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## *Secretly Obeying The Law*

Something funny about this. The FBI, which is charged with enforcing federal laws, has signed a secret agreement to respect the law. The CIA, which operates under the Constitution, has signed a secret agreement to comply with the Constitution.

That may seem to put the two federal agencies through the looking glass, turning things upside down and inside out, yet the facts provide a glimpse of life in America as it has recently been. In 1974 suits were filed against the CIA, the FBI and the Chicago Police Department accusing them of breaking the law in investigations of many citizens' groups during the past 20 years. Now, court documents show, the two federal agencies have signed agreements still subject to court approval, which is presumably why they are secret.

The FBI explicitly renounces the use of illegal break-ins for intelligence gathering and promises not to engage in any activity to impair the lawful conduct of groups or individuals. The conduct agreed to is what might be expected of a law-enforcement agency at any time. The CIA, for its part, agrees to comply with the Constitution and federal laws, one of which prohibits it from domestic spying, which the CIA was not supposed to be doing at any time. The Chicago Police Department, however, has not agreed not to do anything it should not have been doing at any time, and apparently will go to trial.

Whatever the federal court does about the federal agencies' agreements, we hope it will not find novel the idea that law enforcement agencies should not break the law.