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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

August 6, 1970

Miss Sylvia Meagher  
302 West 12 Street  
New York, New York 10014

Dear Miss Meagher:

Mr. Franklin's article in the June 28 New York Times describing governmental surveillance of civilian activities is indeed disturbing.

Police, security, and military intelligence agencies of the Federal government have expanded their activities beyond that which is ethical or effective. The government does need accurate information about violence-prone individuals and organizations. However, surveillance of peace and social action groups is a feature of a totalitarian state, not of a democracy. Present broad guidelines regulating government surveillance can be stretched to include virtually every American who has publically proclaimed his opposition to government policies. It would be ironic if, in an effort to maintain our political institutions, we undermined their foundations of liberty.

An investigation on this matter is being conducted by Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr., Chairman of the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights. He is conducting a survey of the development and maintenance of data banks by agencies of the Federal government and considering the need for legislation to regulate the use of computerized files on non-criminal citizens.

I appreciate your concern about this critical issue, and hope you will write again on any subject of mutual concern.

Sincerely,

*Charlie Goodell*  
Charles E. Goodell

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