



UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
5000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-5000

DEC 19 2005

The Honorable John W. Warner
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Mr. Chairman:

An NBC Nightly News segment aired on December 13th alleging that Department of Defense (DoD) entities are collecting information on American peace activists and monitoring protests against the Iraq war. The segment highlighted entries in the Department's Threat and Local Observation Notice (TALON) reporting system. I want to provide you some context not otherwise reported in the segment.

The Department is authorized to conduct an integrated and cooperative counterintelligence (CI) and military law enforcement effort that protects its installations, property and people from threats of all kinds – both overseas and in the United States. In support of this effort, designated DoD organizations report unfiltered information provided by concerned citizens, DoD personnel charged with responsibilities for the security of DoD installations (e.g., gate guards) or other DoD personnel reporting suspicious activities. That information is merged with information from local, state and federal law enforcement and other intelligence, security and CI organizations and is used by analysts to assess potential threats to DoD interests.

TALON is the place where DoD initially stores "dots" of information which if validated, might later be connected to avert an attack before it occurs. Under existing procedures, a "dot" of information that is not validated as threatening must be removed from the TALON system in less than 90 days. If the "dot" is validated, the information is transferred to law enforcement.

I have directed that the appropriate CI and military law enforcement organizations within the Department take several actions. A thorough review of the TALON reporting system is underway to ensure full compliance with DoD



directives and U.S. laws. We will review those policies and procedures for proper application with respect to receipt and retention of information about U.S. persons. Finally, we will review the TALON database to determine whether information has been improperly used or stored in the database.

I have directed that all Department CI and intelligence personnel receive immediate refresher training concerning the laws, policies and procedures that govern the responsibilities for handling information, especially information related to U.S. persons.

My office is currently engaged in both formal and informal dialogue with members of your staff on this subject. We stand ready to answer questions you may have.

I have sent a similar letter to the Committee's Ranking Member, the Honorable Carl Levin.

Sincerely,



Stephen A. Cambone