



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 134

Resolution condemning the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for collecting extensive information on the legal and constitutional activities of anti-war demonstrators and protestors who have been exercising their human rights against an illegal and unjust war being waged in Iraq.

By Council Members Barron, Baez, Jackson, Jennings, Lopez, Sanders, Foster, James and Seabrook

Whereas, It was recently revealed through a leaked Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) memorandum that the FBI has collected extensive information on the tactics, training and organization of anti-war demonstrators and has advised local law enforcement officials to report any suspicious activity at protests to its counter-terrorism squads; and

Whereas, In the memorandum, the FBI advocates spying on peaceful protesters and indicates that protesters who engage in civil disobedience or other disruptive acts should be treated like potential terrorists; the memorandum confirms that the government has monitored the actions of peaceful protesters and wants intelligence about protesters to be reported to the nearest FBI field office or terrorism task force; and

Whereas, Such monitoring by government agents is frightening, illegal and completely contrary to the values enshrined in the Bill of Rights; and

Whereas, On the local level, such outrageous government behavior was reflected in the New York City Police Department (NYPD) policy of questioning arrested anti-war protestors about their political affiliations; and

Whereas, The blatantly unconstitutional tactics of the FBI and local law enforcement hearken back to the days of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who routinely abused government surveillance and other powers by spying on political protestors such as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr; and

Whereas, The discredited tactics of the Hoover Administration to harass and intimidate lawful political protest and dissent resulted in tight restrictions on the FBI's investigation of political activities; and

Whereas, In the name of the war against terrorism, however, the Bush Administration and Attorney General John Ashcroft have decided to relax these sensible restrictions and collect information on individuals who exercise their First Amendment right to protest and voice their opposition to government policy; and

Whereas, Such a coordinated, nationwide effort to collect intelligence regarding demonstrators chills free speech, harasses law-abiding citizens who wish to express their displeasure with government policy, and speaks to the general intolerance in this country for opposing points of view; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the city of New York condemns the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for

collecting extensive information on the legal and constitutional activities of anti-war demonstrators and protestors who have been exercising their human rights against an illegal and unjust war being waged in Iraq.