



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 22, 2020

After New York City Disbands Plainclothes Anti-crime Unit, Shootings Surge

The New York Police Department (NYPD) moved to disband its precinct anti-crime teams on June 15, deploying about 600 mostly plainclothes officers to its detective, intelligence, and counterterrorism bureaus. Predictably, the elimination of this valuable anti-crime resource resulted in a rapid increase in shootings in the city.



The *New York Post* reported on June 19 that there had been 28 incidents and 38 victims reported since June 15 — a four-day period. By comparison, during the same period last year there were only 12 shootings for the entire week. The *Post* cited sources stating that the shooting spree included at least five murders.

Other New York news sources reported on the surge in shootings. The CBS TV station in the city (CBS2) reported on June 20 that the NYPD was investigating more than a dozen shootings that took place across New York City in just 24 hours. Since midnight on that day, six shootings had occurred in the Bronx, four in Brooklyn, two in Queens, and one in Manhattan.

Another report from NBC News in New York quoted NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea, who defended the reorganizations of the department, claiming that a de-escalation in the violence level of protests in the city will allow for more discussions about police reform.

“Thankfully, here in New York City, angry demonstrations have turned peaceful. Thoughtful discussions about reform have emerged,” Shea said at a June 15 news conference. “We welcome reform, but we also believe that meaningful reform starts from within.”

However, the rank-and-file police officers who must bear the burden of keeping the city safe have taken issue with the decision. Police Benevolent Association (PBA) President Pat Lynch criticized the reorganization.

“Anti-Crime’s mission was to protect New Yorkers by proactively preventing crime, especially gun violence,” Lynch said in a statement. “Shooting and murders are both climbing steadily upward, but our city leaders have decided that proactive policing isn’t a priority anymore. They chose this strategy. They will have to reckon with the consequences.”

NBC also quoted former NYPD Chief of Department Joe Esposito, who said it is a mistake to eliminate the anti-crime units.

“Anti-crime (police officers) are the crime fighters. These are the folks who get the guns off the street, who get the robbers while the robberies are happening,” Esposito said. “There is a price to pay here — we’re eliminating all the tools that got us to be the safest city in the county.”



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As chief, Esposito earned a reputation for being a no-nonsense leader, and in 2011 he directed the arrests of hundreds of Occupy Wall Street protesters during a march across the Brooklyn Bridge.

NBC reported that despite commissioner Shea's denial that the move was done as a response to national protests against the police, the decision unquestionably came after weeks of protests throughout the city and calls to reform the department. Of even greater significance, city officials recently announced their intention to cut the NYPD budget by \$1 billion.

Image: P_Wei/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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