



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on September 28, 2012

Justice Department Trained Police to Link Political Activism With Terror

The Department of Justice is under fire after a leaked terror training presentation aimed at state and local law enforcement revealed that police were being trained to be suspicious of popular bumper stickers including some opposing U.S. government participation in the scandal-plagued United Nations and one urging people to know their rights. Even Americans who hold what the document describes as beliefs that “represent a fairly popular point of view” — pro-life activists, for example — were included in the controversial terror manual.



The [amateurish presentation](#), which was filled with spelling and grammar mistakes, was produced by the Justice Department-funded “State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training (SLATT) Program.” Under the guise of “terrorism training for law enforcement,” the outfit claimed that “extremists” engaged in “single-issue terrorism” — pro-life, animal rights, environmentalism, and opposition to genetic engineering — “often represent a fairly popular point of view.”

The controversial training scheme was recently leaked to [Public Intelligence](#) and is now available online. In one presentation, dubbed “terrorism indicators,” a section entitled “general right-wing extremist” used multiple bumper stickers that the Justice Department claimed in a statement to *The New American* were gathered from a review of “militia web sites and other materials.”

Among the images used were popular bumper stickers created by [The John Birch Society](#) advocating a U.S. government withdrawal from the UN. According to the Justice Department, those “terror training” materials were used from 1998 to 2004 in a supposed effort to “provide awareness to law enforcement of these types of messages.” (See the slide below from the SLATT presentation.)



The John Birch Society, a liberty-minded not-for-profit organization, has been working to defend the Constitution and American sovereignty for over 50 years by educating citizens. Its president, John F. McManus, is also publisher of *The New American*, an affiliate of the JBS.

McManus told *TNA* that despite the dubious SLATT presentation, opposition to the controversial UN is hardly “extremist.” In fact, he added, early last year, the U.S. House of Representatives voted on an



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amendment to a bill calling for a prohibition on any funding used to pay dues to the global organization. It was defeated 243 to 177.

“Refusal to pay dues to the UN has customarily been considered as a move to withdraw from the world body. I don’t know how many of the 177 congressmen who voted Yes on this measure have ‘Get US out!’ [of the United Nations] bumper stickers on their cars, but I believe it safe to say that voting for such a measure in the U.S. Congress is a stronger indication of anti-UN sentiment than merely displaying that attitude with a bumper sticker,” McManus explained. “Are those who produced this SLATT show effectively labeling 177 members of Congress extremists and possible terrorists?”

Since its inception, the UN has been shrouded under a perpetual cloud of scandals — especially among Americans who support individual liberty, the Constitution, and national sovereignty. In recent years, however, the scandals have accelerated. From [UN troops committing sex crimes and murder](#) around the world and [installing mass-murdering Sudanese tyrant Omar al-Bashir](#) on the UN “Human Rights Council” to [providing sensitive American technology to the regimes in North Korea and Iran](#), the UN has become a ripe target for ridicule and criticism.

The most recent credible poll, done in 2006 by Rasmussen, [showed that fewer than one third of Americans had a favorable view of the UN](#) — and the trend was on its way down. Even dubious recent polls conducted by the UN Foundation [found](#) that almost half of Americans supported slashing U.S. funding for the UN.

“Apparently, the Department of Justice considers Americans who have a good grasp of the bill of rights, are concerned about the food they eat, those who politically oppose the United Nations, and even those who hold ‘fairly popular’ opinions, to be likely terrorists,” [wrote](#) Paul Joseph Watson with InfoWars, the first media outlet to report on the scandal.

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of a series of questions sent to DOJ by *The New American* remain unanswered. *TNA* asked, for example, whether the department was suggesting that opposition to the UN was an indicator of “right-wing extremism” and potentially domestic terrorism, and if so, on what basis that assertion was being made. No real explanation was offered.

TNA also asked why law enforcement agents were being trained to be suspicious of political speech, as well as to respond to critics who say such lawless behavior is unconstitutional and has a chilling effect on the First Amendment rights of Americans. The DOJ failed to cite a single example of a person with an anti-UN bumper sticker being implicated in extremism or terror — not that it would justify such political profiling anyway.

“The SLATT Program provides specialized multiagency anti-terrorism detection, investigation, and interdiction training at no cost to our nation’s law enforcement officers,” the DOJ told *The New American* in a statement. “Since 1996, the SLATT Program has trained more than 107,000 state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers in classes designed to help recognize and prevent terrorist attacks.”

The cost of preparing the half-baked presentation demonizing popular political stances also remains a mystery, as does the identity of the officials responsible for creating and approving it. No specific sources for the presentation were cited by DOJ, which also failed to confirm whether or not the discredited political attack group known as the Southern Poverty Law Center was involved.

It is not yet clear either what exactly law enforcement officers were told when viewing the presentation or what police were encouraged to do upon spotting political bumper stickers that federal officials do not approve of. However, The John Birch Society is in the process of filing a Freedom of Information Act



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request to find out.

When asked whether Americans should be worried that they could be targeted by government for expressing themselves, the DOJ did not respond directly. Instead, it pointed to a [document](#) released last year calling on state and local officials to respect First Amendment rights to free speech.

“In 2011, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, in partnership with the Global advisory group, issued Recommendations for First Amendment-Protected Events for State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies,” DOJ said. “This document represents BJA’s current policies and provides updated, specific guidance to law enforcement regarding protection of individual liberties.”

The department also suggested that the focus of state and local “terror”-training campaigns had shifted in recent years from Americans with popular political viewpoints to international groups. “Following the events of September 11, 2001, the focus of the training shifted to international terrorist and extremist groups,” DOJ claimed. “As a result, in 2004, the Institute for Intergovernmental Research removed the slides in question from use within the SLATT training program.”

As readers of *The New American* are well aware, the latest scandal comes in the wake of numerous federal publications in recent years attempting to [link peaceful political activism with extremism and terrorism](#). Just this year, a Homeland Security-funded “terrorism study” [attempted to paint Americans](#) who are “suspicious of centralized federal authority” or “reverent of individual liberty” as “extreme right-wing” activists and potentially even terror suspects.

A 2009 report by the Department of Homeland Security entitled “[Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment](#),” meanwhile, [suggested](#) that millions of Americans could be potential terrorists. Veterans, pro-life activists, Second Amendment supporters, advocates for national sovereignty, and countless others were smeared in the document, [prompting calls for the resignation](#) of Homeland Security boss Janet Napolitano.

When it emerged that the government [relied on discredited or known hoax sources](#) such as the Southern Poverty Law Center and a bizarre website at [www.whatdoesitmean.com](#), the half-baked Homeland Security report was eventually withdrawn. However, the damage had already been done: tens or even hundreds of millions of Americans were equated with potential terrorists due solely to their political beliefs. Homeland Security, meanwhile, came to be widely viewed as either a laughing stock or an out-of-control entity that should be abolished before it does any more damage.

Another 2009 report prepared by the Missouri Information Analysis Center, a so-called “fusion center” bringing together federal, state, and local government, also [suggested bumper stickers may be indications of terror](#). Among the supposedly suspicious political causes: support for Texas Congressman and GOP presidential candidate Ron Paul, as well as pastor and Constitution Party candidate Chuck Baldwin or Libertarian Party candidate Bob Barr.

The John Birch Society has been encouraging Americans to [support their local police and keep them independent](#) of federal control for decades. It appears that there is now at least one more reason among many to insist that law enforcement be accountable to local communities — not out-of-control bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., who characterize the political beliefs of tens or hundreds of millions of Americans as “extremist” while rejecting free speech.

Photo at top: Latest version of “Get US out of the United Nations” bumper sticker from The John Birch Society

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