

Ron Paul: Unleashing a Great Big Ugly Surveillance State

On March 20, President Trump signed an executive order “Eliminating Information Silos.” The order directed heads of federal agencies to make sure officials designated by the president “have full and prompt access to all unclassified agency records, data, software systems, and information technology systems.” The executive order did not attract much attention until it was more recently revealed that the administration was working with tech company Palantir to create a database containing all information collected by all federal agencies on all US citizens.

A database consisting of all the information of American citizens collected by the various federal agencies such as the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Pentagon would be a major step in creating a total surveillance state. This database could come in handy to future Dr. Faucis seeking to enforce mask and vaccine mandates. Those with access to this database could see personal health records, education records, and tax returns. They may even be able to see how many firearms individuals have purchased and if they were associated with any organizations the government had labeled “extremist.”

Despite the obvious threat to liberty the “big ugly database” poses, some commentators and “influencers” who would normally oppose, or at least be skeptical of, expansion of the surveillance state are supporting it because they believe it will be used to locate illegal immigrants. Some conservatives are supporting this proposal because it will help identify students who have publicly opposed the U.S. government’s support for Israel’s actions in Gaza. Ironically, many of those supporting government cracking down on “anti-Israel” students came to fame (and in some cases fortune) as critics of “wokeness” and cancel culture.

The abandonment of liberty because fear drives people to trust government promises of safety is a phenomenon we have witnessed several times this century. An obvious example is the way many former friends of freedom supported the PATRIOT Act and other infringements on liberty following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. We also saw it during the covid hysteria when many embraced mask and vaccine mandates. Following the 2008 market meltdown, normally rather staunch opponents of government intervention supported the bailouts because they agreed with then-

President George W. Bush who said he had “abandoned free-market principles to save the free-market system.”

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Palantir, founded in 2003, has worked on helping government become more efficient at collecting and storing information about US citizens. The company, which was named after the seeing stones from J.R.R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings, is one of the first companies to see the potential in the surveillance-industrial complex that developed following 9-11 and the PATRIOT Act. Palantir is literally the creation of the surveillance state since one of its early investors was In-Q-Tel, a venture capital firm controlled by the CIA.

Those discouraged by the surveillance state’s continued expansion under President Trump should be encouraged that more Americans than ever, including many who voted for President Trump, are seeing through the lie that the only way we can be safe is to surrender our

liberty to politicians, bureaucrats, and crony capitalism. This should inspire us to redouble our efforts to spread the message of liberty.

Ron Paul is a former member of the House of Representatives. This [piece was published](#) by the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity.