



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 27, 2014

Report: Militarized Police Treating Citizens as “Wartime Enemies”

As the number of troop-heavy foreign interventions decreases, the warcraft and weaponry used in battle are now being deployed in neighborhoods as members and machines of law enforcement become increasingly indistinguishable from those of the military.



This is the situation as revealed in a new report published by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) entitled “War Comes Home: The Excessive Militarization of American Policing.”

“[A SWAT team blew a hole in my 2 year-old son](#)” is perhaps the best example of a headline announcing the horrific impact this conversion can have when left unchecked.

As [reported by The New American](#), a toddler is in a medically induced coma after a Cornelia, Georgia, SWAT team tossed a flash-bang grenade into his crib during the execution of a “no-knock” warrant.

Bounkham Phonesavanh is 19 months old and was asleep in his crib when police broke down the front door in the early morning hours on May 28 and threw the grenade into the front room. His mother, father, and three sisters were in the room as well.

Earlier this week, the baby’s mother, Alecia Phonesavanh, described the ordeal in detail, including the relevant account of the near fatal blurring of the line between soldier and cop:

Flashbang grenades were created for soldiers to use during battle. When they explode, the noise is so loud and the flash is so bright that anyone close by is temporarily blinded and deafened. It’s been three weeks since the flashbang exploded next to my sleeping baby, and he’s still covered in burns.

The ACLU provides a brief history of the creation and transformation of SWAT:

SWAT [Special Weapons And Tactics] teams were created in the late 1960s as “quasi-militaristic” squads capable of addressing serious and violent situations that presented imminent threats such as riots, barricade and hostage scenarios, and active shooter or sniper situations. The first SWAT team, at the Los Angeles Police Department, was developed in the wake of a series of emergency situations in which local police felt unable to respond as swiftly or as effectively as was necessary. SWAT teams have since expanded in number, and are used with greater frequency and, increasingly, for purposes for which they were not originally intended — overwhelmingly to serve search warrants in drug investigations.

In the case of Bounkham Phonesavanh, SWAT team members executed the no-knock warrant after receiving a tip from an informant that he had bought methamphetamine from a man named Wanis Thometheva earlier that day. Precisely the perversion of the power documented in the ACLU report.

“War Comes Home” observes 818 SWAT operations from July 2010 to October 2013. These operations were carried out by more than 20 law enforcement agencies in 11 states.

The 96-page report reveals that the increasingly militaristic police — forces equipped, trained, and



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often outfitted by the Pentagon — are behaving with a belligerence more at home on the battlefield in the face of an armed enemy than in neighborhoods while performing routine duties once accomplished with little more than a squad car and a badge.

The sources of the funds that equip formerly cash-strapped towns and cities are also covered in the ACLU report. As the organization writes:

Law enforcement agencies have become equipped to carry out these SWAT missions in part by federal programs such as the Department of Defense's 1033 Program, the Department of Homeland Security's grants to local law enforcement agencies, and the Department of Justice's Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program.

"Neighborhoods are not war zones, and our police officers should not be treating us like wartime enemies," the ACLU says.

The authors of the study recognize that their findings are not new, but only another brick of evidence in the wall of proof incriminating the police for treating Americans as suspects, rather than as fellow citizens.

"This report provides a snapshot of the realities of paramilitary policing, building on a body of existing work demonstrating that police militarization is a pervasive problem," the paper explains.

In order to combat the militarization of police, the report recommends more local oversight.

"Local police departments should develop their own internal policies calling for appropriate restraints on the use of SWAT and should avoid all training programs that encourage a 'warrior' mindset," the report suggests.

Finally, the ACLU report notes that "if the federal government gives the police a huge cache of military-style weaponry, they are highly likely to use it, even if they do not really need to."

This analysis of human nature is not unique to the ACLU. Another expert agrees: Jim Fitzgerald worked for eight years as a vice and narcotics squad detective in Newark, New Jersey, before joining the staff of The John Birch Society. He is point man for the conservative organization's "Support Your Local Police" initiative.

In an interview with *The New American*, Fitzgerald said there is "virtually no use" for the military-grade equipment being bought by local law enforcement with DHS grant money.

"The only reason to have this equipment is to use it," Fitzgerald said, and it is likely it would be used against local citizens who have risen up and created some sort of civil disorder.

Paradoxically, the police's push to be prepared and trained to quell civil unrest is fomenting the feelings that could create such an uprising. Americans are tired of reading reports of law enforcement behaving less like the police and more like the gestapo, less like servants of the law and more like servants of the state, deployed with the training, technology, tactics, and weapons capable of enforcing the increasingly unconstitutional edicts of the ruling regime.

Photo of SWAT team in Seattle: AP Images

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