Is the U.S. Postal Service Preparing to Censor Our Mail?

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> ***The U.S. Postal Service is discovered to be running a 'covert operations program' that monitors Americans' social media posts. This is stunning and inexplicable except that the USPS is already scanning every piece of mail it handlesThe USPS already reserves the right to open any piece of mail that it receives. Measuring your social media posts against so-called fact checkers could provide a list of senders or recipients whose mail needs to be "examined" more carefully. So, you thought your mail was private? Welcome to Nineteen Eighty-Four! ⁂ TN Editor***

by [Jane Wintervia Yahoo!](#)

The law enforcement arm of the U.S. Postal Service has been quietly running a program that tracks and collects Americans' social media posts, including those about planned protests, according to a document obtained by Yahoo News.

The details of the surveillance effort, known as iCOP, or Internet Covert Operations Program, have not previously been made public. The work involves having analysts trawl through

social media sites to look for what the document describes as "inflammatory" postings and then sharing that information across government agencies.

"Analysts with the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) Internet Covert Operations Program (iCOP) monitored significant activity regarding planned protests occurring internationally and domestically on March 20, 2021," says the March 16 government bulletin, marked as "law enforcement sensitive" and distributed through the Department of Homeland Security's fusion centers. "Locations and times have been identified for these protests, which are being distributed online across multiple social media platforms, to include right-wing leaning Parler and Telegram accounts."

A number of groups were expected to gather in cities around the globe on March 20 as part of a World Wide Rally for Freedom and Democracy, to protest everything from lockdown measures to 5G. "Parler users have commented about their intent to use the rallies to engage in violence. Image 3 on the right is a screenshot from Parler indicating two users discussing the event as an opportunity to engage in a 'fight' and to 'do serious damage,'" says the bulletin.

"No intelligence is available to suggest the legitimacy of these threats," it adds.

The bulletin includes screenshots of posts about the protests from Facebook, Parler, Telegram and other social media sites. Individuals mentioned by name include one alleged Proud Boy and several others whose identifying details were included but whose posts did not appear to contain anything threatening.

"iCOP analysts are currently monitoring these social media channels for any potential threats stemming from the scheduled protests and will disseminate intelligence updates as needed," the bulletin says.

The government's monitoring of Americans' social media is the

subject of ongoing debate inside and outside government, particularly in recent months, following a rise in domestic unrest. While posts on platforms such as Facebook and Parler have allowed law enforcement to track down and arrest rioters who assaulted the Capitol on Jan. 6, such data collection has also sparked concerns about the government surveilling peaceful protesters or those engaged in protected First Amendment activities.

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