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## OTTAWA NOT USING 'SPYWARE' OR 'MALWARE,' BUREAUCRATS TELL HOUSEFATHER

MARTIN C. BARRY

Testifying in Ottawa recently before a House of Commons standing committee on information, privacy and ethics, several senior federal civil servants insisted to Mount Royal Liberal MP Anthony Housefather that their departments don't use "spyware" or "malware."

The Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics studies matters related to the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada, as well as certain issues related to the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

Housefather, who is one of nearly a dozen MPs who sit on the committee, had asked Donald Walker, Chief Enforcement Officer at the federal government's Department of the Environment, to clarify whether his department had been using technology to improperly spy on Canadians.

On his Facebook page, Housefather recently stated that "this is a false claim." However, at the same time he acknowledged that federal government departments are using "data extraction technology," although without malicious purposes.

According to Housefather, the committee was recently studying the issue because of a



Mount Royal MP Anthony Housefather sits on the House of Commons' standing committee on information, privacy and ethics.

growing awareness among members of the public of the use of spyware.

"Spyware is something that is a surreptitious thing, that you put it on somebody's phone to extract information on an ongoing basis to use it for nefarious purposes," he said, before

asking Walker directly, "Do you guys use spyware at all or malware?"

"No," replied Walker, adding that "unlike spyware, the tools that we use are for the extraction of existing data under a specific court order with the owner's knowledge.

"So, it is not clandestine," he added. "It is not ongoing, there is no software installed on the device, and it is not conducted remotely. So, there's no ongoing component, which would be required for it to be spyware."

Under further questioning by Housefather, Walker confirmed that his department uses the technology only when mandated under court order, or when someone (such as an employee) agrees to surrender an electronic device to be analyzed with data extraction technology.

Another senior federal civil servant, with the department of fisheries, also insisted that the government isn't using advanced electronic technology to provide close surveillance of Canadian citizens.

"Fishery officers do monitoring, control and

surveillance of the fishery," he said, while also agreeing with Housefather that the practice dates back at least a century and remains very basic and not very technological.

Walker suggested that the environment department's existing methods of surveillance, to see that its rules and regulations are being respected, remain fairly basic, relying for example on word-of-mouth reports from compliant game hunters, so that department employees can follow up with on-site visual inspections.

### Résumé

Selon le député libéral pour Mont-Royal Anthony Housefather, les services gouvernementaux fédéraux n'utilisent pas la technologie pour espionner les Canadiens de manière inappropriée. « Cette affirmation est fautive », soutient-il sur sa page Facebook.

Il avait demandé à plusieurs employés des ministères de confirmer la manière dont ils utilisent réellement la technologie d'extraction de données. Selon eux, ils se fient surtout à des méthodes existantes, plutôt que de la technologie avancée.

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# WHERE ARE YOUR INNER BRACES?

Martin Madden was for many years the distinguished Congressman from the state of Illinois. Then, a very brilliant young man was also elected to Congress and became a member of Madden's Illinois delegation. Shortly afterwards, Madden, the veteran, mature, philosophical Congressman, a man of firm integrity, became aware of the fact that this younger Congressman was being motivated by special interests.

It was obvious to Madden that this Congressman's votes in the Congress were

being based on certain influences which he well recognized. He was concerned for the young man's future for he knew well that a person with a shady character would not last long under the bright spotlight that shines down upon a United States representative.

So Madden called the young Congressman into his office and said to him, "You know you shouldn't vote the way you did on this bill. You know who is behind it. You know the special interests that are involved in it. Why are you doing this? Why are you making this mistake?"

"Well," the young man said, "Mr. Madden, you realize, don't you, the pressures that are on me? I want to stay in office. I want support. Don't you understand the pressures?"

"Yes," said Madden, "I very well realize the pressures that are upon all of us. But", he said, "There's one thing you might think about. WHERE ARE YOUR INNER BRACES? If you do not get these inner braces, you'll never be able to withstand the outer pressure."

These inner braces are formed through our values and our faith as we remember and use God's power to overcome whatever issue or situation would defeat us. In order to achieve God's plan for our lives we need to live in total dependence on Him. Our dependence never stops! As one writer stated: "God's power under us, in us, surging through us, is exactly what turns dependence into unforgettable experiences of completeness."

The Apostle Paul stated: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."

I have always been fascinated by the spectacle of Niagara Falls. In the summer, tourists and residents of that city are treated to the magnificent torrent of water cascading over the rim of the Falls. Some people have tested their ability to survive the Falls by going over, in a variety of inventive contraptions, in such things as barrels of varying shapes and constructions.

But even more impressive are the Falls in ice-bound winter. There the ice encroaches from either side in an attempt to stop the flow. Yet, all in vain. The power of the water keeps on flowing to power the electric turbines at the bottom.

This represents a picture of God's power working through our oppressive circumstances. The encroaching ice on the edge of the Falls well represents our encroaching and potentially defeating adversaries. But the power of God cannot be contained by such contractions, and it continues its mighty flow! As long as we retain our intimacy with God, nothing can stop His power and His blessing!

The late President John F. Kennedy, a victim of war wounds, bad health, and circumstance, knew this attitude well, when he said, "Anyone who believes there is fairness in this life is seriously misinformed." Then came Dallas, Texas, November 1963!

Tragedies strike us all. Cliches abound such as: "Don't look at what you have lost, but at what you have left." That's true. But such clichés are inadequate! We are told not to let our past, with whatever personal tragedies, shackle our future. The way in which we are able to do this is not just from personal endeavor and goal-setting, but from basing our lives on the firm belief that while we have breath God is still able to use us for His purpose.

When we come face to face with our "impossibilities", listen to Annie Johnson Flint: "Have you come to the Red Sea in your life where, in spite of all you can do, there is no way out, there is no way back, THERE IS NO OTHER WAY BUT THROUGH. You have to go on if you are to grow."

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