



May 13, 2013

BY USPS MAIL

HAF/IMII
U.S. Air Force
1000 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1000

RE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

To Whom It May Concern:

The American Civil Liberties Union and the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation (together, the “ACLU”) submit this request under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552, for access to documents relating to Executive Order 12,333, 3 C.F.R. 200 (1981 Comp.) (“EO 12,333”). Specifically, we request the following records¹:

1. Any records construing or interpreting the authority of the United States Air Force (“Air Force”) under Executive Order 12,333 or any regulations issued thereunder;
2. Any records describing the minimization procedures² used by the Air Force with regard to both intelligence collection and intelligence interception conducted pursuant to the Air Force’s authority under EO 12,333 or any regulations issued thereunder; and
3. Any records describing the standards that must be satisfied for the “collection,” “acquisition,” or “interception” of communications, as the Air Force defines these terms, pursuant to the Air Force’s authority under EO 12,333 or any regulations issued thereunder.

1 Records include but are not limited to electronic records, letters, correspondence, tape recordings, notes, data, memoranda, reports, email, computer source and object code, technical manuals, technical specifications, legal opinions, policy statements, and any other materials.

2 Minimization procedures include but are not limited to rules, policies, or procedures addressing the collection, interception, handling, use, retention, and destruction of information relating to U.S. persons that is acquired in the course of intelligence activities.

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UNION FOUNDATION
NATIONAL OFFICE
125 BROAD STREET,
18TH FL.
NEW YORK, NY 10004-2400
T/212.549.2500
F/212.549.2651
WWW.ACLU.ORG

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
SUSAN N. HERMAN PRESIDENT

ANTHONY D. ROMERO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Request for a Fee Limitation and Public Interest Fee Waiver

The ACLU requests a waiver of search and review fees because the requested records are not sought for commercial use and because the ACLU is a “representative of the news media.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II). Dissemination of information about actual or alleged government activity is a critical and substantial component of the ACLU’s mission and work. The ACLU disseminates this information to educate the public and promote the protection of civil liberties. Its regular means of disseminating and editorializing information obtained through FOIA requests include: a paper newsletter distributed to approximately 450,000 people; a bi-weekly electronic newsletter distributed to approximately 300,000 subscribers; published reports, books, pamphlets, and fact sheets; a widely read blog; heavily visited websites, including an accountability microsite, <http://www.aclu.org/accountability>; and a video series.

The ACLU therefore meets the statutory definition of a “representative of the news media” as an “entity that gathers information of potential interest to a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distributes that work to an audience.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii); *see also Nat’l Sec. Archive v. Dep’t of Def.*, 880 F.2d 1381, 1387 (D.C. Cir. 1989); *cf. Am. Civil Liberties Union v. Dep’t of Justice*, 321 F. Supp. 2d 24, 29 n.5 (D.D.C. 2004) (finding non-profit public interest group to be “primarily engaged in disseminating information”). Indeed, the ACLU recently was held to be a “representative of the news media.” *Serv. Women’s Action Network v. Dep’t of Defense*, 888 F. Supp. 2d 282, 287-88 (D. Conn. 2012); *see also Am. Civil Liberties Union of Wash. v. Dep’t of Justice*, No. C09–0642RSL, 2011 WL 887731, at *10 (W.D. Wash. Mar. 10, 2011) (finding ACLU of Washington to be a “representative of the news media”), *reconsidered in part on other grounds*, 2011 WL 1900140 (W.D. Wash. May 19, 2011).

The ACLU also requests a waiver of all search, review, or duplication fees on the ground that disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because: (1) it “is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government,” and (2) it “is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). This request clearly satisfies these criteria.

First, the requested material concerns “the operations or activities” of the Air Force. E.O. 12,333 is “intended to enhance human and technical collection techniques, especially those undertaken abroad, and the acquisition of significant foreign intelligence, as well as the detection and countering of international terrorist activities and espionage conducted by foreign powers.” EO 12,333 § 2.2. It authorizes the intelligence community, including the Air Force, to collect intelligence, and it sets forth certain limitations on intelligence-gathering activities relevant to civil liberties. In its brief in a

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NATIONAL OFFICE
125 BROAD STREET,
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recent case before the Supreme Court of the United States, the Government emphasized its authority to conduct surveillance of Americans' foreign contacts abroad under Executive Order No. 12,333, without conforming to various statutory restrictions. Brief for Petitioners, *Clapper v. Amnesty Int'l USA*, No. 11-1025, 2012 WL 3090949, at *45 (U.S. 2012). How the Government actually does this, and whether it appropriately accommodates the constitutional rights of American citizens and residents whose communications are intercepted in the course of that surveillance, are matters of great significance.

Moreover, the requested materials will "contribute significantly to the public understanding" of the Air Force's operations or activities. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). Though the subject of foreign-intelligence collection is a matter of great public interest and concern, little information on how the American intelligence community construes the authority conferred by EO 12,333 and its implementing regulations is currently publicly available.

For example, in the *Clapper* brief described above, the government makes no argument beyond a handful of one-sentence assertions of its authority under EO 12,333. *See* Brief for Petitioners, *Clapper v. Amnesty Int'l USA*, No. 11-1025, 2012 WL 3090949 at *4, *33, *41, *45. Likewise, the publicly available administrative agency materials typically do little more than restate EO 12,333's limits on the intelligence community in slightly different ways or provide predictable definitions for terms left undefined in the executive order. *See, e.g.,* Dep't of Def., DOD 5240 1-R, *Procedures Governing the Activities of DOD Intelligence Components that Affect United States Persons* § C2.3.12 (Dec. 1982); Nat'l Sec. Agency, *United States Signals Intelligence Directive 18* (July 1993); Army Regulation 381-10, *U.S. Army Intelligence Procedures* § 2-2(1) (2007). Judicial treatments of EO 12,333 contribute equally little to the public understanding of the limits of intelligence-gathering powers under EO 12,333. *See, e.g.,* *United States v. Marzook*, 435 F. Supp. 2d 778 (N.D. Ill. 2006); *United States v. Poindexter*, 727 F. Supp. 1470 (D.D.C. 1989); *United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. v. Reagan*, 738 F.2d 1375 (D.C. Cir. 1984).

For these reasons, we respectfully request that all fees related to the search, review, and duplication of the requested records be waived. If the search and review fees will not be waived, we ask that you contact us at the email address listed below should the estimated fees resulting from this request exceed \$100.

We request that responsive electronic records be provided electronically in their native file format, if possible. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(3)(B). Alternatively, we request that the records be provided electronically in a text-searchable, static-image format (PDF), in the best image quality in the agency's possession, and in separate, Bates-stamped files.

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We also request that you provide an estimated date on which you will finish processing this request. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(7)(B).

If this FOIA request is denied in whole or in part, please provide the reasons for the denial, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). In addition, please release all segregable portions of otherwise exempt material in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Furthermore, if any documents responsive to this request are classified, please identify those documents, including a date and document number where possible, so we may begin the process of requesting a Mandatory Declassification Review under the terms of Executive Order 13,526 (2010).

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at the email address listed below. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i), we expect a response regarding this request within the twenty working-day statutory time limit.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'A. Abdo', is written over a horizontal line.

Alexander Abdo
Staff Attorney
National Security Project
American Civil Liberties Union

Phone: (212) 549-2517
Email: aabdo@aclu.org

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES
UNION FOUNDATION
NATIONAL OFFICE
125 BROAD STREET,
18TH FL.
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