

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

http://original.antiwar.com/will_porter/2015/05/06/the-empire-comes-home/print/

The Empire Comes Home

By Will Porter

May 6, 2015

In mid-April, famed national security state journalist Glenn Greenwald gave a talk at the “Stop the Wars on Drugs and Terrorism” conference, held jointly at the University of Texas at Austin by the Future of Freedom Foundation and Young Americans for Liberty. In his speech, Greenwald made a point which, in light of recent events in Baltimore, cannot be emphasized enough. The war on terror, he said, *must eventually come home*. That is to say, perpetual warfare waged abroad will *always* creep back to the Homeland, manifesting on the domestic front in a number of alarming ways.

Perhaps the most blatant example of this phenomenon is the now-infamous “1033 program,” wherein civilian police departments procure heavy-duty military weapons and hardware from the Pentagon. This program was created by the National Defense Authorization Act of 1997 (an act whose more recent versions Americans are now familiar with) for the purpose of transferring excess military equipment to domestic police forces. In 1997 *alone* the Pentagon gave 1.2 million pieces of military hardware to local police departments. And while the idea of the 1033 is to provide law enforcement used equipment from past military conflagrations, the hardware received in that program, as well as in a separate DHS grant program, is often brand-new.

From mine-resistant armored personnel carriers, to fully-automatic MP5 submachine guns, to terrifying “acoustic cannons” straight out of an Orwellian nightmare, the American cop is now armed to the teeth, ready to wage a veritable war on innocents and criminals alike. (Note the illustrative marketing slogan given to H&K’s MP5: “From the Gulf War to the Drug War – battle

proven.”) Here, with the rapid militarization of police, the imperial warfare waged abroad blends seamlessly into domestic American society, finding a significant outlet in the War on Drugs. Indeed, it was the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), beginning in 1992, that beat the NSA to the punch with their own massive, bulk-collection surveillance program, targeting “virtually all” American telephone communications, as well as up to 116 foreign nations.

The Drug War, among many other things, offers police departments a limitless number of suspects and perps, many of whom are apprehended in the course of a “no-knock” raid. Once reserved for special circumstances and crimes-in-progress, hyper-weaponized SWAT teams now execute tens of thousands of no-knock drug raids each year. As a consequence of the Reagan Administration’s sharp escalation of the Drug War in the 1980s, the number of SWAT raids conducted each year in America continues to rise substantially. The early 80s saw about 3,000 SWAT raids annually, with around 30,000 in 1996, and up to 40,000 by 2001.

One might imagine that such aggressive tactics are reserved for only the most violent of suspects, yet an ever-greater proportion of no-knock SWAT raids are used to serve simple search warrants. All too many such raids end in the death of an innocent person, such as the case of seven year-old Aiyana Jones, who was fatally shot by a police officer in a botched SWAT raid on a Detroit residence in 2010. (An excellent interactive map which archives botched police raids can be found [here](#).)

Yet the now commonplace no-knock raid is only the beginning; in countless other ways the War on Terror is imported from the desert sands of the Middle East to the heart of American cities and suburbs. Local and federal police fly warrantless drones above American towns to survey, and spy on, citizens. The FBI baits Americans (often Arab or Muslim, some mentally handicapped) and entraps them in phony terrorist plots.

Cops train as if they were waging an ongoing war with urban guerillas, exemplified in the case of the LAPD receiving counterinsurgency training from the military (don’t worry, they returned the favor). Police continue to engage in “civil asset forfeiture” practices, which involve the outright theft of property considered “suspicious.” And outside of the typical SWAT raid, Americans are killed and brutalized on an almost daily basis during routine traffic stops and run-of-the-mill encounters with police.

According to some estimates, police officers in America take a life *every eight hours*, with over 100 police killings just in March of 2015. Despite such alarming figures, as well as high-profile cases such as that of Freddie Gray recently in Baltimore, or the Ferguson saga, accountability is almost nowhere to be found. Shortly after the murder of Michael Brown, there was much talk in Washington of a desire to cut back the rapid militarization of police, yet nothing happened.

Only a few weeks ago, police unions in Maryland joined hands to fight tooth-and-nail against a wave of police accountability reform bills. They prevailed. In fact, police departments not only politely resist greater accountability, they pout like children at the very prospect! Take the case of the NYPD threatening to cease – or at least slow down – carrying out their tax-funded job in order to teach some perverse lesson to the people they claim to protect (and who pay their salaries). While this ironically was a great relief for many New Yorkers, it’s increasingly obvious

that anything short of absolute sovereign impunity is unacceptable to America's new Warrior Cop.

The domestic effects of the global war state don't end with the police, either. On the economic front the wars take their toll as well. Economic historian Robert Higgs traces what he calls the "Ratchet Effect" in his book *Crisis and Leviathan*, which can be simply described as governments' tendency to usurp greater regulatory power during times of war. The increases in power often wane after the conflict, Higgs concedes, yet never return to prewar levels. Whether it is massive police abuse and unaccountability, ramped up domestic surveillance programs, greater governmental control of the private economy, or the general social degradation that accompanies all of the above, the American Empire has undoubtedly *come home*.

With Americans performing such ethical acrobatics as attempting to justify torture, it is no wonder why this continues to happen. War is the health of the state, and it is the disease of the body politic. It erodes the public morality, and in countless ways undermines the value of human life. For every anguished scream tortured out of a Middle Easterner in the name of American security, another American citizen will face the same treatment from the soldiers' counterpart in the Homeland. For every evil, for every depredation left in the wake of American military might abroad, the standards of human decency are diminished equally so at home. The welfare, warfare, and police states are inextricable, and so long as Americans fail to internalize that lesson, prospects for significant, far-reaching government accountability remain somewhat dim.