuses on radical elements of the militia movement capable and willing to commit violence against government, law enforcement, civilian, military and international targets.” This distinction offers little comfort in light of the fact that, as will be seen below, the FBI’s working definition of the “militia movement” parallels SLATT’s expansive and flexible definitions.

Targeting Religious and Political Views

“Many extremist individuals and groups place some significance on the next millennium, and as such it will present challenges to law enforcement at many levels,” declares Megiddo’s executive summary. “The significance is based primarily upon either religious beliefs relating to the Apocalypse or political beliefs relating to the New World Order (N.W.O.) conspiracy theory.... The purpose behind this assessment is to provide law enforcement agencies with a clear picture of potential extremism motivated by the next millennium.”

The publicly available version of Megiddo, significantly, “excludes specific guidance given to law enforcement as well as names of groups who are viewed by the agency as the most dangerous,” reported the APBnews.com on-line news service. FBI spokesman Neil Gallagher explained that the agency did “not want these groups to know these details.”

“Religious motivation and the N.W.O. conspiracy theory are the two driving forces behind the potential for millennial violence,” according to Megiddo. “The volatile mix of apocalyptic religions and N.W.O. conspiracy theories may produce violent acts aimed at precipitating the end of the world as prophesied in the Bible.” The section of the report describing “Apocalyptic Cults” offers a detailed list of “cult” characteristics. Law enforcement officers are advised to be wary of organizations led by “charismatic psychopaths or those with narcissistic character disorders,” and are warned that “the longer the leader’s behavior has gone unchecked against outside authority, the less vulnerable the leader feels.” Equitably and dispassionately applied, these guidelines would require that the Clinton administration be defined as a violent cult.

According to Megiddo, “Religiously based domestic terrorists use the New Testament’s Book of Revelation — the prophecy of the endtime — for the foundation of their belief in the Apocalypse. Religious extremists interpret the symbolism portrayed in the Book of Revelation and mold it to predict that the endtime is now and that the Apocalypse is near.” Of course, this is true not only of potential terrorists but also of millions of law-abiding Americans who harbor no violent intentions toward anyone — but who have been marked by the FBI nonetheless as potential domestic enemies.

Maligning JBS and TNA

Similarly marked as enemies of the state are those who subscribe to globalist “conspiracy theories,” especially those who suspect that Y2K-related social unrest may be exploited by forces seeking to create a world government. “Unlike religiously based terrorists, militia anxiety and paranoia specifically



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relating to the year 2000 are based mainly on a political ideology," declares Megiddo, describing concerns expressed by many Americans about a potential loss of U.S. sovereignty to the United Nations. "Under this hypothetical N.W.O./One World Government, the following events are to take place": 1) private property rights and private gun ownership will be abolished; 2) all national, state and local elections will become meaningless, since they will be controlled by the UN; 3) the U.S. Constitution will be supplanted by the UN charter; 4) only approved churches and other places of worship will be permitted to operate and will become appendages of the One World Religion, which will be the only legitimate doctrine of religious beliefs and ethical values; 5) home schooling will be outlawed and all school curriculum will need to be approved by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and 6) American military bases and other federal facilities will be used as concentration camps by the UN to confine those patriots, including the militias, who defy the N.W.O. Other groups besides the UN that are often mentioned as being part of the N.W.O. conspiracy theory are Jews, Communists, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bilderbergers and the Trilateral Commission. Law enforcement officials will probably notice different versions of this theory, depending upon the source."

Although this section of Megiddo is not footnoted, most of the first five items used in this capsule summary of the political beliefs of potential terrorists was borrowed wholesale from *The United Nations: A Look into the Future*, a video documentary produced by the John Birch Society (JBS), of which THE NEW AMERICAN is an affiliated publication. That documentary projected, on the basis of UN and U.S. government documents, how present trends may culminate in a dystopian UN-administered world government unless they are arrested by an informed, mobilized electorate. Item number three on the FBI's list was taken verbatim from the documentary, and item number four includes language taken verbatim from the video as well; items one, two, and five are very close paraphrases from material in the same presentation. The FBI neglected to mention, of course, that nothing in the video endorses terrorism or violence of any kind, but rather demonstrates how principled political activism can restore our national sovereignty and constitutional order.

Furthermore, the thumbnail sketch offered by Megiddo, in classic Leninist fashion, co-mingles the JBS perspective with other views that "already have a bad smell" — specifically, anti-Semitic nostrums and alarmist rumors about the existence of concentration camps. The purpose behind this is twofold. First, by advising police to watch out for "different versions of this theory," the FBI is instructing police to regard critics of the UN as potential terrorists, most likely of an anti-Semitic bent. Second, the FBI is attempting to immunize police against outreach efforts by law-abiding, well-informed Americans who seek to educate their neighbors — including police officers — about the documented threat to our national sovereignty and constitutional system.

THE NEW AMERICAN itself was similarly targeted for misrepresentation by the FBI regarding this publication's treatment of the "Y2K bug": "The New American, an organ of the ultraconservative John Birch Society, speculates that the Y2K bug could be America's Reichstag fire, a reference to the 1933 arson attack on Germany's Parliament building that was used by Hitler as an excuse to enact police state laws." Once again, this reference was a Leninesque "sandwich smear," inserting the reference to THE NEW AMERICAN between an anti-Semitic quotation from former Posse Comitatus leader James Wickstrom, and an alarmist quote from a militia leader from Michigan.

The reference to this magazine's treatment of Y2K was not footnoted, and with good reason: Were law enforcement officers to be directed to our September 14, 1998 story ("Millennium Mayhem: Y2K and the Fear Factor,") they would realize, upon closer inspection, that this magazine has sought to dispel



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Y2K alarmism, while soberly taking inventory of potential problems that may result from the millennial rollover. In subsequent reports (see “Mock-up for Martial Law” and “Soldiers in Your Backyard” in our April 26, 1999 issue), THE NEW AMERICAN has documented how the Clinton administration, using potential Y2K-inspired social turmoil as a pretext, has been amalgamating the military and law enforcement functions. Those reports included warnings from such noted “extremists” as Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Lewis Millett (U.S. Army, retired); and Brigadier General Andrew J. Gatsis (U.S. Army, retired), who is one of our nation’s most highly decorated fighting soldiers.

The John Birch Society’s treatment of the Y2K problem received very grudging praise from Money magazine columnist Joseph Nocera. In a September 1998 column about a nine-page treatment of the issue published by the JBS, Nocera wrote, “I never thought the day would come when I found myself in agreement with the John Birch Society, but I think those boys got this one exactly right.” While he was content to regurgitate the spoon-fed canards about the JBS’s supposedly extremist views, Nocera favorably quoted the paper’s conclusion that the Y2K problem “will prove to be simply annoying ... and therefore will not likely cause the downfall of mankind.”

Presumably, the FBI — the world’s largest and best-funded investigative agency — had research resources that equal those available to Mr. Nocera, who was able to access the JBS report at the organization’s website with the click of a mouse.

Truth Is No Defense

In predictable fashion, Megiddo depicts concerns about civilian disarmament (commonly called “gun control”) as a symptom of right-wing extremism. “The passage of the Brady Bill and assault weapons ban in 1994 were interpreted by those in the militia movement and among the right-wing as the first steps towards disarming citizens in preparation for the UN-led N.W.O. takeover,” declares the report. “Some are convinced that the registration of gun owners is in preparation for a confiscation of firearms and eventually the arrest of the gun owners themselves.... Speculation like this only serves to fuel the already existing paranoia of militia and patriot groups.”

As THE NEW AMERICAN recently documented, with specific citations from relevant UN documents (see “[Global Gun Grab](#)” and “[Gun Grabbers’ Global Gestapo](#)” in our November 22nd issue), there is nothing speculative about the UN’s drive for global civilian disarmament and our nation’s eager participation in that drive. Dr. Edward J. Laurance, a consultant to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, has explained how El Salvador’s UN-administered program of “micro-disarmament” — that is, confiscation of firearms from civilians — began with laws “requiring all citizens to register hand guns and personal weapons. A new police force was created [and] trained under UN supervision . . . [which] received specialized training in searching for, confiscating and destroying” banned firearms. He also points out that the UN Center for Disarmament Affairs has carefully studied, for global implementation, “buy-back programs as practiced in many American cities” and those “conducted by the U.S. Army in Haiti” as part of a UN-mandated “peacekeeping” mission. Last August 19th, the UN published its “Report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms,” which called upon all member states to prohibit “private ownership of small arms and light weapons.”

From the FBI’s official point of view, however, those who take notice of such developments and work to inform others are guilty of anti-government “extremism” and “paranoia.” Truth is no defense once the FBI has decreed certain political views off-limits.

“Socially Dangerous Persons”



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The Megiddo report illustrates that the FBI, once the world's premier investigative agency, is morphing into a national political police agency — a law enforcement organ with a mandate to defend the regime, rather than to protect the rights of law-abiding citizens. It is worth remembering, once again, the July 4, 1994 observation made by FBI Director Louis Freeh upon signing a cooperation pact with the successor organization to the Soviet KGB: "Today our two nations have more in common than ever before."

The FBI's Megiddo report has more than a little in common with the Soviet Union's Fundamental Principles of Penal Legislation, which was adopted on October 31, 1924. According to *The Black Book of Communism* — a detailed study compiled by six French scholars that was recently published in English translation — that measure "codified the notion of a 'socially dangerous person.' Among counterrevolutionary crimes, the law included any activity that, without directly aiming to overthrow or weaken the Soviet regime, was in itself 'an attack on the political or economic achievements of the revolutionary proletariat.' The law thus not only punished intentional transgressions but also proscribed possible or unintentional acts."

The category of "socially dangerous persons" was based on "extremely elastic categories" that permitted individuals to be sentenced to the gulag "even in a case of total absence of guilt"; under Soviet law, the state "may use these measures of social protection to deal with anyone classified as a danger to society, either for a specific crime that has been committed or when, even if exonerated of a particular crime, the person is still reckoned to pose a threat to society." Enshrined in Soviet law as Article 58 of the penal code, the concept of "socially dangerous persons" served as "the legal foundation of the [Soviet] terror."

The key distinction between the Megiddo report and its Soviet precursor is that the FBI has not — just yet — called for the pre-emptive arrest and incarceration of the "socially dangerous" religious "extremists" and "N.W.O. conspiracy theorists" identified as a pool of potential terrorists. Perhaps all that is missing is a precipitating event. In the case of the early Soviet Union, the Cheka used an assassination attempt against Lenin to justify its initial crackdown on "counter-revolutionaries." Speaking with reference to a reprisal attack upon a Ukrainian secret police official, Cheka official Karl Lander organized a "day of Red terror" and issued these instructions to his subordinates: "[T]his act of terrorism should be turned to our advantage to take important hostages with a view to executing them, and as a reason to speed up the executions of White spies and counterrevolutionaries in general."

To arrest our descent into the same police state tyranny that has engulfed so many unfortunate nations, Americans must, above all else, support and uphold the rule of law under the U.S. Constitution. Well-informed and conscientious Americans who would find themselves marked as "socially dangerous persons" must actively reach out to state and local law enforcement agencies, first of all to express support and gratitude to those who are appointed to protect ordered liberty, also to counteract the indoctrination taking place under the aegis of the FBI. Just as importantly, Americans must pressure Congress to de-politicize the FBI and confine it once again to its original function as an investigative agency.



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