



DOJ's Stealth Nationalization of Local Police

Under a Department of Justice program known as “Equitable Sharing,” local police are being deputized as federal agents in order to participate in Joint Terrorism Task Forces, enabling them to bypass their state’s own forfeiture and surveillance laws so they can spy on individuals suspected of terrorism or other crimes falling under federal jurisdiction.



This is according to an online [article](#) written by the Tenth Amendment Center’s Director of Communications Michael Maharrey. In the article, entitled “Local Cops Skirt State Limits on Surveillance by Joining Federal Task Forces,” Maharrey writes:

It’s well-known that a federal program known as “Equitable Sharing” allows local prosecutors and police to bypass more restrictive state asset forfeiture laws by passing cases off to the federal government through a process known as adoption. A Department of Justice directive issued last summer by Attorney General Jeff Sessions reiterates full support for the equitable sharing program, directs federal law enforcement agencies to aggressively utilize it, and sets the stage to expand it in the future.

In other words, local police and prosecutors are able to circumvent their own state’s anti-surveillance or forfeiture laws in order to conduct warrantless surveillance or seize private property.

Local police and prosecutors are able to justify this unconstitutional abuse of power merely by transferring the case over to the jurisdiction of the federal government. By doing so, the case is then designated as a “federal adoption,” according to the DOJ directive.

Once the case has been transferred or “adopted” to the jurisdiction of the federal government, local police and prosecutors are allowed to continue working on the case as though they are federal agents, freeing them up from any restrictive local or state surveillance and forfeiture laws. The state or local police officers that were initially involved in the case prior to the “federal adoption” continue working on the case by participating in a Joint Federal Task Force, or JTTF.

Local and state police participating in the JTTF are given immunity, or protection, from what would otherwise be a violation of their state’s own restrictive surveillance and forfeiture laws. Maharrey elaborates:

When state or local law enforcement officers join a federal joint task force, they are deputized as federal agents. As a result, they then operate under the exact same parameters as an FBI or DEA agent. That means they act as if they are no longer bound by state laws governing surveillance. In practice, this allows local cops to ignore state laws as they collect information on people in their communities.

When participating in a JTTF, state and local police become an arm or extension of the federal



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government and DOJ; in essence, they become de facto national police.

Citing a [report](#) by the Century Foundation, Maharrey states, “Joint Terrorism Task Forces are particularly invasive due to their broad and sweeping mandate to ‘prevent terrorism.’”

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Despite serving in, and wearing the uniform of, a state or local police department, officers participating in a JTTF are virtually removed from the authority of their department’s commanding officer(s) due to the classified nature of the case once it has been designating as a “federal adoption.” In other words, the state and local law-enforcement officers participating in a JTTF are removed from their department’s oversight and are instead subordinate to the DOJ.

As Maharrey also points out, the report by the Century Foundation states:

Partnerships on JTTFs may also enable local and state police to conduct activities in secret, under cover of federal law protecting ‘classified information,’ where their activities would otherwise be subject to public scrutiny through state open records laws. Sometimes, local officers deputized to work as federal agents on JTTFs aren’t even subject to ordinary chain-of-command requirements, for example, if their local commanding officer doesn’t have security clearance to access information held by the JTTF member. These frameworks make it impossible to hold local and state law enforcement officials accountable for their work on JTTFs.

Extracting state and local police officers in a JTTF from their department’s chain-of-command virtually makes them federal police officers, constituting a national police. Maharrey concludes: “Federal deputization allows your local cops [to] operate outside of state law with virtually no local or state oversight or accountability. They can surveil you with impunity, even if your state has passed laws to protect your privacy.”

The DOJ’s “Equitable Sharing” program — which enables the “federal adoption” of cases that would otherwise fall under the jurisdiction of a local or state law-enforcement agency and the deputization of local and state law-enforcement officers as federal agents participating in Joint Terrorism Task Force — compromises the integrity and *independence* of local police departments across the country. Instead of supporting the independence of local police, “Equitable Sharing,” federal adoption, and JTTFs are the recipe for the establishment of a national police force.

There are presently about 180 JTTFs operating throughout the country, according to Maharrey.

The enemy or threat is not the local police. Rather, it’s the federal government’s Department of Justice and its program of stealth nationalization of local police. In an online [article](#) published earlier this week on JBS.org, Kristin Stockheimer, Marketing Manager of The John Birch Society, reminds readers that “a federally controlled police force would bring about federal standards, federal guidelines, and allegiance to the federal government without local accountability.”

“The U.S. Constitution provides no authority for federal police agencies; police were established to serve under local authority,” Stockheimer wrote. In fact it is for this very reason or threat of a federal or nationalized police force that The John Birch initially created its “Support Your Local Police *and Keep Them Independent!*” action campaign.

One way anyone interested in stopping this de facto nationalizing of police is through joining or starting a local Support Your Local Police (SYLP) committee. Of the SYLP committees, Stockheimer says:

This nationwide network will provide support and guidance for you to make the largest impact.



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[Contact your local coordinator](#) to learn how a SYLP committee can be started! Download the SYLP Committee Formation Report to decide on a chairman, vice-chairman, and a treasurer. And we'll send you an SYLP packet to kickoff.

Anyone interested in learning more information about The John Birch Society's "Support Your Local Police *and Keep Them Independent!*" action campaign, and about either joining or forming a local SYLP committee, can [click here](#) to visit the SYLP webpage.

If allowed to continue, the DOJ's unconstitutional "Equitable Sharing" program may indeed result in replacing local police with a fully federalized national police in the name of "safety" and "security."





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