

***Police Militarization in America:
The Land of the Free and the Home of Contradictions***

VICTORIA FERRARA¹

In many ways, America has become the land of the free and the home of contradictions. In his 1796 Farewell Address, George Washington warned Americans about becoming involved in foreign entanglements. However, as time passed, America has found itself involved in foreign affairs around the globe. Many nations today view the United States as the police power of the world, yet at one time in history, the American inhabitants feared the use of the militia.

When establishing the nations' foundation, the Founding Fathers had a strong aversion to creating a powerful military presence in the country. They wanted to avoid a situation that resembled colonial America on the cusp of its revolution: "Two important government functions described in the Constitution are to 'provide for the common defense' and 'insure domestic Tranquility.' The military and local police are two of the most commonly used forces the government maintains to fulfill those roles" (Bianco and Canon, 2011, p.6). In order to avoid instilling fear in the citizens, careful procedures were put in place to ensure that the military was only called forth on occasions when their services were needed.

A look at the current situation in America reveals the opposite of what the Founding Fathers intended. Just as the advice of George Washington was neglected, the concerns of a military presence in America have been neglected as well. Following the lead set by the military, the police presence in the United States has come to resemble a violent military force in itself. From the gear on the officers, the weapons they are equipped with, and the violent raids they conduct, everything about modern policing techniques violates the intentions of the American founders as set forth in the Constitution. The Fourth Amendment offers protection against unreasonable search and seizure, and the Eighth Amendment explicitly prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. An exploration into the development of police forces in this country is a historical journey that depicts how we, as a nation, have abandoned values that once defined this country.

I did not choose the issue of police militarization because of its prominence in the news, but because unfortunately, a new age is upon America. Power that was once retained by the people is now being placed in the hands of a higher authority. As I continue to grow older, I see a major discrepancy between the country I learned about in revolutionary American history classes and the country that I have called home for the past 22 years of my life. My fears as a child were always quelled by the idea that there were people to keep me safe. Certainly, the government and the police would never let anything bad happen to good people. However, I am reluctantly confronting the truth surrounding recent issues. The news and current events tell a different story than the one I have been

¹ Victoria Ferrara graduated from Ramapo College of New Jersey in 2015 and is currently pursuing a Master's degree at New York University. This was her senior thesis in law and society.

hearing throughout my school years. Therefore, through this paper, I launch my own investigation on the issue of police militarization in the United States, and seek to understand what happened from 1787 to 2015 to land us in our current position.

My initial research already revealed information that confirmed my fears: “The relationship between government and the defense industry is unmistakable. The Center for Investigative Reporting found in 2011 that more than \$34 billion in federal grants have gone to stocking police forces with tanks, riot gear, and assault weapons” (Prupis, 2014). I worry about the future of a country where the people I entrust to keep me safe are sponsoring a militarized police force that perpetuates violence. My government assumes it is contributing towards the safety of its people, but in reality this astronomical budget spurs the injustice it claims it wants to eradicate. Police militarization has led to increased violence surrounding counterterrorism and anti-drug movements. It has distanced community members from authority, fueled racism, and negatively distorted the attitude police officers have towards their role in society. I genuinely worry about living in a country that sacrifices morality for brutality, and civil liberties for civil disorder.

The imperfections in police militarization are not recent phenomena. Each era in United States history has posed challenges of how to best maintain the safety and protection of the people. The irony is that the goal of the police is to protect the rights of citizens, while in reality, the police has come to violate those same rights. Despite the increasing trend of violence in recent police-civilian encounters, the militarization of the police is a process that has been a concern for decades. The 19th century, Progressive Era, civil rights movement, War on Drugs, and more recent events have all contributed new findings about military police forces and their consequences in society. In order to understand the negative consequences this social movement has had, and continues to have, it is important to discover the driving forces behind its existence.

In writing, the United States preaches freedom and equality, but in practice it demonstrates the opposite. The recent murders of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, along with lesser-known tragedies, have brought the issue back in the spotlight with more force than ever. The Drug Policy Alliance found that African Americans, who represent 13 percent of the U.S. population, “proportionately account for 13 percent of the nation’s drug users, but are 34 percent of those arrested for drug offenses and 45 percent of those held in state prisons for drug offenses.” Disparities such as these run rampant. The nation is now confronted with the challenge of how to end police militarization to redeem American principles of equality.

Recent events have spurred greater conversation by the United States government on how to confront the matter. Implementing solutions would involve reducing federal aid that contributes to increased violence, improving the tracking of aid offered to police forces, providing better training to police forces, and developing a more stable attitude in police officers towards the citizens they aim to protect. Each of these potential solutions would pose a threat to the current system and the people it benefits. However, the concern may no longer be the population at large. A militarized police force in itself can hardly be

representative of a democratic government. The most important aspect of being an American is having an active voice in the government. Years ago the people feared a military presence and the government responded to that voice. Unfortunately, now the very force aiming to enforce laws that protect that voice has carelessly stifled the voice of the people.

Revolutionary revelations

“Standing armies in time of peace are inconsistent with the principles of republican governments, dangerous to the liberties of a free people, and generally converted into destructive engines for establishing despotism” (Walker, 2010, pp. 54-57). This quote from Eldbridge Gerry captures the attitude of many Americans shortly after the war fought with Great Britain. The establishment of a Constitution represented the first paramount challenge the United States faced as an independent nation, and its ratification proved an even more difficult feat. Federalists and Anti-federalists stood divided on many issues, particularly the amount of power that would be placed in the hands of a central government. Without a method to safeguard citizens from the control of an all-powerful government, the Anti-federalists were hesitant to ratify the original Constitution. Several amendments were later added and became known as the Bill of Rights, a comprehensive list of freedoms that include many indications of the colonists’ attitude towards a violent presence in the new nation.

The Second Amendment, as ambiguous as it is, provides for a well-regulated militia and the right of the people to bear arms. Although its modern definition has come to be understood as an individual right to bear arms, I focus here on its connections to the issue of the militarization of the police. As Maier pointed out, “there were no professional police forces in the eighteenth century. Instead, the power of government depended upon traditional institutions like the ‘hue and cry’, by which the community in general rose to apprehend felons ... Where greater and more organized support was needed, the magistrates could call out the militia” (Maier, 1972, p. 17).

With these provisions in place, the shortcomings of the militia become rather evident. “These law enforcement mechanisms, of course, left magistrates virtually helpless whenever a large segment of the population was immediately involved in the disorder, or when the community had a strong sympathy for the rioters” (Maier, 1972, p. 17). Therefore, the Second Amendment was included in the Bill of Rights to protect the people’s life, liberty, and property and perhaps to protect them from their own government. If the government itself failed to provide the necessary protection, then it would be left to the citizens to do so for themselves.

Should the traditional ‘hue and cry’ or militia fail, there was always the possibility of deploying the troops:

But since all Englishmen had shared a fear of standing armies, the deployment of troops had always been a sensitive and carefully limited recourse. Military and civil spheres of authority were rigidly separated, as was clear to Sir Jeffrey Amherst, who refused to use soldiers against anti-military rioters at Philadelphia in 1759 and 1760 because that function was

‘entirely foreign to their command and belongs of right to none but the civil power. (Maier, 1972, p. 18)

Not surprisingly, the colonists adopted the fear of standing armies as well. “The presence of British regular troops was a constant reminder of the colonists’ subservience to the crown” (Library of Congress). When the Revolutionary War was inevitably fought, the quartering of British soldiers brought the presence of troops into colonists’ homes. When writing the Constitution and adding amendments for its ratification, the Third Amendment prohibited the quartering of troops during peacetime without the consent of the owner. This measure aimed to protect the liberty and property of the new American citizens. It created an appropriate separation between the military and civil spheres to avoid further conflict. Although quartering of troops is not a constitutional issue weighed with as much importance as the Second Amendment, it shows the Framers’ fears about the presence of a standing army.

The Fourth and Eighth Amendments are also important in terms of protecting citizens from a higher authority. The Fourth Amendment protects citizens from unreasonable searches and seizures, while the Eighth Amendment protects against cruel and unusual punishment. Understanding the ability of the all-powerful British government to take action without justification, some of the Framers wanted to ensure that the Constitution would provide protections against these behaviors. However, the Fourth Amendment includes the need to obtain a warrant and a systematic means for obtaining the warrant. The Eighth Amendment is more ambiguous, with few specifications of what constitutes cruel and unusual punishment. Regardless, the framers did not want Americans to be abused, mistreated, or taken advantage of by their own government.

Whether considered together or separately, the Second, Third, Fourth, and Eighth Amendments demonstrate the emphasis the founders placed on protecting the civil liberties of American colonists. It also shows the efforts made to defend the values of life, liberty, and property that were cited throughout the revolution. However, there are less commonly known efforts that translated into legislation that deal more directly with the issue of regulating the presence of military forces. The fear of a standing army did not end at the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. In fact, at that time it had really just begun. As a brand-new nation in the process of formulating and perfecting a government system, the question of how to limit the presence of a standing army fell within the jurisdiction of the new government.

Under the Articles of Confederation, each state was an independent unit with its own militia and governor as commander-in-chief. However, the Articles’ provisions fell short. “The Articles of Confederation placed a specific requirement on the individual states to maintain a militia in readiness; and there was no way short of congressional debate and vote to get the state militias to respond to a national emergency” (Walker, 2010, pp. 54-57). This flaw was highlighted by Shay’s Rebellion, a series of uprisings that pushed government leaders to revise the Articles. Without a strong, national government to address national crises, the United States would be bound for failure.

The Constitution laid the groundwork for how the military would be called upon by bestowing powers on Congress in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution. However, the ability to call upon the militia has come to be shared by both Congress and the President: Congress had made provisions for calling forth the militia by giving the job away. Congress made similar provisions for the militia as additions to bills in 1790 and 1791, and finally in 1792 two bills worked their way through Congress addressing its constitutional mandate with respect to the militia. The Congress' decision regarding how to share this power has greatly influenced the direction of the United States. "A nation that at its outset feared forming a standing Army, because of the despotic power such an Army might give the chief executive, now permits the president to summon to active service up to one million personnel just by declaring an emergency" (Walker, 2010, pp. 54-57).

Although there were no police forces in the eighteenth century, the revolutionary period is critical to grasping how and why police forces have evolved. Laws in England and America before the existence of police forces shared many similarities with regard to the utilization of troops and violence. In England, laws were specific enough to define what types of bodies and units could use force and which could not.

The precise legal offense lay not so much in the purpose of the uprising as in its use of force and violence, 'wherein the Law does not allow the Use of such Force'. Such unlawful assumptions of force were carefully distinguished by commentators upon the common law from other occasions on which the law authorized a use of popular force. It was, for example, legal for popular force to be used by a sheriff, a constable, 'or perhaps even... a private Person' who assembled 'a competent Number of People, in Order with Force to suppress Rebels, or Enemies, or Rioters...' (Maier, 1972, p. 19).

In America today, the use of violent force by police departments is being condoned. Looking at the country now, it is difficult to believe that there was ever a fear of large standing armies, since police forces themselves have transformed into one. Common knowledge and history reveal to us that during times of war, civil liberties are stripped from the public in order to preserve the well-being of the population at large. Therefore, as both history and the corresponding timeline presented in this research unfold, it becomes clear that the civil liberties established during the revolutionary period have slowly been masked by the phenomenon of "police militarization."

May the force be with you: the establishment of the first police force and its historical development

With the establishment of the Constitution, the nation began to develop independently of Britain. However, the British influence did not fade when the war ended. The development of America's first police force itself was modeled after England. It is first necessary to explain how and why there came to be a need for a police force, and what the intended role of this police force would be. Although America vowed, through legal discourse, to carefully implement and

utilize the violent forces available to it, countless unpredictable social changes occurred that called for solutions to be developed quickly, not thoughtfully.

As America developed, separate regions of the country developed their own unique cultures as well. The North and South both became booming economic centers, but for quite opposite reasons. The North was an urban center that based its economy on manufacturing and industrialization, while the South was a rural economy based on farming and an agrarian way of living. Two opposite cultures proved to have different needs when it came to social control. With a denser and more heavily populated area, the North organized night watch patrols to combat high crime rates in the cities, while the South formed slave patrols to maintain order and structure amongst rebellious slaves. These informal patrols constitute some of the original methods of social control in the 18th and 19th centuries. “Since the watch groups could no longer cope with this change in the social climate, more formalized means of policing began to take shape” (Archbold, 2013, p. 4). With the passage of time, it had become evident that improvements needed to be made to the status quo. These improvements came in the form of creating a unified, systematic form of social control that would operate similarly despite location or culture.

Another issue during the early 19th century that demonstrated the need for better social control was immigration. The addition of different cultures, ethnicities, and races in America only added fuel to the fire that had already ignited between blacks and whites. Immigration was a substantial contributor to the heightening cultural and social tensions arising: “In the 1820s, nearly 150,000 European immigrants arrived; in the 1830s, nearly 600,000; by the 1840s, nearly 1.7 million; and during the 1850s, the greatest influx of immigrants in American history—approximately 2.6 million—came to the United States” (AP U.S. History Notes).

Economically, people were drawn to the job opportunities presented in America during the rapid period of industrialization. Less than 50 years into its existence, America had already begun to appeal to foreigners because of the principles and freedoms established in the Constitution. They were especially appealing to the Germans, who were escaping persecution and violent revolutions in their home nation.

Although reasons for coming to America were held in common by descendants of all cultures, harmony did not characterize the relationships that developed once they settled together in their new country. Cities were centers of industry and battlefields of conflict. “Race riots were common between the Irish and the free African Americans who competed for the same low-status jobs” (AP U.S. History Notes). In order to maintain peace and calm the inevitable chaos that ensued in the cities, a force greater than a volunteer patrol was needed. The first police force formed in 1845 to compensate for the new challenges and threats posed to America.

The Constitution did not provide for a police force. Just as the United States had adopted a government from Great Britain, they also adopted ideas for a police force from their parent country. Sir Robert Peel of London, who expressed a genuine concern over the worsening conditions in the city, set forth the idea. Cities, across time and space, have continually represented

overwhelming concentrations of mass heterogeneous populations, making them breeding grounds for crime.

In order to improve the city conditions of the 19th century, Peel acknowledged the dilemma of utilizing too much force. “Peel was sensitive to concerns about standing armies, but he also believed that a successful police force would need at least some of the structure and discipline of a military influence” (Balko, 2013, p.30). Peel was also aware of the potential consequences of an overpowering military. “Peel recognized the ineffectiveness of the repeated use of military force to preserve order, for the traditional dependence on ‘the frequent use of soldiers in that manner made the people look upon them as their adversaries rather than their protectors’” (Monkkonen, 1981, p.38). However, he still understood the importance of a strong police presence: “The idea was that citizens would think twice about committing crimes if they noticed a strong police presence in their community. This approach to policing would be vastly different from the early watch groups that patrolled the streets in an unorganized and erratic manner” (Archbold, 2013, p. 6). Now known as community policing, this approach has been proven to be the most effective method of policing. Peel felt strongly that the presence of police in the community would not only deter crime, but allow civilians to naturally form pleasant relationships with the officers destined to protect them.

Although Peel’s initial concerns about a military presence in the police had some validity, it was not a major cause of concern in the 19th century. What did become a major cause of concern was the lack of professionalism of the police, as the early watch groups had not conducted themselves in a way that was conducive to fulfilling Peel’s mission. There were several factors that revealed the unprofessionalism of the police. In a way, community policing gave the public access to seeing a majority of these flaws first hand: “The authority for policing was decentralized to the level of political wards and neighborhoods, which developed relatively autonomous police units. The police established intimate relations with neighborhoods and neighborhood leaders and initially did not even wear uniforms” (Whetstone, 2015).

Although the laid-back nature of the police was structured to facilitate a smooth installment of these forces, the informalities and lack of professionalism outweighed the projected benefits. People were able to detect the heavy involvement of politics in the position. The police force functioned on favoritism and bias, causing concern for those who sought to eliminate corruption from the institution. Additionally, “the relationship between the police and local politicians was reciprocal in nature: politicians hired and retained police officers as a means to maintain their political power, and in return for employment, police officers would help politicians stay in office by encouraging citizens to vote for them” (Archbold, 2013, p.6). The solution to this problem came from August Vollmer, a leading figure in the development of criminal justice: “Through the adoption of best practices, [administrators] successfully transformed the job of police officer from a perk of patronage to a formal profession with its own standards, specialized knowledge, and higher personnel standards and entry requirements” (Balko, 2013, p. 31).

Suddenly, there were educational components to be met, civil service

exams to be passed, and uniforms that were required to be worn. At the time when Vollmer's changes came to be implemented in local police forces, there was a huge emphasis on effective training as a safeguard to ensure that only quality men could achieve the rank of police officer. "Vollmer rose to prominence for his requirement that prospective police officers pursue a college education in an era when a high school diploma was not even required by most departments. Vollmer set up the first formal training school for policemen in 1908 and over the following decade, departments in New York City, Detroit, and Philadelphia established similar training academies" (Roth, 2005, p.207).

Prior to the onset of Vollmer's changes, it had become clear that police forces lacking professionalism were rather ineffective at exercising the level of social control that was necessary at the time. Disturbingly enough, the 'fear of standing armies' mentality proved to be ineffective for dealing with the social uprisings of the 19th century as well.

A decade after the New York police had been unified and uniformed, the draft riot of 1863 erupted. This riot, often cited as an example of successful police protection of blacks from hostile Irish rioters, in fact demonstrated the inability of the New York Metropolitan Police to control determined rioters. The riot continued until the army successfully quelled it. The police, although relatively well organized and coordinated, and demonstrating remarkable discipline, simply lacked the power and tactics necessary to win. (Monkkonen, 1981, p.37)

This outbreak served as a test to measure the progress of the police concept in the 20 years since its formation. After this experience, improvements still needed to be made. The success of the army in the riot left little room to deny the power that the military had over the police. The early failures and shortcomings of the police started the beginnings of militarization. This riot, and subsequent experiences that mimicked it, revealed the effectiveness of authoritative power and violence for social control.

Less than one hundred years after the American Revolution, the ideology towards standing armies had already changed. In the process of protecting the peace and ensuring the continuation of its growth, the nation sacrificed a principle that had been critical to its beginnings. America, once fearful of a growing disconnect between the people and its government, had rapidly begun to endorse police militarization for its preservation. The history that unfolds hereinafter is a story that depicts more than just a slow disintegration of a widely held belief during the American Revolution. It tells a story of a country that often has its people and its government pitted against one another.

Progressing or regressing? The Progressive Era (1890-1920s)

The Progressive Era in the United States (1890s-1920s) was marked by efforts to continue developments begun under August Vollmer. Recent history and rapid social changes at the time made it evident that both a powerful and professional police force would be necessary to combat crime. These powerful forces, however, slowly evolved into forces that even the wildest imagination

could not have devised in previous decades.

Several failed efforts to implement effective policing tactics motivated the United States to try something new. Without a quick resolution, the country feared slipping back into a state of chaos. At this time, more than ever, showing the public that everything was under control was more important than admitting shortcomings. A ray of hope revealed itself in the form of a revamped state police. “A new era of state policing was launched in 1905 with the creation of the Pennsylvania State Police. Following a half -century of rural crime, industrial disorder, and ethnic conflict, widespread labor strikes continued to paralyze the Pennsylvania economy. In 1902, Pennsylvania took steps toward creating a state police force based on the Royal Irish Constabulary and Philippines Constabulary military models” (Roth, 2005, p.209).

State police forces would therefore be modeled after military structures: “Under the command of a Spanish-American War veteran, the 220-man force was selected from the ranks of the armed forces and required to be unmarried and live in barracks. [They were] mounted on horses, and equipped with carbines, pistols, and riot batons” (Roth, 2005, p.209). This type of police force was equipped to handle the labor riots that dominated the early 1900s in America. Local police forces were ill equipped to handle riots without the weaponry possessed by state police forces. And as riots faded, new matters came to be under the jurisdiction of the state police, reinforcing the military mindset.

During January of 1920, the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol became illegal in the United States under the 18th Amendment. The purpose of its passage was to encourage abstinence and protect American families from the harmful effects of alcohol. Motivations for the movement stemmed from intense religious revivalism in the 1820s and 1830s, which state legislatures belatedly addressed at the turn of the 19th century. Prohibition was inevitably repealed due to the overwhelming public outcry against its existence and its harmful, unintended consequences. However, during the thirteen years it was in effect, it presented police forces with obstacles to overcome. “For many authorities the hopelessness of trying to keep the nation dry became apparent” (Heary, 2014, p.123). Prohibition was passed with the high hopes of completely eliminating drunkenness and the-accompanying misbehaviors, but ultimately it led to less than desirable results. The actual outcome could be described as a microcosm of police militarization itself.

The effects of Prohibition characterized the lawlessness of the 1920s and 1930s. They included, but were not limited to, increases in gang activity, unemployment due to the elimination of legal jobs, black market activity such as the formation of illegal speakeasies, and an overall increase in violent crime. “At the start of prohibition it seemed the ban on alcohol was working, with a fall in the rate of drunkenness and a decrease in crimes in large cities. But, as the years passed, prohibition saw an estimated increase of 561 per cent in federal convictions” (Heary, 2014, p.123).

The public did not support enforcing the Prohibition. “In the early 1920s, public sentiment favored enforcement, but with the growing corruption and crime, public opinion changed, and in 1930 a poll of five million people found only 10.5% in favor of enforcement” (Roth, 2005, p.230). In an effort to appease

the public and end the chaos that had accompanied Prohibition, the laws were repealed in 1933, never to be reinstated.

Simultaneously during this time period, race began to play more of a role in the relationships between police officers and civilians. After the conclusion of the Civil War, despite efforts made by the Civil War Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, “African Americans faced disenfranchisement and discrimination throughout the country, as they found themselves excluded by employers and labor unions from white-collar jobs and many of the skilled trades” (Roth, 2005, p.215). Riots typically erupted between whites and blacks living within close proximity to one another. Whites desperately clung to their white privilege and expressed their dissatisfaction with blacks living and working in their communities. Blacks fought back for equal opportunities. Eventually, violence heavily dominated race riots. Blacks were fighting white power with both fists and weapons.

To improve conditions and find out a way to end the violence following a series of catastrophic Chicago race riots, “the Commission on Race Relations was created in 1922 to investigate the causes of the riots and to seek solutions for preventing future conflagrations. The formation of this commission signaled a new element in criminal justice: commissions to study the reasons for race riots” (Roth, 2005, p. 215). Beneficial for their efforts to understand riots without retaliating with violence, commissions became more popular in the following years. It was not until the 1960s, however, that unprecedented violence by the police forces had an impact on race relations in the United States.

The Progressive Era, including Prohibition, race relations, and the onset of the Great Depression all had fatal consequences for police forces. “This era proved one of the deadliest for peace officers, with an average of 169 killed in the 1920s and 165 per year in the 1930s” (Roth, 2005, p.239). Gang violence during the Progressive era knew no bounds, and officers were pitted against the civilians they were in charge of protecting. However, with violence escalating quickly, police felt as if they were given very few alternatives to counteract the negative responses from the public. Compared to the weaponry of gangs and the violent tendencies of public uproars, they were lagging behind. As the Progressive Era came to a close, it became evident that the police would declare war.

Blue blood brutality: race relations in the 1960s

During the 1960s, many people felt that they were on the cusp of a golden age unfolding in America. The horrors of the Great Depression and World War World II appeared to be long behind the United States, which had recently emerged as a major world superpower following the war. The election of President John F. Kennedy restored hope that American values would be brought to the forefront. “Kennedy had promised the most ambitious domestic agenda since the New Deal: the “New Frontier,” a package of laws and reforms that sought to eliminate injustice and inequality in the United States” (History.com). Unfortunately, the hopes and promises of the Kennedy era never materialized, and American progress regarding racial relations lagged far behind where it should have been one century after the emancipation of the slaves and the conclusion of a deadly Civil War.

The 1960s are considered the beginning of the civil rights movement, gay rights movement, women's rights movement, and the protest against Vietnam. However, for the purpose of arguing that race relationships are indicative of police violence, the civil rights movement will be the focal point for exploring the 1960s and police militarization.

Before 1964, the federal government was not heavily involved in the civil rights struggle: "In general, the federal government stayed out of the civil rights struggle until 1964, when President Johnson pushed a Civil Rights Act through Congress that prohibited discrimination in public places, gave the Justice Department permission to sue states that discriminated against women and minorities and promised equal opportunities in the workplace to all" (History.com). Of course, this legislation did not pass easily, as a racist ideology dominated at the time. Still, these laws did not solve the problems facing African Americans: "They did not eliminate racism or poverty and they did not improve the conditions in many black urban neighborhoods. Many black leaders began to rethink their goals, and some embraced a more militant ideology of separatism and self-defense" (History.com).

It was the 1960s that nudged the United States toward more militaristic policing: "middle America began to fear crime as never before. Much of white, middle-class America spent five nights watching their TV's as black people looted and burned their own neighborhoods" (Balko, 2013, p.52). With the rising safety concerns for ordinary, middle-class citizens, and the unpredictable nature of these riots, police departments nationwide were forced to reevaluate strategies to stop the outbursts and respond to militant African American groups such as the Black Panthers. The general consensus was that the current tactics were inadequate, and that somehow, more needed to be done. The US war in Vietnam, at the time, was the perfect place to draw motivation.

Random chaos was an element defining the 1960s. Rioters were constantly combating police efforts with newer forms of violence, oftentimes faster than the police could come up with a valid defense. LAPD inspector Daryl Gates writes in his autobiography: "We were constantly ducking bottles, rocks, knives, and Molotov cocktails... Guns were pointed out of second-story windows, random shots fired. It was random chaos, in small disparate patches" (Balko, 2013, p. 53). After much contemplation, Gates decided the best defense was a strong offense. Consulting the US military, who were at that time pursuing a guerilla warfare strategy in Vietnam, Gates eventually created a segment of police that were similar to the military. This force was called the Special Weapons and Tactics, or SWAT team, although Gates preferred the name Special Weapons Attack Team. The word "attack" made some elected officials uncomfortable, so the end result was Special Weapons and Tactics, which sounded less aggressive (Haberman, 2014). Despite the insignificant change in the name, the SWAT teams carried out duties that were nothing short of aggressive.

SWAT teams did not play as active of a role in the 1960s as they do in the modern era. Their first deployment was not until 1969, in Los Angeles, California. They were sent to the Black Panther headquarters where, typically for SWAT raids, the operation did not go as planned: "The Panthers opened fire and drove the SWAT team out of the building, beginning a three-hour standoff in which

over 5,000 rounds of ammunition were fired” (Payne, 2015). The Black Panthers were a group of blacks that practiced militant self-defense against the US government. Their very existence was a threat to police officers and white individuals, and police responded to this threat with more violence.

Following the implementation of SWAT teams and the start of the 1960s, much research was conducted on the effectiveness of countering violence with violence. Leading civil rights leaders at the time advocated different strategies for achieving political and social equality for blacks. Unlike the Black Panthers, Martin Luther King Jr. led peaceful protests to make a powerful statement against the use of violence in the civil rights movement. Despite his efforts, violence still ensued. During the historic Selma-to-Montgomery March for voting rights, peaceful protestors made it only six blocks into the route before state and local police officers attacked them with clubs and tear gas. These police actions went above and beyond the call of duty. Although police did try to establish a powerful presence to prevent outbreaks of violence, the police initiated violence towards peaceful protestors and violated several constitutional amendments, including the First Amendment, Fifth Amendment, and Thirteenth Amendment.

The police forces who were meant to protect the people from discrimination had done the exact opposite. When Gates sought advice from the military on how to revamp policing techniques, he was beginning a legacy of police militarization that would continue well into the modern day. The consequences have been tremendous and irreversible. Even if militarization is supported by many leading police figures, research has shown that “high levels of direct repression will not only be ineffective at quelling riots but may in fact be escalatory, worsening an already volatile situation... this counterproductive inflammatory effect seems most likely to occur, namely (a) when repression is excessive and/or racially selective, (b) when police have poor training in crowd control, and (c) when police-community relations are strained or lacking in formal connections and channels for feedback” (Perez et al, 2003, p.155). With this type of research available, the continuation of police militarization has no logical explanation.

During the 1960s, the police were clear instigators of violent behavior. Whether regarding the militaristic Black Panthers, or the peaceful marches of Martin Luther King and his followers, violence was employed as a form of social control. Most disturbing is the fact that the First Amendment grants the right to peaceful assembly, but because of the color of their skin, African Americans were forcefully prevented from exercising that right, along with many others. Unfortunately, in subsequent years, although legislation had inevitably been passed to equalize the playing field between blacks and whites, racial discrimination still had an undeniable influence in policing tactics.

Fighting with fire: Nixon’s War on Drugs

Before pursuing an in-depth discussion of police militarization in a modern context, we must analyze a time period in the United States that has had a severe impact on the continuation of police violence. The 1970s, like the 1960s, were a turbulent time in the United States. The 1970s brought more despair, unfairness, and inequality for African Americans. The Nixon administration

implemented many questionable policies during his term, but by launching the War on Drugs, Nixon began a battle that would not reach an end. However, before Nixon even entered office, the groundwork was already being set for the endorsement of police militarization to combat drugs.

The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, known as HR 5037, set the stage for Nixon's presidency in the following year. With the passage of this act, government support of police militarization became perfectly legal, in fact, it became encouraged. The language of the statute is explicit:

Congress finds that the high incidence of crime in the United States threatens the peace, security, and general welfare of the nation and its citizens. To prevent crime and to insure the greater safety of the people, law' enforcement efforts must be better coordinated, intensified, and made more effective at all levels of government. Congress finds further that crime is essentially a local problem that must be dealt with by State and local governments if it is to be controlled effectively. It is therefore the declared policy of the Congress to assist State and local governments in strengthening and improving law enforcement at every level by national assistance (HR 5037).

Although the Act claims that part of the assistance includes research and development, it quickly became clear that writing out checks to police departments and handing down weapons from the Department of Defense were more effective strategies. Despite this fact, which will become more relevant in the next chapter, the act was ambitious in its intent. It was created to protect citizens from crime, which in its nature threatens the basic rights and liberties of citizens. The burden to fix this issue fell on law enforcement, and the federal government was more than willing to hop on the bandwagon. Seeing that giving police forces autonomy had not led to much success in the riots of the previous years, the federal government stepped in to offer aid. The Act "authorized no-knock raids, preventive detention, expanded wiretapping, night raids, and other powers in federal investigations" (Balko, 2013, p.83). With such broad powers now in the hands of the federal government, police militarization developed quickly to meet the agenda that President Nixon would eventually put before Congress.

When Nixon took office in 1969, he walked into an ideal situation. Prior to his presidency, legislation had already been under construction regarding crime prevention in the United States. By the time Nixon took the reins, this legislation was beginning to take effect. The Organized Crime Control Act of 1970 was not passed under the Nixon administration, however, "by the time of its passage it had been eagerly adopted, if not embraced by President Nixon and key members of his administration" (Block, 2014, p.39). The statute defied organized crime by banning gambling organizations that included five or more people that had been in business more than 30 days or accumulated \$2,000 of revenue in a single day. Furthermore, the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 created a consolidated list of banned drugs and their corresponding schedules.

Nixon used the passage of these laws during his presidency as momentum to launch his War on Drugs.

Nixon's commitment to the elimination of drug manufacture, sale, and use in the United States was a political issue that clinched him the election in 1968, and defined the legacy he left behind. In a Special Message to Congress on Drug Abuse Prevention and Control in 1971, Nixon expressed his belief that despite efforts to tackle the matter, still more could be done to combat drug use: "Despite the magnitude of the problem, despite our very limited success in meeting it, and despite the common recognition of both circumstances, we nevertheless have thus far failed to develop a concerted effort to find a better solution to this increasingly grave threat" (Nixon Special Message to Congress). Nixon's plan of action to better meet the problem at hand included mobilizing the government to take more action by giving more money to police forces. "I will ask for additional funds to increase our enforcement efforts to further tighten the noose around the necks of drug peddlers, and thereby loosen the noose around the necks of drug users" (Nixon Special Message to Congress).

Later in the speech, Nixon gave a more specific plan of action he intended to utilize regarding enforcement needs: "The problems of addict identification are equaled and surpassed by the problem of drug identification. To expedite work in this area of narcotics enforcement, I am asking the Congress to provide \$2 million to be allotted to the research and development of equipment and techniques for the detection of illegal drugs and drug traffic" (Nixon Special Message to Congress). In an effort to revamp the War on Drugs, Nixon called for the creation of 'special forces' within the agency that "will have the capacity to reave quickly into any area in which intelligence indicates major criminal enterprises are engaged in the narcotics traffic" (Balko, 2013, p.72). The Omnibus Crime and Control Act allowed for the creation of such forces and as a result the expansion of federal powers granted police forces more authority.

Nixon's speech, aside from its political content, employs violent and powerful language with regards to drugs. He refers to the efforts against drugs as an attack, and subsequently created the phrase the "War on Drugs." The phraseology itself alludes to police militarization. By treating the encounter between drugs and police as a war, the violence that ensued was not a completely unintended or unforeseen consequence. Nixon's speech may not officially authorize violence and police militarization as a legitimate form of drug prevention, however, it strongly encouraged further involvement of police activity. This speech opened the door for relationships between the police and the federal government to strengthen. This relationship, as I will explain in the next chapter, has received recent media attention as a factor that has contributed to the increase in police militarization. Aside from resorting to violence, like the Omnibus Crime Act had demanded, Nixon alluded to the need for research and development. However, as his presidency unfolded, it became clear that as history had previously shown, resorting to violence would be easier than getting to the root of the problem.

Unable to learn from the lessons of the previous decade, the 1970s were characterized by different, yet similar problems as the 1960s. Even if drug crimes

were at the forefront of issues characterizing the 1970s, racial relations were still ever present.

The drug war has produced profoundly unequal outcomes across racial groups, manifested through racial discrimination by law enforcement and disproportionate drug war misery suffered by communities of color. Although rates of drug use and selling are comparable across racial lines, people of color are far more likely to be stopped, searched, arrested, prosecuted, convicted and incarcerated for drug law violations than are whites (Drug Policy Alliance).

Unfortunately, the 1970s were not a time of great progression for African Americans in urban areas. "Thus, although the most recent data available indicate that the problem of illicit drug misuse is by no means banished from the middle classes, the worst drug misuse is concentrated in urban ghettos" (Gorman, 1993, p.370). Inequality regarding the War on Drugs has manifested itself in the modern day. "African Americans, 13 percent of the U.S. population, proportionately account for 13 percent of the nation's drug users, but are 34 percent of those arrested for drug offenses and 45 percent of those held in state prisons for drug offenses" (Law Enforcement Against Prohibition). Although these are modern statistics, the rapid arrests, convictions, and misplaced blame of African Americans was founded during the War on Drugs. This placed a major strain on the relationship between communities of color and their local police forces.

The major victories for civil rights in the 1960s were dismantled by the War on Drugs. It could equally be said that the failures of the 1960s to deliver equality in practice, as opposed to equality in writing, carried over into the 1970s. In fact, many to this day feel as if "the mass criminalization of people of color, particularly young African American men, is as profound a system of racial control as the Jim Crow laws were in this country until the mid-1960s" (Drug Policy Alliance). With ideas and statistics such as those presented still circulating, the success of the War on Drugs is questionable.

Aside from racial relations, the War on Drugs, as previously mentioned, has ushered in a new age in the United States. Nixon had kick started a war without end. The facts verify that it is impossible to completely eradicate drug production, manufacturing, and consumption in the United States. When the United States enters war with an enemy, specific temporary measures are put in place until the war has concluded. However, drugs are an enemy that is impossible to defeat. The measures that were put in place to win the War on Drugs were a catalyst in the continued growth of police militarization.

The facts are available and reveal the failure of Nixon's efforts. When power shifted from the Republicans to the Democrats in the 1990s with the election of President Bill Clinton, "the budget announced by [his] administration showed virtually no shift in emphasis from that of its Republican predecessor. Most of the \$13.04 billion to be spent in the next year remains allocated to law enforcement and interdiction" (Gorman, 1993, p.369). This revelation was shocking, as "expectations of change had been raised in part because Clinton

appeared to be listening to people critical of the emphasis on law enforcement and interdiction” (Gorman, 1993, p.369). Furthermore, the continuation of such massive spending has not yielded any encouraging results:

Despite the billions of dollars spent over the past 12 years and increased numbers of drug seizures and drug related arrests, the purity of heroin and cocaine sold on the streets has increased while prices have fallen and the disease and social disorder resulting from the trade in illicit drugs has escalated, especially in inner cities (Gorman, 1993, p.369).

Many scholars agree that the War on Drugs has been largely ineffective. Police militarization during the 1970s is not just infamous for failing to accomplish its mission, but for the no-knock raids that deprived ordinary citizens of their civil liberties. In the past, police violence had been unjustly directed towards innocent African Americans, those involved in riots, or those who had acted violently towards the police. In the 1970s with the legality of no-knock raids, mistakes had devastating consequences. Occasionally, officers raided the wrong locations, sometimes with catastrophic endings. As the War on Drugs continued, police militarization crept closer and closer into the everyday lives of ordinary citizens.

Robot cop, a well-oiled machine: expansion of police powers and modern manifestations

Circumstances in the United States, with the help of propaganda, have made conditions ripe for the development of a militarized police force and the blurring of lines between police officer and soldier (Balko, 2013). Although times have changed, the War on Drugs continues, and counter-terrorism efforts have also been used to validate violent policing tactics.

In 1990, the government passed the National Defense Authorization Act. Like the Omnibus Crime and Control Act just 22 years earlier, this new act expanded the power of the federal government in the arena of policing. Called the 1033 Program, this act “allowed the Secretary of Defense to “transfer to Federal and State agencies personal property of the Department of Defense, including small arms and ammunition” (Prupis, 2014). Ironically enough, the program expanded further during the height of the War on Drugs in 1996, and has been active due to the war on terror. In fact, Congress has provided incentives for using the equipment by charging police departments no costs and requiring use of the equipment within one year of its acquirement. Police militarization in the modern age has taken on a new meaning because of the federal government’s role in sponsoring police departments’ violent activities.

Police militarization in previous decades was not in full-fledged effect, the way it is today. Police violence would be an accurate term to describe what had occurred in previous decades; police militarization is the only term to describe what the nation currently experiences. In the past, inspiration was drawn from military strategies and increased weaponry was utilized to keep up with the arms race on the streets. Now, surplus military equipment is making its way into the hands of local police officers. The three largest federal programs that have

contributed to the rapid growth of police militarization are the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, and Department of Defense. As Alicia Parlapiano reported in *The New York Times* in 2014, the Department of Defense is affiliated with the 1033 Program, and more than \$5 billion worth of equipment has been transferred since the program was started just 15 years ago. Numbers from the Department of Justice have tapered off in recent years. “Congressional funding for the program has fallen in recent years, from 1 billion per year in the late 1990s to \$376 million in 2014” (Parlapiano, 2014). This is still a significant amount of funding that correlates to significant amounts of violence. The resources available to police forces have allowed for the continuation of negative trends.

In theory, and on the surface, the expansion of police militarization has come in the wake of a violent time in American history. The attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 was a tragedy that sent the nation spiraling into chaos. Throughout the timeline presented within my research, I have had to rely upon historical data and recollections to complete this report. Police militarization in the modern era is something unfolding in my lifetime that I can report on.

The United States is a far from perfect nation, however, the past few years have certainly been a reminder that history repeats itself, and not in a positive way. The recent riots in Baltimore, Maryland, are the most widespread, long-lasting, violent riots occurring since the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. They could arguably be the worst since the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The news is flooded with announcements of burning vehicles and buildings, individuals looting stores, and of course, police in military gear prepared to go to war.

The riots began as a result of the arrest of a black man, Freddie Gray, who died in police custody on April 19th, 2015. Baltimore residents began protesting against the unfair treatment of blacks by police officers, asserting that more brutal police practices are used against African Americans compared to citizens of other races. David Simon, a former reporter for the Baltimore Sun, points to the War on Drugs, and specifically former Mayor Martin O'Malley for pushing the police to try to reduce crime rates through mass arrests (Delaney, 2015). This issue has already been identified as one of the major factors contributing to continued strained race relations in the United States at large. In Baltimore, the data supports this thesis: “of more than 76,000 people arrested the previous year, prosecutors declined to charge 25,000 with any crime -- meaning roughly 30 percent of the arrests were basically bogus” (Delaney, 2015). Even though the city knew about this problem, its severity slowly dissipated and police brutality continued.

The riots in Baltimore have devastated the community physically: “Streets in Baltimore looked like a war zone early Tuesday after a night of riots, fires and heartbreak... Buildings and cars across the city were engulfed in flames. About a dozen businesses looted or damaged” (Botelho et al, 2015). But far more than physical damage has been done. In the next section, I explore a return to community policing as one of the best solutions to the recent policing matters. Baltimore is a prime example of how relationships between community members, primarily African Americans, and police officers have been butchered.

Several cops were attacked in the riots as a way to make a statement against police brutality. The common tendency to fight violence with violence has become characteristic of policing in the 21st century. Why? Police militarization itself has been justified by government officials. Additionally, supporters of the 1033 Program have asserted that better, more powerful weapons are needed to keep up with the arms race in the streets. Situations similar to Baltimore are the police's greatest fear, and to many, the militaristic style equipment they use is a valid defense against extreme situations. The Baltimore riots are exactly that, an extreme situation.

Up to 5,000 law enforcement officials will be requested from the mid-Atlantic region to help quell the violence in Baltimore...And authorities say about 1,500 members of the National Guard have been deployed. Maryland State Police ordered an additional 40 troopers to Baltimore to join the 42 troopers already sent there Monday afternoon to assist city police. Since last Thursday, more than 280 state troopers have provided assistance in Baltimore. (Botelho et al, 2015)

Clearly based upon the deployment of out-of-state officials and the National Guard, the Baltimore riots are a highly unlikely occurrence. The Baltimore riots are considered "ideal" situations supporting police militarization. However as mentioned, they are rare. With angry crowds, defenders of police militarization feel that anything can happen and officers must be prepared. Having topnotch gear is an essential piece of that preparation. Even the President of the United States agrees that eliminating the 1033 Program and cutting federal contributions towards police departments would be a huge step backwards. With occurrences such as these becoming more popular in the last few years, the government and citizens alike scramble to come up with a solution to satisfy everybody.

Restoring revolutionary revelations: solutions

Nearly 250 years after the establishment of the United States, and half a century after the onset of police militarization, police related tragedies continue to plague the United States. As the timeline depicted throughout this research paper portrays, each era in history has presented a unique challenge for law enforcement. It also shows how much countless research has been conducted on the subject. This research has not been applied to deliver effective, sustainable solutions that would ameliorate the problem at hand. Because, after all, "studies show that police have the power to either lessen the tensions of an angry group of people or goad them into a riot" (Eichenwald, 2014). Police have chosen the latter.

Perhaps the most obvious solution to police militarization is better training. All experts admit that if proper training were undertaken, police officers would know how to properly use powerful and deadly equipment. Back during the nascent years of the police, Vollmer's ideas gained so much footing because of the emphasis they placed on proper training. After all, training may be one of the only options available. Even police officers agree that better training would help

reduce police violence: “In the course of [a study conducted], police chiefs and administrators were asked what steps they would consider most likely to bring about a reduction in unnecessary shootings by police officers. The most common response was to recommend a tight firearms policy coupled with an effective training program.” (United States Department of Justice).

Many government and police officials believe abolishing the use of certain equipment would be regressive. However, better training could bridge the gap and allow equipment to be utilized in appropriate situations. One of the areas where better training is highly recommended is within SWAT units. After the “no-knock” raids were authorized under Nixon’s presidency, several raids were pursued under faulty tips. The consequences for innocent people have been disastrous. Last October in Habersham County Georgia, a SWAT unit was dispatched to a home in search of a man who was in possession of drugs. Thinking that the suspect was in the home, the SWAT team threw a flash bag grenade that landed in the crib of a baby: “The explosion from the flash bang tore a hole in [the baby’s] chest, separated his nose from his face, and covered his body in third degree burns...The man the SWAT team was looking for no longer lived in the house and was later arrested without incident. There weren’t any guns or drugs in the home either” (Dansky, 2014). Incidents like this are not uncommon, as SWAT teams are used to raid people’s homes 50,000 times a year. Most of the time these raids are in search for drugs, and more often than not, they end similarly to this tragic example.

Citizens such as the victims of the Georgia incident and police officers are in agreement that SWAT teams need better training. LAPD officer Steven Staveley wrote an article for the Journal of California Law Enforcement advocating for additional SWAT training and investment: “there are warrant services where the resources of SWAT make sense, especially in major cases where there is potential for violence. But I fear that we too frequently use SWAT units and the accompanying dynamic entry styles to serve warrants that can be better done in other ways” (Staveley, 2014). His solution is simply better training. More than 80 hours should be devoted to basic training, and an additional 200 plus hours (over 10% of the officer’s work year) should be allocated towards specific skillset training.

Each time a police-related tragedy occurs in the United States, all eyes turn to the President to devise a strategy that will ease the hardship by creating a more positive outlook for the future. After the murder of Michael Brown and the events surrounding Ferguson, Missouri, the public was outraged and demanded an end to police militarization and the institutionalized racism that stems from it. When the White House was questioned about ending the transfer of equipment from the federal government to local police forces, “experts said [it] would be a reversal of years of policy and would have scant support in Congress. The militarization of police has been part of a broader counterterrorism strategy fortifying American cities, which took root after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001” (Landler, 2014). Similar justifications were and are used regarding the War on Drugs. The federal government and police forces continually cite their primary duty, which is to protect and defend their citizens. But what about upholding their civil liberties?

In a recent Senate hearing, that question was explored in more depth. Senator Claire McCaskill brought the issue of police militarization to light in the wake of the peaceful protests that had been occurring in Ferguson, Missouri. The right to peacefully protest is included in the First Amendment. It, along with other constitutional rights, has been breached by police militarization. In an effort to limit the effects of police militarization, several Senators, including Rand Paul, hope to limit the access police departments have to weapons. One potential solution includes more oversight of the transfer of weapons from the federal government to the police. This would hopefully answer the questions that remain ambiguous. As McCaskill begins drafting bipartisan legislation to limit the programs that participate in transferring equipment to the police, it is expected that “Congress will tweak the programs to promote leadership and training, so law enforcement officials know when it’s appropriate to use those tools and when it’s not” (Shesgreen, 2014). A complete elimination of weaponry among the police is impossible, but including more oversight would be one small step in the right direction.

Of course, recent tragedies have motivated the government to become more aware of police militarization and policing tactics. They are, as their job description entails, responding to the concerns of their constituents. However, both police militarization and research on policing tactics have existed for decades. Until recently, many have remained silent on the subject. Despite what Senators, officials, and other personnel have to say on the matter, the root of the problem lies in the psychology.

The root function of the police is serving and protecting the community. Without a favorable relationship within the community, the effectiveness of the police decreases. “When cops in Ferguson, Missouri, or any American town swap their peace officer look for soldierly garb and gear... many civilians view them not as law enforcers but as machine-like invaders” (Briggs, 2014). In the army, soldiers are trained to dehumanize people in order to be able to kill. When the police are dressed in a way that mimics soldiers equipped for war, it has a negative effect on the public. The explanation is psychological. “We are social creatures, we are human beings. We need to see people’s eyes and we need to see people’s expression” (Briggs, 2014). Without this connection, people begin to see their police officers as occupiers and enemies. “When police treat a crowd justly and humanely, the chance of an uproar decreases and participants trust law enforcement more, the research shows” (Eichenwald, 2014). Resolving this disconnect is key to ending police militarization and restoring humanity to policing.

A return to community policing is another solution proposed by many psychologists and former police officers. They understand the importance of human interaction in achieving successful police tactics. “Any shift away from community policing—a genial collaborating between cops and civilians—has been exacerbated by the rapid acquisition of military weapons and material by municipal and county law-enforcement agencies across the country” (Briggs, 2014). The adversarial gap between police and civilians that has developed as a result of police militarization is as concerning as the actual violence itself. Rebuilding a positive relationship between police and the communities they serve

would be the best solution to police militarization.

Another solution, which has sparked a debate as a result of the riots in Baltimore, is the use of body cameras on all police officers. A video that went viral during the Baltimore riots included footage from the body camera of a young police officer in Ohio. Throughout the video, his gun is raised and pointed at a black man who has been suspected as the culprit in a double murder investigation. Throughout the video, the black man encourages the officer to shoot him, shouting, "Shoot me! Shoot me", repeatedly throughout the short clip. The young officer refuses to shoot, instead, keeping his gun raised until the end of the clip, where he is ultimately seen making the arrest. No brutality and no violence were committed. This video was circulated around social media to demonstrate that there is often no need for violence. The video reminds advocates of police militarization that many times officers "jump the gun" quite literally when deciding to utilize violence in an otherwise non-violent encounter.

The video produced a lot of discussion around the idea of requiring police officers to wear body cameras. However, if body cams were to enter the judicial system, it would complicate the process even more. "As [people] endeavor to make a video 'speak for itself,' they will inevitably speak for it, imposing competing interpretations and introducing uncertainty instead of proof" (Vertesi, 2015).

Conclusion

Police militarization is not a new phenomenon despite increased media attention in the past few years or the past few days in Baltimore. The Baltimore violence points to a practice that continues like a broken record, repeating the same tragedies and misfortunes over and over again. The current situations we face in this country, from the strained race relations to the brutalization of everyday citizens by their own citizens, is a stain on the American character that is hard to wash out.

Solutions exist. But even our own President is skeptical of breaking with tradition and venturing into uncharted territory. Perhaps he, unlike many others, recognizes the deep-rooted history that accompanies this issue. Contrary to popular belief, changing police forces to reverse the damage that they have caused is not going to happen overnight. It will be a long and strenuous process that can progress only if other issues get resolved first. As my historical timeline shows, these issues include strained racial relations, social acceptance, and trust between police officers and communities. To ignore these complex issues would demonstrate a poor grasp on understanding police militarization. Before compiling and reflecting on this research, I was unaware of the depth of police militarization. The more I learn, the more I am filled with doubt and disbelief towards the direction the nation is headed.

As of now, the legacy our era will leave behind is one of a continued War on Drugs, a new war on terror, and a return to racial attitudes that most closely resemble that of whites and blacks in the deep South prior to the Civil War. Yet, we have more research, more knowledge, and our past mistakes to learn from. How the United States will continue to fight each of these battles, for lack of a better term, depends on whether the country sees them as just that, battles. A

new mindset is necessary to yield new results.

I challenge anyone to imagine a United States where people are treated guilty until proven innocent, rather than presumed innocent until proven guilty. Imagine returning to a time when armed soldiers patrolled the streets and pointed their weapons at peaceful citizens exercising their First Amendment rights. Imagine having your Fourth Amendment rights violated when a SWAT team raids your home, only to find a lack of evidence holding you responsible for a crime. Unfortunately, this does not require much effort, because that is the reality that confronts us. My motivation to write this paper was my disquiet with the situation, and further research confirmed my deepest fears.

The Founding Fathers of our country did not picture a United States that reflects the country we live in today. The Constitution was carefully crafted to avoid injustices that had existed in other corners of the globe. Although just words on a paper, the Constitution has survived as a document that differentiates the United States from every other country on the planet.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty, to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. (United States Constitution)

Each and every president that serves our nation is forced to take an oath of office in which they promise to uphold and defend the values of the Constitution. Many would say, somewhere in the history of the United States, a fatal mistake was made that changed the course of the nation forever. As I have demonstrated, our current situation is a reflection of dozens of fatal mistakes that were made. Police militarization is not the result of one poor decision, but the manifestation of years of making quick decisions instead of thoughtful ones. It is a reminder that changes need to be made, and a clue about the direction of the future.

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