

The Maryland State Police classified 53 nonviolent activists as terrorists and entered their names and personal information into state and federal databases that track terrorism suspects, the state police chief acknowledged yesterday.

Police Superintendent Terrence B. Sheridan revealed at a legislative hearing that the surveillance operation, which targeted opponents of the death penalty and the Iraq war, was far more extensive than was known when its existence was disclosed in July.

The surveillance took place over 14 months in 2005 and 2006, under the administration of former governor Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. (R). The former state police superintendent who authorized the operation, Thomas E. Hutchins, defended the program in testimony yesterday. Hutchins said the program was a bulwark against potential violence and called the activists "fringe people."

TVNL Comment: This is a classic sign of fascism.

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