Press Palantir on Spying-On-The-Public Contracts for 'Mega-Database' of Americans' Info

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By Brett Wilkins

A group of Democratic lawmakers on Monday pressed the CEO of Palantir Technologies about the company's hundreds of millions of dollars in recent federal contracts and reporting that the big data analytics specialist is helping the government build a "mega-database" of Americans' private information in likely violation of multiple laws.

Citing New York Timesreporting from late last month examining the Colorado-based tech giant's hundreds of millions of dollars in new government contracts during the second term of U.S. President Donald Trump, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) led a letter to Palantir CEO Alex Karp demanding answers regarding reports that the company "is amassing troves of data on Americans to create a government-wide, searchable 'mega-

database' containing the sensitive taxpayer data of American citizens."



Object 1

The letter continues:

> According to press reports, Palantir employees have reportedly been installed at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), where they are helping the agency use Palantir's software to create a "single, searchable database" of taxpayer records. The sensitive taxpayer data compiled into this Palantir database will likely be shared throughout the government regardless of whether access to this information will be related to tax administration or enforcement, which is generally a violation of federal law. Palantir's products and services were reportedly selected for this brazenly illegal project by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).
> Several DOGE members are former Palantir employees.

The lawmakers called the prospect of Americans' data being shared across federal agencies "a surveillance nightmare that raises a host of legal concerns, not least that it will make it significantly easier for Donald Trump's administration to spy on and target his growing list of enemies and other Americans."

"We are concerned that Palantir's software could be used to enable domestic operations that violate Americans' rights," the letter states. "Donald Trump has personally threatened to arrest the governor of California, federalized National Guard troops without the consent of the governor for immigration raids, deployed active-duty Marines to Los Angeles against the wishes of local and state officials, condoned violence against peaceful protestors, called the independent press 'the enemy of the people,' and abused the power of the federal government in unprecedented ways to punish people and institutions he dislikes."

"Palantir's troubling assistance to the Trump administration is not limited to its work for the IRS," the letter notes, highlighting the company's role in Immigration and Customs Enforcement's mass deportation efforts and deadly U.S. and allied military operations.

The letter does not mention Palantir's involvement in Project Nimbus, a cloud computing collaboration between Israel's military and tech titans Amazon and Google targeted by the No Tech for Apartheid movement over alleged human rights violations. But the lawmakers did note that companies including IBM, Cisco, Honeywell, and others have been complicit in human rights crimes in countries including Nazi Germany, apartheid South Africa, China, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt.

The lawmakers asked Karp to provide a list of all contracts awarded to Palantir, their dollar amount, the federal agencies involved, whether the company has any "red line" regarding human rights violations, and other information.

In addition to Wyden and Ocasio-Cortez, the letter is signed by Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), and Ed Markey (D-Mass.), and Reps. Summer Lee (D-Pa.), Jim McGovern (D-Mass.), Sara Jacobs (D-Calif.), Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.), and Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.).