



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 11, 2022

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## Police: National or Local?

One of the most chillingly memorable lines in 1984, George Orwell's famous novel about an imagined future dystopia, is uttered by O'Brien, a soulless apparatchik of the totalitarian state. "If you want a vision of the future," O'Brien dispassionately told his tortured victim, Winston Smith, "imagine a boot stamping on a human face — forever."



AP Images

Tragically, billions of our fellow human beings are living, or have lived (and died), under despotic regimes with the boot of the police state on their faces. The right to be free and to defend oneself is fundamental and natural. That includes the right to bear arms in the defense of oneself, one's family, and one's community. It also includes the right to act together with others in a legal polity to delegate limited powers to designated full-time individuals "to serve and protect." We give them badges and guns and a certain measure of authority to carry out this task for the common good. However, as the human experience has shown (from ancient history to our present day), this authority is often abused, especially when it is expanded and centralized into a national force unaccountable to local control.

Our constitutional Republic, with its checks and balances among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government, and its equally important division of powers divided among the national, state, and local governments — and the people — is veering perilously close to becoming a de facto police state. As explained in our article [Biden's Crime Wave](#), our federal government has no constitutional authority for any general police powers. Nevertheless, according to the latest data available from the federal Department of Justice (DOJ), the federal police force has expanded to 136,815 officers in 90 federal agencies.

Virtually every federal agency now has its own SWAT-style paramilitary "police" unit to enforce its edicts and "protect the homeland": the Departments of State, Education, Agriculture, Energy, and Treasury, for instance, and agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, the Social Security Administration, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, etc. Not to mention the U.S. Marshals



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Service, the FBI, the Federal Protective Police Service, the Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. And recently, in one fell swoop, the Biden administration and the Democrat-controlled Congress have pushed through legislation that would soon add 87,000 federal IRS agents with badges and guns!

Alarming, while the federal constabulary has been ballooning to unprecedented size, our local law-enforcement agencies are *shrinking* due to radical Marxist “defund the police” campaigns. Police officers and sheriff’s deputies across the country have had enough of the hate, abuse, threats, stress, and budget cuts, and have been leaving the profession in droves. Many of our local law-enforcement agencies are dangerously understaffed and underfunded, endangering both the officers and their communities. The New Orleans Police Department, for instance, with just a third of its needed manpower, is stretched so thin that the average 911 response is now taking two and a half hours. A lot of criminal mayhem can happen (and does happen) during those lengthy delays. New Orleans Police Superintendent Shaun Ferguson told *The Wall Street Journal*, “The criminals are bolder and more brazen. They do not believe they will face any consequences for their actions.” And many times — too many times — they don’t.

And “Police recruitment and operations are hampered by a lingering 2013 [federal] consent order that gives a judge and outside monitors oversight over the New Orleans Police Department,” *The Washington Times* reported on September 17, 2022.



**Anti-police, pro-crime:** Movements to defund or abolish local police have left many law-enforcement agencies dangerously understaffed and underfunded. Predictably, crime has skyrocketed. (AP Images)

## “Consent Decrees” = Federal Handcuffs

Even far-left Democratic New Orleans mayor LaToya Cantrell has called for an end to the federal oversight, telling the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, “The consent decree handcuffs our officers by making their jobs harder, pestering them with punitive punishment and burying them with paperwork that is an overburden.” Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry, a Republican, says the federal interference imposes an “arbitrary and unrealistic standard” and is “a major obstacle to state and local collaboration to address critical threats to the public.”

The federal Department of Justice “consent decree” is the new weapon of choice to hamstring and take



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over local law-enforcement agencies. Some two dozen city police departments are now operating under the thumb of these decrees. They include Albuquerque, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, East Haven, Ferguson, Los Angeles, Miami, Newark, New Orleans, Portland, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. It usually begins with an “incident” (a charge of police brutality, racism, or corruption — which may or may not have a basis in fact) that then leads to a lawsuit by the ACLU and mob calls for federal intervention. That’s the cue for the DOJ to step in.

To avoid costly legal battles and the prospect of a possible court-ordered “reform” mandate, many cities and counties enter into “consent decrees” with the Justice Department that require the law-enforcement agencies in question to jump through hoops designed by the federal bureaucrats and their ACLU allies. A “monitor” (a federal judge) is appointed to oversee compliance with the decree. Of course, under the Clinton, Obama, and Biden administrations, radical ACLU cadres have *written* the consent decrees (usually hundreds of pages long) from inside the DOJ. The latest example is former ACLU staffer Vanita Gupta, Biden’s associate attorney general, who reportedly wrote the recent Cleveland consent decree. She previously had her hands in other consent decrees as assistant attorney general for civil rights in the Obama administration.

The federal consent-decree scheme was launched with the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. Signed into law by then-President Bill Clinton, it is most remembered as the so-called three strikes law, which, like similar state laws, mandates life imprisonment for three-time offenders. That was the bait to get support from imprudent “law and order” types who failed to read the fine print and, moreover, are ignorant of the fact that the law was a raw usurpation of power that our Constitution reserves to state and local governments. One of the effects of the legislation has been the mass incarceration of African-American men — which is now being decried as evidence of America’s “structural racism.” Significantly, the legislation was written by “liberal” Democrats: Representative Jack Brooks of Texas and then-Senator Joe Biden of Delaware. Yes, *that* Joe Biden. Another feature of this law was to establish in the DOJ Civil Rights Division the pretended authority to investigate and prosecute local law-enforcement agencies for an alleged “pattern and practice” of violating the rights of citizens. Usually this has centered on charges by local activists that police use racial profiling or excessive force.

The Obama administration was especially aggressive in pushing this DOJ takeover of local policing. In a December 4, 2014 press release entitled “Police Reform and Accountability Accomplishments Under Attorney General Eric Holder,” the DOJ boasted, “In the past five fiscal years, the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division has opened over 20 investigations into police departments, more than twice as many investigations than were opened in the previous five fiscal years. The department has entered into 15 agreements with law enforcement agencies, including nine consent decrees.”

The Trump administration attempted to remove the federal “consent” handcuffs from local police but was stymied by ACLU lawsuits and leftist judges. And the Biden DOJ under Attorney General Merrick Garland has brought them back with a vengeance. A.G. Garland announced on April 16, 2021 that the consent-decree operation would be back in business to “continue the Department’s legacy of promoting the rule of law, protecting the public, and working collaboratively with state and local governmental entities.”

Federal consent decrees have added greatly to the “Ferguson effect,” the double phenomenon of skyrocketing crime and “de-policing,” which is to say that officers are simply backing off from policing



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because that's the only safe thing to do. Consent decrees are an excellent illustration of the communist tactic of "pressure from above and pressure from below" explained by Czechoslovakian Communist Party official Jan Kozak in a 1957 report entitled "How Parliament Can Play a Revolutionary Part in the Transition to Socialism and the Role of the Popular Masses." In this instruction manual, which has been used worldwide, Comrade Kozak explained for the Party faithful the importance of "accelerating the communist revolution" through the coordinated application of *pressure from above* by communists in the government and *pressure from below* by communist agitators in the streets, the media, and academia. Kozak boasted that he and his fellow communists had succeeded in using this form of gradual revolution to transform Czechoslovakia into a communist state.

## Carrots and Sticks

There are many additional ways in which local law enforcement is being corrupted and nationalized through federal carrot-and-stick programs, such as:

- **COPS:** The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) in the Department of Justice was established by Clinton Attorney General Janet Reno, with plans to implement a six-year, \$8.8 billion grant program that would enable state and local law-enforcement agencies to hire or redeploy 100,000 additional police officers. Since 1994, COPS has invested more than \$14 billion to help advance federally directed "community policing."
- **Buffer Zone Protection Program (BZPP):** Under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the BZPP is flooding local jurisdictions with Big Brother surveillance technology such as night-vision cameras, facial-recognition technology, license-plate readers, traffic light camera video feeds, etc.
- **FLETC:** Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC), according to the FLETC website, "provide tuition-free and low cost training to state, local, campus, tribal and territorial law enforcement agencies. Programs are conducted across the United States and are normally hosted by a local law enforcement agency. Training is also conducted at FLETC facilities located in Glynnco (Brunswick), GA; Artesia, NM; Charleston, SC; and Cheltenham, MD."
- **Fusion centers:** According to DHS, "Fusion centers conduct analysis and facilitate information sharing, assisting law enforcement and homeland security partners in preventing, protecting against, and responding to crime and terrorism." By the end of 2012, the DHS had marked 1,849 locations scattered throughout the 50 states that would serve as regional surveillance collection centers. The DHS has spent many millions of dollars establishing these federal-local "collaborative" efforts. They have not exhibited a single terrorist caught during the program, though thwarting terrorism served as justification for the program.
- **1033 Program:** Section 1033 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 1997 gave the secretary of defense permanent authority to militarize local law enforcement by transferring war-fighting equipment — tanks, Humvees, MRAPs, Bearcats, Stingrays (for cellphone monitoring), full-auto rifles, grenade launchers, and more — to police, ostensibly to fight the "war on drugs" and "war on terrorism." This juicy carrot comes with the stick of federal training and monitoring. The same "progressives" who supported this militarization of the police now denounce this militarization of the police.

Recognizing the dangerous push to centralize our 16,000 local law-enforcement agencies into a national police force, The John Birch Society nearly 60 years ago launched a national network of Support Your



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Local Police (SYLP) committees to expose and oppose these unconstitutional, subversive efforts. Through billboards, bumper stickers, pamphlets, article reprints, and speaker programs, the program continues to proclaim the SYLP motto of “Support Your Local Police — and Keep Them Independent!”





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