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Leaked memo details ICE media strategy to counter citizen activist groups

By [Stephen C. Webster](#)
Thursday, April 29th, 2010 – 7:38 pm

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Call this a crash course in how federal agencies use the press to advance their own advocacy.

A memo leaked from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency is has immigration reform activist groups up in arms, calling the government's plans to argue on behalf of its programs "unbelievable" and an "an aggressive strategy for spin and deception."



The document details how the agency was to respond amid a host of planned protests against the so-called "Secure Communities" program. It reveals that ICE targeted major media in eight cities where activists planned their rallies, securing space in publications like *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *The Maimi Herald*, *The Washington Examiner* and others.

"On the day of the launch, ICE Assistant Secretary John Morton placed opinion-editorials in Atlanta, Georgia; Miami, Florida; and Morristown, New Jersey—all sites of the campaign," noted *Uncover the Truth*, a joint advocacy campaign set up by the Center for Constitutional Rights, the National Day Laborer Organizing Network and other non-governmental groups.

Additionally, it explains that the agency "will arrange for [Assistant Secretary] Morton to be interviewed by Julia Preston from *The New York Times*, Suzanne Gamboa from the Associated Press, Antonieta Cádiz from *La Opinion* and possibly Lori Montenegro from *Telemundo*."

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"ICE's unbelievable offensive against activists organizing for truth and accountability must be challenged," CCR attorney Sunita Patel said in a [media advisory](#). "Rather than sticking to the promise of transparency, the Obama administration is hiding behind misinformation and attacking civil society. The quest for answers is even more compelling and begs the question: what is ICE hiding?"

RELATED: [GOP candidate's 'microchip an illegal' comment draws outrage](#)

Hoping to obtain answers to just that question, the campaign has filed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for data related to the "Security Communities" program, which the agency says leverages technology to track down and capture what it calls "criminal aliens."

In his editorial, Morton opened with a tale of a California man who'd left Bible study, only to be run down by an illegal immigrant driving while intoxicated.

"Since beginning the program in October 2008, ICE has deployed the fingerprint technology to more than 165 jurisdictions across 20 states," he wrote. "We deploy to more places every week. As a result, we have removed more than 33,000 aliens convicted of crimes — aliens who may have otherwise been released back onto our streets and into our neighborhoods."

"As ICE expands this program nationwide, we meet regularly with local law enforcement agencies, national and local nongovernmental organizations, media and others to ensure the public understands that ICE is using this race-neutral program to identify and remove criminal aliens, thereby relieving the burden on state and local governments."

Morton was nominated to serve as ICE assistant secretary by [President Obama](#) on Feb. 23, 2009.

A large part of the "Secure Communities" program is federal coordination of local law enforcement. The leaked memo apparently reveals this coordination even applies to "messaging," as it claims ICE would reach out to encourage press officers to speak with the media, going so far as to offer sound bytes and talking points.

"It is deeply disturbing that ICE responded to our simple request for truth and accountability with an aggressive strategy for spin and deception," countered Sarahi Uribe, an organizer with Uncover the Truth. "At a time when its clear that the federal government's irresponsibility gave rise to the crisis in Arizona, rights groups now feel under attack for demanding basic answers from our government."

RELATED: ['Deep concerns': Napolitano testifies Arizona immigration law will be reviewed](#)

It was revealed in Dec. 2009 that ICE maintains a network of [unlisted immigrant detention centers](#) across the United States, calling them "subfield offices," where they hold an unknown number of people. [The Nation magazine](#) placed the number of "subfield offices" at 186, noting that the facilities have no beds or showers, are not subject to ICE Detention Standards and most are located "in suburban office parks or commercial spaces revealing no information about their ICE tenants".

At least 100 immigrant prisoners have died while in ICE custody, [according to documents](#) obtained by [The New York Times](#) and the American Civil Liberties Union.

The following document is an internal Immigration and Customs Enforcement memo detailing the agency's media strategy to counter activist citizen groups.

[ICE Media Strategy](#)

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

April 23, 2009
Contact: Gillian Brigham
202-732-4217

Media Plan

Get the Facts: Secure Communities media plan for April 26-30

Background:
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are preparing for a one-week series of events around the country April 26-30 to express their opposition to ICE and law enforcement collaboration. The events focus on ICE's Secure Communities strategy, a FOIA request about this strategy and overall opposition to removal policies. Several of their media events claim that they will announce requests of information from local law enforcement about their participation in ICE programs. This series of events follows a similar series of events organized by NGOs in March.

Locations of events as this time: San Bernardino, Calif; Miami; Morristown, N.J.; New York City; Atlanta; Washington, DC; Houston, Texas; and Raleigh, N.C.

Media outreach
Op-eds:
On Sunday, April 25, OPA will submit for publication Monday morning a "Secure Communities: Get the Facts" op-ed signed by A/S Morton to major newspapers in the eight cities where protests are planned. This op-ed will highlight the incredible success of the program and the support it provides to state and local law enforcement at no cost to them, as well as hit back against allegations that it encourages racial profiling and is not an effective means to remove criminal aliens from the community.

National-level interviews:
OPA will arrange for A/S Morton to be interviewed by Julia Preston from *The New York Times*, Suzanne Gamba from the *Associated Press*, Antonieta Cádiz from *La Opinion* and possibly Lori Montenegro from *Telemundo* to discuss the success of Secure Communities.

BBC's "The World" has already reached out to ICE to talk about Secure Communities and 287(g) in light of next week's events. Reporter would like to interview an ICE official on-the-record Monday

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 farang and 1 more liked this

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 **jack** 1 month ago [in reply to Guest](#)

 NadePaulKuciGravMcKi liked this

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 **Vic** 1 month ago [in reply to jack](#)

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Like Reply

 **WhodaThunkit** 1 month ago

 Praxman and 1 more liked this

Obama = Bu\$h 44?

Like Reply

 **DaveO** 1 month ago

 sprout liked this

Learn to proofread.

Like Reply

 **Terrible** 1 month ago

 farang liked this

Once upon a time in America.... it was a very serious crime for US government agencies to engage in domestic propaganda.

Like Reply

 **farang** 1 month ago [in reply to Terrible](#)

"Once upon a time"....a very good opening line of a fairytale, Terrible.

Growing up in Arlington, Va., my mother was employed at the Pentagon in the 1950's, in the "P.R." office.

WTF do you think THAT was, Mother Goose?

It was an illusion of freedom and "difference" from "other countries less free" we all believed....but an illusion nonetheless.

Like Reply

 **realnews** 1 month ago

 farang liked this

I forgot to mention that ICE claims to have detained over 18K people but only deported 4K.

Why keep them detained for so long? If they are guilty of a crime charge and sentence them or deport them.

Its like GITMO all over again. This time its on American soil or should I say under American soil.

Like Reply

 **realnews** 1 month ago

 farang liked this

Hmm... lets see "secretively maintained detention facilities all over the United States."

Why the need to keep the locations of these detention centers a secret?

"At least 100 immigrant prisoners have died while in ICE custody"

|
Why hand over documents to the ACLU about 100 prisoners dying while in ICE custody but yet claim to have never received any complaints? The ACLU is investigating for a reason.

Like Reply

 **Boneman** 1 month ago

 farang liked this

"In his editorial, Morton opened with a tale of a California man who'd left Bible study, only to be run down by an illegal immigrant driving while intoxicated."

Damn bible studies. We should outlaw them!

Like Reply

 **Benway for the Nova Police** 1 month ago [in reply to Boneman](#)

 farang liked this

This has all the elements of an urban legend.

Like Reply

 **farang** 1 month ago [in reply to Boneman](#)

"Damn bible studies. We should outlaw them!"

From your lips to god's ear.

Like Reply

 **vince j** 1 month ago

 NadePaulKuciGravMcKi liked this

Obama... so much CHANGE... So much freedom!!!

Like Reply

 **hurlyburly** 1 month ago [in reply to vince j](#)

Tastes like FRENCH fries.

I wish everyone would stop and consider how this ICE document is relevant to all of the news we consume, including the stuff we read here. The depth and scope of these propaganda plans would amaze most people.

The recent wikileaks leak on how our CIA managed the news to promote the Afghanistan occupation (fully supported by rawstory) was a wake up call.

This ICE plan shows how government and media work hand in glove to manipulate people.

As for the brave patriot who leaked this memo.....Obama will probably sick his dirty DOJ lawyers on him and throw the book at him. It is what he did last week to a similar honest brave American who blew the whistle on illegal government wiretaps.

<http://rawstory.com/rs/2010/0415/obamas-justice...>

The Obama troll brigade will just blame Palin or teabaggers and ask that we all look away, as usual.

PS You have lots of great comments here vince j. Nice work.

Like Reply

 **farang** 1 month ago [in reply to hurlyburly](#)

girlywiry, like the Republicans weren't/aren't doing the exact same thing.

Only someone with limited intellect would think there is a scintilla of difference between these two "parties."

I'm sure you'll wish to reconsider your obviously limited perusal and analysis of this article. Maybe you just skimmed over it.

Perhaps on reflection you may find they are the exact same, only one is covert fascist, the other overt.

But both fascist.

I do however get a chuckle at your portrayal of "Obama's dirty DOJ lawyers", like Bush didn't appoint most of them. Like they weren't investigated and outed as Rove's political attack dogs. Thanks for the laugh.

(Edited by author 1 month ago)

Like Reply

 **hurlyburly** 1 month ago [in reply to farang](#)

You sound like the kind of farang that gives farangs a bad name.

I probably have more comments in my profile trashing the two party system and saying Republicans and Democrats are the SAME. Ya know, same same but different?

Nice of you to spend more time crafting a perfectly written assault on a fellow commenter who is trying to equate Obama with Bush. You did a really really really good job.....probably would have taken you less than half the time to read a few comments and see that I agree on the two party scam. Now, go slow, but do go, GFY.

Like Reply

 **kiboshki** 1 month ago

 NadePaulKuciGravMcKi liked this

One jackbooted step closer to a national police....

Like Reply

 **steelerhawk47** 1 month ago

 NadePaulKuciGravMcKi liked this

War is Peace
Freedom is Slavery
Ignorance is Strength

George Orwell

Like Reply

 **Benway for the Nova Police** 1 month ago [in reply to steelerhawk47](#)

No, that's not George Orwell, that's Big Brother in Orwell's 1984.

Like Reply

 **Atilla** 1 month ago

Propaganda here? In the land of the sheep and the home of the slave? Tell me it isn't so. Not in the Banana Republic of America!.... It's time to scrape the scum off the top of the gene pool.

Like Reply

 **farang** 1 month ago

Now you know who the ones are labeling folks "conspiracy nuts, tin foil hatters, extremists, and fringe": Cass

Sunstein clones.

What? When that creep scumbag Sunstein came out and stated the federal government "should" infiltrate opposition groups, he meant they ARE infiltrating opposition groups, and was simply practicing CYA.

Or didn't you figure that out then?

Like Reply

 **Unlegendary** 1 month ago

If nobody gets it I'll make an attempt here..

This is NOT Obama per se nor Bush..It's the PIC, Prison Industrial Complex run amuck while the citizenry is lulled into a daze and they now have the ability to capture anyone at will and never have to answer to anyone, not even the president.

Their big, nasty barbed wire complexes ran into a wall getting scrutinized and they had to actually answer so they decided to go underground and this is NOT about immigration.. It's about me, you and anyone else unlucky enough to get run over by the PIC wheels.. WATCH OUT!

When they run out of scapegoat brown inmates they'll go after anyone who dare question their insanity and skin color won't make one iota's difference to them not that it ever has in the first place. They'll simply begin hauling anyone who can't afford high priced lawyers and who aren't well connected with investigative reporters... That's me, you and anyone who happens to have the ability to breath in air.

It's the same people spending kings ransom every day to beat down laws that protect your rights as a law abiding citizen of ANY political stripe. Even if you're law abiding that's OK because they'll just say you broke a law and who's there to say you didn't? Nobody because nobody will know where you are.

Like Reply

 **skechersshoes** 1 month ago

This comment was flagged for review.

 **markusgarvey** ★ 1 month ago [in reply to skechersshoes](#)

knock off the spam...your servers might accidentally...

Like Reply

 **Boneman** 1 month ago [in reply to skechersshoes](#)

I bought a pair of those sunglasses and let me tell you something. They're overpriced pieces of shit. Skecher sunglasses SUCK!!!! And it's too bad not enough people know what cheap pieces of plastic they are.

Like Reply

 **Boneman** 1 month ago [in reply to skechersshoes](#)

Governor looks at person on death row and asks three questions: 1 twice the number of ugly skecher sunglasses: 2 to much of sunglasses that suck more than gargoyles: three, if you buy those pieces of crap you'll just look like an idiot.

Gargoyles man, forget skechershit

Like Reply

 **Fangdango** 1 month ago

I am a social worker. A young child in my caseload was repeatedly raped by her father. ICE deported him before he could be charged and convicted. Because he was not charged or convicted, his family members believe that he is innocent -- they reason that, if he were guilty, he would be in jail instead of just deported. Consequently, the victim will go through her life with her family believing that she was lying and she is crazy. It is an injustice to victims everywhere, here and in the country of origin of the criminals, to deport them and turn them loose to offend in their birth countries without having to suffer any consequences for their crimes.

Like Reply

 **FemmeVarie** 1 month ago

How many of you are tired of the sales spam all through the website comments? If you are, please report it before flagging it. Ignoring it isn't making it go away, so do your part, please.

Like Reply

raw Boneman 1 month ago [in reply to FemmeVarie](#)

Love your name.

Like Reply

raw FemmeVarie 1 month ago [in reply to Boneman](#)

so does my husband

Like Reply

raw Boneman 1 month ago [in reply to FemmeVarie](#)

Yeah? What's his name... maybe I know him.

Like Reply

raw FemmeVarie 1 month ago [in reply to Boneman](#)

That would be telling.

Like Reply

raw Boneman 1 month ago [in reply to FemmeVarie](#)

Wouldn't it now? So, what's his name? I bet it's not as good as mine

Like Reply

raw FemmeVarie 1 month ago [in reply to Boneman](#)

you don't get it; I was trying to tell you in a discrete and honest manner that I'm not interested. I'll repeat it. I'm not interested, so leave me alone in this regard.

Like Reply

raw Boneman 1 month ago [in reply to FemmeVarie](#)

I got it the first time you responded. Just wanted to see how far you would go. No need to get upset. In this regard, I will leave you alone. Happy trails!

Like Reply

raw FemmeVarie 1 month ago [in reply to Boneman](#)

thank you

Like Reply

raw sunglasses 1 month ago

Comment removed.

raw Boneman 1 month ago [in reply to sunglasses](#)

Fuck off!

Like Reply

raw OldAtlantic 1 month ago

This comment was flagged for review.

raw barrelhse 1 month ago [in reply to OldAtlantic](#)

 farang liked this

Yes, of course. I see it all now. How blind and foolish I've been, you fucking moron.

Like

Reply

 **farang** 1 month ago [in reply to OldAtlantic](#)

Yeah, we should have shot John Paul Jones on site when he slipped in from Scotland.

Who knew his kind would drag us into limited intellectual discussion, eh OA?

My family has been in this land since 1680, and we sure didn't like those damn Blue Nose Fundie Christians booted out of Great Britain landing in New England and fouling our wonderful new land.

Your relatives?

Like

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