



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on February 2, 2019

Police in Minn. Seek Alliance with DHS and Private Security Firms to Increase Surveillance

Police in Minnesota are reportedly creating alliances with third-party private security firms in preparation for a predicted armed encounter with citizens protesting against a tar sands pipeline named Line 3 proposed by Enbridge, a Canadian energy company.

Details of the public-private police operation were reported by *The Intercept*:



In 2017, Enbridge began construction on the tiny portion of Line 3 that cuts into Wisconsin. Local police reports describe two security firms, Raven Executive and Security Services and Securitas, keeping tabs on protesters and reporting their activities to law enforcement. It was the protests in Wisconsin that sparked the multi-state coordination led by Minnesota. The state's fusion center developed a reputation as "the keepers of information for the Enbridge protests," as one sheriff's analyst put it, receiving information on Line 3 opponents from police departments in at least three states. While fusion centers were originally established to facilitate counterterrorism intelligence-sharing, they have increasingly played a role in monitoring, interpreting, and criminalizing political activity.

It should not be surprising to readers of *The New American* that the proposed police cooperation is being spearheaded by a federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Fusion Center located in Minnesota.

These unconstitutional unions of local, state, and federal law enforcement are being built all over the country and serve as networked nodes of the ever-expanding federal surveillance state's web of watchers.

Using "grants" and other economic incentives, the DHS is paying police departments to become subordinate outposts of the increasingly militarized federal agency.

The New American has chronicled this dangerous trend for years and we've begun to notice the



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acceleration of the pace of DHS consolidation of control of local police departments and sheriffs offices around the country.

Financial grants earmarked for “improving homeland security” aren’t the only DHS carrot enticing cash-strapped police departments to subject themselves to federal management. The DHS also uses the establishment of “buffer zones” and fusion centers to accomplish its surreptitious seizure of police forces.

It’s not enough, however, for Homeland Security to merely take control of local police. A primary focus of the plan is to enlarge the surveillance net by equipping squad cars and precincts with technology enabling them to target and track citizens whether at home or on the road.

From license plate readers to facial recognition software, from surveillance cameras to cellphone signal trackers, the Department of Homeland Security is providing police with all the gadgets, hardware, and software necessary to keep everybody under surveillance, without the targeted public ever realizing that it’s the Capitol, not the cops, that are behind the monitoring.

Local police who participate in the program will have access to a shockingly broad array of personal information of citizens. Facial recognition technology, license plate readers, and stop light camera video feeds will all be funneled to a Regional Operations Intelligence Center where FBI, police, and DHS agents can watch the live feeds.

The power and purpose of the Fusion Center is on display in the preparation police are making for their anticipated face-off with activists determined to deny Enbridge access to their land.

Perhaps no sentence so succinctly describes the larger issue at work in the union of local, state, federal, and private police power than a statement made by one such activist.

“I don’t understand why I’m being looked at as a criminal when a corporation is proposing to destroy my water,” said Honor the Earth executive director Winona LaDuke, as quoted in a story covering the Line 3 controversy. “I am not a criminal — I am a water protector.”

LaDuke was “reported to the fusion center because she was suspected of owning property that may be used to house protesters,” according to a story published by Common Dreams.

The numerous violations of civil rights that are committed by even the creation of DHS Fusion Centers have been covered repeatedly in this magazine. The Line 3 plan and its owners plan to thwart protesters has another aspect that is equally worthy of mention.

As noted above, police agencies in Minnesota have been seeking and securing contracts with private security firms in order to increase the strength of their force and widen the scope of their surveillance.

To me this elicits another question: if private companies are so much better at the duties performed by taxpayer-funded police departments, isn’t there a good case to be made for cutting out the middle man?

In other words, perhaps the privatization of police forces — terminating the over 100 years of government monopoly on official law enforcement — would serve to incentivize the protection of safety in a way only a free market solution could.

Undoubtedly, in the century or more of the exercise of monopolistic control by government of police power, companies as well as individuals have become accustomed to “calling the police” after something criminal has occurred. This reliance has resulted in a dependence that in turn has atrophied the muscle of self-reliance in matters of crime prevention and prosecution.



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In fact, there are today approximately three times as many private security personnel than government police forces employed in the United States.

In fact, the railroads in both Canada and the United States are secured by a private police force.

With that in mind, imagine the solutions to the pandemic effects of crime and the criminal justice system that American entrepreneurs could create if they were not prevented from doing so by government's zealous protection of its exclusive control of law enforcement.

The idea of privatization of police, on the state level, deserves to be among the proposals being considered to restore law and order to the United States and place responsibility for safety on property owners rather than police. Under the American system of federalism, states possess the sovereignty to experiment in this area. If some states were to do so, the results would shed light on the best way(s) to protect the liberties of citizens, while protecting the ability of companies to make money.

On the other hand, nationalizing local police and confiscating privately held firearms under the guise of protecting the public would be unconstitutional and deathblows to liberty, since they would give the national government in Washington a monopoly of power. By contrast, local, independent police forces that are truly beholden to the citizens they are entrusted to protect and serve, and that complement armed citizens in the protection of their rights, are instruments of freedom, not tyranny.

Back in Minnesota, the police are taking advantage of both their fusion with the federal government and the superior technology and training of private sector security firms to control resistance to the proposed pipeline.

In the words of attorney Tara Houska, as quoted by Common Dream, "It's clear that Enbridge is doing everything they can to have a very highly skilled force of security and law enforcement at their fingertips to do what they can to stop any resistance to Line 3."

"Doing everything" should not include violating the liberties protected by the Constitution.

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