

# The Architecture of Domestic Repression in the United States

By [Donald Monaco](#)

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*Millions of Americans have awakened to the shocking realization that they are living in a veritable police state as they witness unarmed peaceful protesters for racial justice being confronted by a [militarized police force](#) replete with armored personnel carriers, assault rifles, submachine guns, flashbang grenades, pepper spray, rubber bullets, visor helmets, bulletproof vests and helicopters. More often than not, the force is deployed as a menacing phalanx armed to the teeth by the [Pentagon](#) for the purpose of suppressing protests. In recent years, the force has been used in [American ghettos](#) to quell a restive Black underclass. Today, it can be seen in the main thoroughfares, business districts and civic centers of prominent cities including the nation's capital where police and national guard units removed protesters from the gates of the White House on June 1 so that President Trump could pose for a photo opportunity in front of St. John's Episcopal Church. Not since U.S. troops under the command of **General Douglas MacArthur** cleared the bonus army of protesting World War I veterans from encampments during the 1930s or armed troops faced anti-Vietnam war protesters at the Pentagon during the 1960s has such a militarized show of force been displayed in Washington.*

As protesters demanding racial justice and an end to police brutality have taken to the streets in unprecedented numbers in response to police executions of **George Floyd**, **Breonna Taylor**, **Elijah McClain** and countless other black lives lost, instances of violent police tactics escalated. Thousands of peaceful protesters have been [arrested](#), detained and brutalized as demonstrators confront agents of the police state. Calls emerged to "defund" or "abolish" the police. Those demands will be ignored by state power. Systemic change will only come about when the very state that deploys police forces is itself abolished and replaced by a socialist democracy.

Image on the right: Brutal: A Minnesota police officer sprays protesters with pepper spray at the weekend (Source: Morning Star)



To accomplish this daunting task, a sustained social struggle that has as its goal

revolutionary transformation of the American terror state will be needed. Anything short of this aim will only produce superficial reforms that will leave America's predatory imperialist system intact. A revolutionary movement requires leadership. None exists in the United States with any influence with the American population. The goal of the U.S. government will be to ensure that a condition of political isolation and fragmentation persists among the working class and the poor.

Any transformative social movement that may emerge from the ongoing anti-racist protests will face a repressive apparatus of Orwellian proportions.

The physical architecture of the repressive apparatus includes a militarized police force that is linked to a vast prison-industrial gulag. Surplus weaponry of the U.S. imperialist war machine used for decades to kill the poor inhabitants of third world countries has come home to the shores of America. Police forces across the country have been equipped with advanced military weapons designed for war zones, including [13,000 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected \(MRAP\)](#) tactical vehicles. The armored vehicles were developed in Iraq as a response to the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by resistance forces. They were also deployed in Afghanistan. The vehicles cost between \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 per carrier. The Defense Logistics Agency has calculated that the Pentagon practice of giving unused military weaponry to police departments has cost [\\$7.4 Billion](#) since 1997. The U.S. militarized police force is only one part of the state's architecture of repression.

The national security autocracy is another. The structure of the national security autocracy consists of the president, the secretaries of State and Defense, National Security Council, Joint Chiefs of Staff and 16 intelligence agencies, the most prominent of which are the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Agency (NSA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The national security autocracy is supplanted by a [privatized intelligence network](#) so vast as to defy description.

Since 9/11, the architecture of domestic repression has been expanded and merged with domestic law enforcement and the military through the creation of the [Department of Homeland Security](#), [FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces](#), [Fusion Centers](#), [FEMA Detention Camps](#), [Northcom](#) (U.S. Military Northern Command) and a privatized [American intelligence network](#).

The privatized American intelligence network is so extensive that over 250,000 private contractors are working in approximately 2,000 companies and 1,200 government organizations on top secret security programs in 10,000 locations across the country. And this may only be the tip of the private covert intelligence iceberg.

The [NSA](#) can now monitor any phone conversation, email message, website visit, social network interaction, text message, or online book purchase in the country. Privacy has been destroyed in the United States as an expansive [National security autocracy](#) augments the militarized police state. And the security apparatus has been actively involved in coordinating the repression of [Black Lives Matter](#) and anti-racist protests across the nation.

Ominously, the [Department of Homeland Security](#) has warned that the George Floyd protests could be infiltrated by "domestic terrorists", meaning anarchist groups such as Antifa. The warning follows an accusation by President Trump and Attorney General William Barr that blamed Antifa and other left-wing groups for instigating violent protests. Trump also threatened to label Antifa a "[domestic terrorist organization](#)." Following Trump's lead,

Barr stated that the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Forces would coordinate police activity aimed at finding and arresting violent protesters.

The designation used by DHS to identify members of Antifa as "domestic terrorists" is their classification as "anarchist extremists." According to bureaucrats at DHS, anarchist extremists are those individuals who oppose capitalism, globalization, and U.S. government institutions. Anti-capitalists, anti-globalists and anti-imperialists can now be targeted by DHS as "extremists" allowing the U.S. government to proscribe political belief, association and activity.

There is ample precedent for DHS involvement in domestic repression. [Extensive documentation](#) has revealed that the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security and local police forces coordinated the violent repression of Occupy Wall Street. The protest movement was targeted as a criminal and terrorist threat. This is not surprising as post-9/11 anti-terrorist legislation such as the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 expanded the definition of terrorism so broadly as to criminalize political dissent.

Occupy activists were arrested, held in detention for hours on end without access to lawyers, violently assaulted by police forces, beaten, tear gassed, secretly infiltrated and surveilled. Information gathered by police about protesters was funneled to Fusion Centers and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces.

The FBI has a sordid history of domestic political repression that culminated in the Cointelpro program from 1956 until 1971. The covert program was used against domestic political dissidents involved in civil rights, anti-war, feminist, Black liberation, Native American and anti-colonialist movements of the 1960s. The program was revealed by courageous anti-war activists who stole files from an FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania in 1971 that were published in the underground press. Revelations of FBI Cointelpro helped build public opposition to illegal government activity. The disclosures forced Congress to investigate the role of intelligence agencies in suppressing social rebellion during the turbulent era of the 1960s.

In 1976, **Senator Frank Church** chaired the [United States Senate Select Committee to Study Government Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities](#). The Church Committee found extensive violations of civil liberties by the U.S. intelligence community and proposed restrictions on the domestic activities of intelligence agencies that were not adopted by Congress. Public outcry to the findings of the Church Committee pressured President Ford's **Attorney General Edward Levi** to issue internal restrictions on the FBI that prevented the agency from investigating individuals engaged in constitutionally protected political activity. Those restrictions were swept away after the terrorist attacks of [September 11, 2001](#) by Bush's **Attorney General John Ashcroft**.

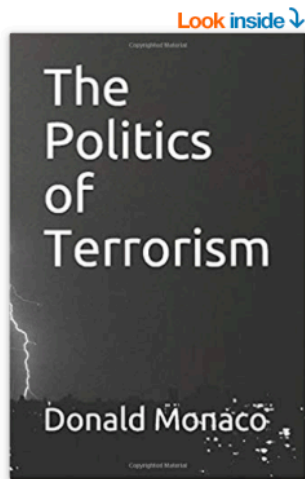
The continued integration of the U.S. military/security/intelligence apparatus with a militarized police state bodes ill for emerging social movements that are fractured by the identity politics of the Democratic party and the liberal left in America. Until and unless a politics of solidarity coalesces to confront the systemic and institutional crisis of imperialistic capitalism and the military/industrial/security complex that protects the American plutocracy, the social forces needed to defeat racism and class oppression will be repressed and diverted into the cage of electoral politics with promises of transient reform.

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by [Donald Monaco](#) (Author)

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