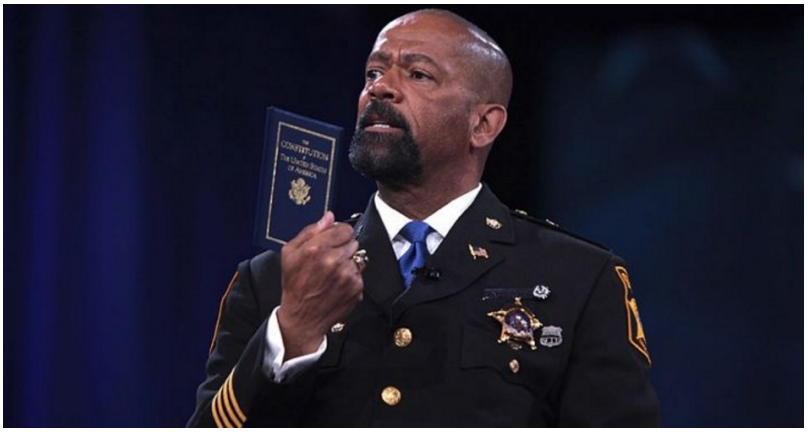
Written by **Steve Byas** on December 7, 2016

# Sheriff David Clarke Reportedly Considered for Homeland Security Chief



Amid reports that President-elect Donald Trump could appoint Milwaukee County (Wisconsin) Sheriff David Clarke as his director of Homeland Security, some of Clarke's past statements and publicly held positions on various issues can certainly be expected to provoke controversy.

Although Clarke is a registered Democrat in heavily Democratic Milwaukee County, he has often clashed with his fellow party members, including Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. Additionally, he has spoken at many Republican functions. In fact, Clarke declared during the 2016 presidential campaign that he would "do everything [he could]" to elect Donald Trump president, and he even gave a speech for him at the 2016 Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

Clarke has also been a vocal critic of prominent Democrat politicians, such as Attorney General Eric Holder, accusing him of "outright hostility" toward police in his testimony before the U.S. Senate's Judiciary Committee. Addtionally, Clarke once referred to Al Sharpton as "a charlatan." While an African American himself, Clarke has been a strong critic of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, labelling it "Black *Lies* Matter" and a hate group that could link up with ISIS. He has also specifically challenged the assertion that police officers are more likely to shoot black suspects than white suspects, citing a *Washington Post* study that concluded that less than four percent of fatal police shootings were of unarmed black people. In 75 percent of the cases cited by the *Post*, "police were under attack or defending someone who was."

In his forthcoming autobiography *Cop Under Fire*, scheduled for release in March, Clarke discusses the accusation that he does not believe there is police misconduct. He explains that "of course" he did not mean that "specific incidents don't ever happen across the country." Brutality, Clarke notes, "is defined as savage physical violence," and he contends that "police brutality is no longer systemic, nor is it condoned within our ranks." Rather, it is "episodic," he argues.

Conservatives would certainly have no problem with many of his public statements and positions, for instance his opposition to the Black Lives Matter organization and race hustlers such as Sharpton and Holder. And they would no doubt cheer his support for the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. Clarke has even recorded a series of radio advertisements arguing that citizens can no longer rely on the police for timely protection and should arm themselves. In one ad spot, he told his audience, "Your safety is no longer a spectator sport; I need you in the game, but are you ready? With officers laid

off and furloughed, simply calling 9-1-1 and waiting is no longer your best option. You can beg for safety from a violent criminal, hide under the bed, or you can fight back; but are you prepared? Consider taking a certified safety course in handling a firearm so you can defend yourself until we get there. You have a duty to protect yourself and your family. We're partners now. Can I count on you?"

"Gun free zones" are described as "killing fields" by Clarke. He advises businesses to take "No Firearms" signs out of their windows and off the front doors. But in the end, he says, private companies may do as they like. However, public spaces controlled by the government are a different matter, he declares. "If I want to go to a park, a public facility, the court house, or a state college campus, that's a different story," he says, arguing that such public sites should not be "gun free zones."

In reference to his party registration, Clarke explains, "I have never asked a person to vote for me because I run as a Democrat. I ask them to vote for me based on my 35-year commitment to keeping citizens safe. Most voters get it when it comes to public safety. There is no Democrat or Republican way to be a sheriff. The enemy is not the opposing party; the enemy is the criminal."

In his soon-to-be-released autobiography, Clarke asserts that American citizens suspected of terrorism should be treated as "enemy combatants." He laments that the U.S. government, by "organizing its counter-terrorism efforts domestically through the FBI," continues to use "a law-enforcement model organized around not taking action until evidence exists to make an arrest for prosecution. That is inefficient, ineffective and proven dangerous in its ability to stop terrorism on our home soil. We are at war. Homegrown radicalization has the enemy inside our borders. Islamist radicalized Americans are not criminals, they are enemy combatants. They should not be processed in our criminal justice system; they should be processed by military tribunals."

Clarke is a patriotic American who expresses a genuine concern about the threat of radical Islam, but these words also raise some legitimate questions. Just who would decide who is a terrorist or exactly what constitutes "Jihadi rhetoric?" Anyone could be designated an "enemy combatant" and denied due process, even detained indefinitely without trial. What if one day we have someone in the White House who decides Christians are potential terrorists because their Bible-based religious beliefs were not presently politically correct? What if a director of Homeland Security some time in the future is an anti-gun fanatic who considers that all members of the NRA or the Gun Owners of America are potential terrorists?

Clarke believes that federal agencies must share with local law enforcement any information they have on suspected terrorists in local communities, enabling those local police and sheriffs to better monitor such suspects. "I can guarantee you," he asserts, "that if something [bad] happens" inside Milwaukee County, people will say, "Sheriff Clarke let this happen."

We have already seen the political usage of the IRS by the Obama administration against conservative and Christian groups. Is it too much of a stretch to think the Department of Homeland Security could not also be used against political enemies, as well as actual terrorists?

Photo of David Clarke: Gage Skidmore