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## The Implications of a Militarized Police Force in the United States

### Abstract

The police model in America is slowly changing. From the early days of America, the police were modeled after the London Metropolitan Police. Over time, this has changed from a civilian police model into a more militaristic one. Police militarization in America can be traced to the implementation of the 1033 program, which granted local law enforcement agencies surplus military equipment such as weapons, surveillance gadgets, and armored vehicles. This research paper examines the effects of increasing police militarization on public perception and public trust of police.

### Keywords

1033 program, paramilitary units, public trust, police militarization

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**Abstract**

The police model in America is slowly changing. From the early days of America, the police were modeled after the London Metropolitan Police. Over time, this has changed from a civilian police model into a more militaristic one. Police militarization in America can be traced to the implementation of the 1033 program, which granted local law enforcement agencies surplus military equipment such as weapons, surveillance gadgets, and armored vehicles. This research paper examines the effects of increasing police militarization on public perception and public trust of police.

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## Introduction

The identity of the police force in the United States emphasizes themselves as servants of the public to protect and serve to maintain social order. These men and women have the authority sanctioned by local officials to uphold the law within their local jurisdiction. Originally called the Night Watch, the early police force was created for collaborative and informal practices (Potter, 2013). In short, the primary purpose of the police is to safeguard the citizens in the city or town they serve and uphold the local laws mandated by the city or state officials. The local police or civilian police in the United States became modeled after the London Metropolitan Police Department, founded in 1892 (Go, 2020). The London Metropolitan Police became considered the first local police department of its kind in the world. The philosophy behind the local civilian police model was to permeate into civil society with legitimacy that was more acceptable to the general population than militaristic force (Go, 2020). Historically, the police are not supposed to be military in any shape or form because they are civilian police who deal with local citizens and not combatants from a foreign country. Therefore, the local civilian police model directly opposes the state military model (e.g., military training, tactics, using military-grade weapons, ranking structure) and national armed forces presumed to be non-militaristic.

With the establishment of the local civilian police department during the 19th century in the United States, the early years of policing were entirely corrupt, powerless, and inefficient to control crime because they were not professionalized (Go, 2020). However, modern policing as we know it today is derived from reforms during the early 20th century that focused on organizational reforms, tactics, and technology, through which the

police department also became more professionalized, centralized, and created new methods for training officers (Go, 2020). In addition, the police department expanded its capabilities, adopting new methods of criminal identification through technological advancements, crime mapping, intelligence units, and creating mobile and mounted squad units (Go, 2020). The goal of these reforms was to suppress crime with more efficiency and prove the effectiveness of the police department at reducing crime. Unfortunately, these minor incremental reforms slowly transformed the police department into a militaristic force, because the crucial changes established by the police reformers were acquired from the military model. In the past few decades, research conducted by Simckes et al. (2019) has found that U.S. police departments across the country have increased their paramilitary units (PPU). Moreover, the research also found an increase in PPU activities, and police departments that served smaller populations also saw an expansion in PPU. More importantly, there seemed to be a pattern in the normalization of using PPU in domestic policing (Simckes et al., 2019).

The increased use of paramilitary tactics and units is detrimental to the public's relationship and the police. Even more alarming is that the increased adaptation of militaristic tactics, units, and weapons is creating a divide between the public's trust in the police department. The public perceives that the police department is not there to protect and serve, but to act as more like an authoritative entity with borderline authoritarianism. More specifically, the police department should serve the public as civilian police and not treat citizens as mere combatants. It is a far cry from the central ideology of past institutions established by the London Metropolitan Police. It invented the civilian police model to use policing as a tool to prevent crime, maintain social

order, and integrate themselves with the community they serve to build a strong bond with the local citizens and establish the legitimacy of the police department without the need of a military model. The officials that were behind the invention of the London Metropolitan Police believed that a militaristic model in domestic policing would be detrimental to the citizens they served (Go, 2020). This research paper focuses on how the militarization of the police department is detrimental to the relationship between the public and the police.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

#### **Theoretical Framework**

Risk theory can become helpful to understand why the U.S. is prone to utilize paramilitary units to prevent an impending threat. Risk is characterized, by Bolduc (2016), as a hazard that is actively assessed and associated with an affiliation of a future possibility of a threat. This is how society views risk through a futuristic lens, and that risk is how society envisages a possible danger to attempt to prevent an imminent danger (Bolduc, 2016). Moreover, Bolduc also distinguished that there are two different forms of risk. The first form is external risk or risks manifested outside of a designated area. The second is manufactured risk, which are created by society's knowledge of a known threat. Once a manufactured risk becomes expanded, it becomes a problem that society is obligated to confront to counter the consequences of its action (Bolduc, 2016). As society faces these risks, there is only one prominent force that can respond to such a risk, and that is law enforcement. Furthermore, police and governmental bodies face a difficult conundrum. If there is a possible threat (e.g., increase in crime, terrorist threat, or mass shootings) and nothing is done to prevent it, society will view these institutions as failures. On the other hand, if these institutions, such as law enforcement agencies,

intervene, and no threat or risk manifests itself, they will face a backlash of criticism on the wastefulness of resources, money, and time (Bolduc, 2016). Thus, global threats and risks shape a nation's response to take action.

Militarized police, as defined by Bolduc (2016), are police that enforce as a unit after obtaining military training with military-grade weapons, equipment, and unique apparel. This type of training responds to international threats such as terrorism or large illicit drug distribution syndicates. Therefore, the U.S. has shifted to a "crime fare" state, in which the police adopted a more militarized personality to confront and eradicate such criminals (Bolduc, 2016). As a result, the threat to national security from these clandestine transnational criminals forced the police to become more militarized. Therefore, military intervention and interaction with local law enforcement became more legitimized.

Another theory that explains the increased usage of the military model by the police department is contingency theory. Contingency theory contends organizational structure is built to fit around the external environment for a higher output of performance and efficiency (Zhao et al., 2010). One of the cardinal assumptions of contingency theory is there must be a good fit between the organization and its external environment to achieve operation viability.

Moreover, an organization (police agencies) must maintain an excellent fit to adapt to the changing environment. According to a study by Zhao et al. (2010), there are three types of environmental factors that have an impact on the structure of an organization: (1) adaptation to new technology, (2) adaptation to the scale of production, and (3) adaptation to the task environment. Therefore, through historical events, such as 9/11 and mass shootings, police agencies use these environmental

situations to justify paramilitary police training and tactics (Lindsay, 2016; Randol, 2012). It can explain one of the environmental adaptations of contingency theory for police agencies to adopt a more militaristic approach when confronted with the threat of terrorism or mass shootings in the United States. Moreover, technologies used by the police for surveillance are derived from technologies developed for military application (Lindsay, 2016). Based on contingency theory, the adaptation of technology by police agencies is supposed to help them achieve a higher level of performance and efficiency to combat crime. Moreover, the scale of operation of police agencies that are inclined to use a special military-trained unit is affected by the increasing number of crimes and legislation, like the 1980's Anti-Drug Act, which justifies the use of tactical teams to conduct drug raids or serve warrants. Therefore, it is an example of the contingency theory of adaptation to scale of production. In fact, according to Zhao et al., how law enforcement agencies become structurally arranged is associated with population diversity. If a certain area or population has a higher crime rate and more drug dealers, police agencies often use a special military-trained unit called the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT). They handle drug raids or serve warrants in dangerously populated areas (Lindsay, 2016). Therefore, contingency theory provides context on how police agencies use paramilitary units and military technologies to adapt to their environmental situation.

### **The 1033 Program and the Effect it has on the Militarization of the Police**

The creation of the 1033 program has legislative roots that directly resulted from the War on Drugs. The defense bill of 1988, which was incorporated into legislation passed in 1981, granted military assistance to local law enforcement in their drug

interdiction efforts and immigration control and rewrote federal laws on the relationship between Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) and the military (Radil et al., 2017; Steidley et al., 2019). Signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1997, the 1033 program allowed the Department of Defense (DOD) to sell military surplus equipment to local law enforcement agencies (Abigail et al., 2013; Steidley et al., 2019; Edward, 2019). Before 1997, the 1033 program had to be renewed periodically in defense spending bills (Radil et al., 2017). However, after 1997, the National Defense Authorization Act Security Act of 1997 (which contained the 1033 program) made the relationship between the U.S. military and LEA permanent by providing LEA military-grade armored vehicles, weapons, bulletproof vests, uniforms, airplanes, and helicopters (Radil et al., 2017; Delaehanty et al., 2017; Balko, 2006). Therefore, through the 1033 program, it transformed LEA to become similar to the military.

Records provided by the DOD from 2006 to 2014 showed that in eight years an estimated 2,329,000 pieces of military equipment were transferred to local police agencies (Radil et al., 2017). Although LEA can acquire military equipment at no direct cost to themselves, the transfer of this equipment by the DOD to LEA had an estimated \$1.5 billion value from 2006 to 2014 alone (Radil et al., 2017; Delaehanty et al., 2017). As U.S. troops withdrew from Afghanistan and Iraq, from 2011-2012, the U.S. military needed to dispose of surplus military equipment coming back to U.S. soil. In short, there was not enough warehouse space to store the surplus, in turn the Pentagon distributed the extra military equipment to local police agencies to free up space for their other inventory (Lindsay et al., 2016), thus, adding to the overall value of military equipment. By the end of 2014,

equipment transferred to LEA by the Pentagon was estimated to surpass \$5 billion (Lindsay et al., 2016).

The 1033 program has an apparent effect on police agencies, as they now gravitate towards a militaristic mode of operation in domestic policing. Local civilian police are now armed with military-style weapons, riding in armored vehicles, and trained as the military. It was even more apparent during the 2014 protest in Ferguson, Missouri, where protesters were confronted with snipers, armor vehicles, and officers equipped identically to a U.S. soldier regarding battle uniforms and gear (Lindsay et al., 2016; Burkhardt et al., 2019; Bove et al., 2017; Ajilore, 2015; Arnaud, 2016). During the protest, which had been sparked by the death of a black teenager by a white Ferguson police officer, the police deployed SWAT units to confront the peaceful protesters around the area where the shooting took place. Notably, the display of local civilian officers dressed as soldiers with military-style weapons only escalated the already elevated tension between the protesters and the police department (Arnaud, 2016). Radil et al. (2017) assert that SWAT units undermine the trust between the public and the police. With the display of police resembling the military, the protest became increasingly more violent. One implication of the 1033 program on the militarization of police agencies is proven fatal for local citizens in a study conducted by Delehanty et al. (2017). The study results revealed that counties that acquired military equipment through the 1033 program were expected to have an increase in civilian deaths by officers (Delehanty et al., 2017).

### **Implications of a Militarized Police Force**

The 1033 program has become credited for the mass transformation of a militarized police force through the governmental transfer of military equipment to LEA. In doing so,

small legislative changes, like the National Defense Act of 1997, which included the 1033 program, which spanned over several decades have eroded the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act, which established the separation between the military and domestic policing (Lawson, 2019; Balko, 2006; Lindsay et al., 2016; Radil et al., 2017). In addition, militarism became defined as the values and beliefs that accentuate the use of force and dominance to neutralize a threat or solve problems (Insler et al., 2019; Lawson, 2019). Moreover, Lawson (2019) attributed two possible mechanisms for law enforcement agencies to become militarized, hierarchical, and operational. The hierarchical mechanism, pertaining to how police officers adjust their behavior and attitude according to organizational structures, means that officers adapt to the conduct of their roles and make decisions based on suggestions from police leaders and their socialization with veteran officers. Furthermore, policing training that maintains the roles of officers as warriors can influence an officer's perception of their community. This translates to how officers perceive their community as an enemy territory for officers to control and occupy (Lawson, 2019). More importantly, how police leaders perceive the role of their department as a crime-fighting agency rather than building a relationship with the community they serve, then a militarized mindset trickles down from the leadership to their subordinates through the socialization and training process (Lawson, 2019). In short, if a police department's leadership has a militarized philosophy, then all officers below the leadership rank will adjust their attitude and behavior to match the organizational leadership ideology; thus, officers under the leadership rank are conforming to their organizational structure (Crank et al., 1992). The following mechanism is operational, which has two components that contribute to the militarization of LEA. Direct

cooperation is the first component, linking the military and LEA together. Military involvement with LEA, such as military training of police officers, a joint task force in anti-drug and antiterrorism intervention, sharing information, technology, and weapons, only further escalated the LEA's militarization (Lawson, 2019). Moreover, the second component is the creation of specialized elite police units that are identical to the military special forces. Through the threat of terrorism and drugs, these military-trained special forces of the police departments are often referred to as Paramilitary Units (PPU), or Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units (Lawson, 2019; Kraska et al., 1997). Lawson (2019) asserts that both hierarchical and operational mechanisms are thus the reasons law enforcement agencies are trending towards militarization.

Consequently, as police departments become more militarized, there has been a correlation between the militarization of LEA and civilian deaths (Lawson, 2019). According to data provided by Lawson (2019), there have been 995 civilians killed by the police in 2015, 963 in 2016, and 987 in 2017. As a result, Insler et al. (2019) revealed that the integration of the military with police departments could intensify societal distance and distrust of the police. Moreover, with the rise of PPU and SWAT units increasing across the United

States, these units' violent drug raids often resulted in civilian deaths. However, these units, such as SWAT and PPU, were initially created in 1966 by the Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates for hostage situations, bank robberies, and high-risk situations (Balko, 2006; Coyne et al., 2016). Now, they are often used for drug raids and to serve warrants as domestic policing (Kraska, 2007). Due to federal funding for drug arrests, police departments with SWAT and PPU are deploying these units for

drug raids. Moreover, for example, from Balko (2006), most drug raids often resulted in violent encounters with suspected drug dealers, usually ordinary civilians. Often, these violent raids are at times botched raids, where informants gave unreliable information about suspected drug dealers that resulted in SWAT units violently raiding the wrong property and killing innocent civilians in the process (Balko, 2006; Kraska, 2007).

The overuse of SWAT units in domestic policing ranging from calls about a domestic dispute to angry dogs and patrolling the street with military armored vehicles further diminishes the trust between the public and the police. These specialized units, like SWAT and PPU, have a military mindset instilled in them from the training they received by military personnel that made individuals in these units perceive civilians as enemies. Therefore, police departments with such militarized units have the mentality of “us” (the police) versus “them” (civilians). It is harmful to civilians because the utilization of these militarized units does not reflect the ethos of civilian police, which is to protect and serve the citizens (McMichael, 2017). In addition, the police’s legitimate role is to investigate crime and uphold the law mandated by local officials that minimize the use of force (McMichael, 2017). However, this is not the case for militarizing the police force with SWAT units and PPU. The military ideology instilled in them is to hunt and destroy perceived enemies (McMichael, 2017).

### **The Militarization of Policing and the Effect it has on Minorities and the U.S.-Mexico Border**

In a study by Ajilore (2015), the author claimed a link between police militarization and race associated with the Minority Threat Hypothesis. In the Minority Threat Hypothesis, when the majority recognizes minorities as a threat, the majority

will exercise social control by contributing the resources required for police services to treat that threat (Ajilore, 2015). Moreover, the study by Ajilore was conducted to figure out if a link existed between race and the expansion or implementation of a militarized police force by the acquisition of Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles. Results from this study revealed it became possible that the size of a minority group was not a motivation for the militarized police force. Instead, the distribution of various groups within an area could be a determinant factor for the police to be militarized (Ajilore, 2015). In addition, a region with a higher level of racial segregation became associated with police militarization through acquisitions of MRAP, which appear to be consistent with the Minority Threat Hypothesis. Furthermore, the findings from this study also revealed that a more significant proportion of the Asian-Americans within a population correlated to an increase in the militarization of the police force through the acquisition of MRAP (Ajilore, 2015). The public's lack of confidence in the police was due to the increased police force becoming militarized. Data from Ajilore (2015) revealed that less than ten percent of the public was satisfied with the police's overall performance, which included their utilization of force in certain situations, holding officers accountable for their misconducts, and treating racial minority groups fairly and equally.

In the age of a militarized police force, the minority communities are being policed unfairly. Gamal (2016) proclaimed that militaristic principles had become the dominant force to address the social problems existing in these marginalized minority communities. Moreover, with the display of the police in a militarized uniform, armored vehicles patrolling the streets, and police officers carrying military weapons, herein conveys the

perception that these minority communities are dangerous and need to be controlled with the use of excessive force (Gamal, 2016). Furthermore, Coyne et al. (2016) reported that racial minorities are at higher risk of death while in police custody. SWAT units are deployed against the minority groups at a higher rate (Coyne et al., 2016). Data provided by Coyne et al. (2016) reported that fifty percent of SWAT raids conducted between 2011 and 2012 were against Black or Hispanic individuals compared to only twenty percent of raids against their White counterparts. More specifically, a study conducted by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) reported that sixty-eight percent of the raids conducted were drug raids against minority groups (Coyne et al., 2016). Compared to that of white suspects, the percentage of drug raids against them was lower, despite the rates of drug sale and usage being nearly identical for all racial groups (Coyne et al., 2016). Notably, the data showed the disproportionate usage of the paramilitary units against the minorities and their respective communities compared to that of whites. Minorities are predominantly affected by police militarization through excessive displays of force across marginalized minority communities.

In recent years, the militarization of LEA has extended beyond the streets of the United States and towards the U.S.-Mexico border. Slack (2019) asserts that the “zero tolerance” policy, an anti-immigrant measure incriminating any migrant who crosses into the United States without authorization, is a form of militarization, along with the blockade of the U.S.-Mexico border, the deployment of military personnel, and the installation of barbed wire along the U.S.-Mexico border wall; together, they embodied the essence of militarization. The effects of this militarization at the U.S.-Mexico border, along with punitive anti-

immigrant measures, have created a bottleneck effect for asylum seekers (Slack, 2019).

Moreover, the social construction of “legality,” as described by Urbina et al. (2019), has elevated the militarization of a physical geographical location that turned the U.S.-Mexico border into a militarized warzone. In addition, the two thousand mile stretch of the U.S.-Mexico border has been a region for warehousing military equipment in preparation for a potential foreign invasion in which they are deployed against immigrants crossing into the United States (Urbina et al., 2019). Furthermore, with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the terrorist attack that took place on September 11, 2001 on U.S. soil, the militarization of the southern border has drastically intensified (Slack, 2019; Urbina et al., 2019). In 2011, the DHS constructed 649 miles of high-tech fencing consisting of floodlighting, radio towers, mobile surveillance, and other militarized technology (Urbina et al., 2019). Additionally, the DHS has also increased the amount of federal personnel (Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Border Patrol) at the border to target high-risk areas in preparation for any potential threat. According to Urbina et al., it is estimated that by the end of 2021, approximately \$17.9 billion will be spent to strategically militarize 2,000 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border and add to the overall number of border guards that currently number well over 60,000. It is apparent that the United States is favoring the militaristic approach in response to national security threats.

### **Policy Implications**

#### **Recommitment to the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878**

One of the policy implications that could help mitigate the rising tension between the public and LEA is for Congress to recommit to the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878. The Posse

Comitatus Act of 1878 was a Civil War-era law that prohibited the military's interference in domestic policing (Balko, 2006; Lindsay et al., 2016; Radil et al., 2017).). The Act was meant to limit the federal government's use of military force in domestic policing. The military is an entity to defend the nation from danger beyond our borders. Thus, recommitting and expanding the rules of the Posse Comitatus Act could prove to the public that the civilian police are here to protect local citizens and ensure their safety. Moreover, the implication of the 1033 program is detrimental to the public's potential trust in the police and has eroded the Posse Comitatus Act by allowing the integration of the military and law enforcement agencies. The police department utilizing military-style weaponry and displaying themselves indistinguishable from a U.S. soldier has no place in the streets of the United States. The local civilian police are meant to safeguard the local citizenry and not perceive them as enemies. Furthermore, having a militaristic mindset instilled in the philosophy of the police department only further escalates the police officer's utilization of the military model and tactics on local citizens (Delehanty et al., 2017). The adoption of the military model within the police force moves toward the direction of an authoritarian state. Thus, the police department should not look into acquiring more military equipment to fight crime but rather concentrate on the ideology of past police reformers like August Vollmer to recommit the civilian police back into the realm of educated criminologists (Douthit, 1975). With the recommitment to the Posse Comitatus Act, separating the military from domestic policing and the integration of more educated officers who are well versed in criminology can help establish the legitimacy of the police as capable of decreasing crime rates that can result in the public's acceptance, trust, and confidence in the police to safeguard the citizens from crimes.

### **Dismantling the 1033 program**

Another policy implication is for the government to dismantle the 1033 program. Through much of the reviewed literature, the 1033 program has become credited for the mass transformation of a militarized police force by transferring military surplus equipment to LEA (Bove et al., 2017; Balko, 2006; Radil et al., 2017; Delehanty et al., 2017). According to Burkhardt et al. (2019), law enforcement agencies risk alienating the citizens if they adopt the military model in domestic policing. Moreover, the data provided by Burkhardt et al. (2019) revealed that 40% to 50% of Americans disapproved of the police use of military equipment after the events of Ferguson. Armored vehicles and military-grade weaponry do not belong in the streets of the U.S. It is not Afghanistan nor anywhere in a warzone. Moreover, the government's money from selling the surplus military equipment to allied countries can be reintegrated back into the U.S. to create programs that can reduce crimes and other societal problems. For example, such programs can add more professionalized mental health workers to work alongside the police to deal with calls about an incident involving an individual with mental health problems. It is a case where the police are being over-utilized for a multitude of social issues ranging from homelessness, dealing with mental health individuals, or domestic disputes. Furthermore, the surplus money can help alleviate the congested workload for officers to focus on crimes pertaining to homicide, theft, murder, and other violent crimes by adding more professionals who are suited to deal with the aforementioned societal problems and will work alongside the police force. These new professionals will have a separate department or unit within the police department to respond to calls dealing with societal problems.

### **Community Policing and Procedural Justice Practice**

Instead of adopting the military model (e.g., training, tactics, and using military equipment), law enforcement agencies should adopt the community-orientated practice of policing. In other words, the police should adopt the approach of community policing (CP). It will help gain the public's trust by demonstrating the police are in tune with the community they serve. Instead of viewing the citizens in those communities as enemies, the police personnel should perceive them as civilians who require the police department's protection and service. The goal of community policing is to help empower police officers in creating a positive bond with their respective communities (Perez et al., 2002). In addition, with CP, the public will have a more positive perception and acceptance of the police in their neighborhoods because the police are integrating themselves into the community and meeting the community's needs. It will also help establish the legitimacy of the police department. Module et al. (2019) asserts that legitimacy is vital to an institution of governance that the governed consent to. In addition to the legitimacy of the police, Module et al. (2019) also claimed that legitimacy is necessary to secure individual voluntary compliance to an authority figure (the police) and institutional practices (e.g., law enforcement agencies). Thus, when the police become perceived as legitimate, the citizens are more willing to comply and cooperate with a police officer's orders.

Another method by which LEA can deter from the military model to gain the trust and compliance of the public is through the application of procedural justice. Procedural justice is the process of how the police will conduct themselves through respect and fair treatment within the law when engaging with its citizens or respective communities (Gau, 2014). According to Gau

(2014), police officers can gain legitimacy when acting positively with the people they encounter. Moreover, procedural justice is significant in getting people to comply with an authoritative figure when the individual feels that they are treated with fairness and respect within the confinement of the law by the police (Gau, 2014). More importantly, Gau (2014) asserts that with high-quality treatment by the police towards an individual, the individual is more likely to accept the police's decision even if the outcome is negative. Using these various practices, law enforcement agencies can achieve and raise the legitimacy of their institution resulting in the public acquiring a more positive perception, acceptance, trust, and confidence in the police.

### **Conclusion**

The trend in policing in the United States has strayed away from the original model of policing derived from the London Metropolitan Police, founded in 1892, which established a local civilian police model meant to serve the public instead of having the military as enforcers of the law. However, as the United States moved towards the 20th century, minor incremental police reforms contributed to establishing the military within domestic policing. By the 1980s and with the War on Drugs, Congress passed a series of defense bills (including the 1033 program) which slowly eroded the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, an Act which was meant to separate the military from domestic policing in the United States. Now, the 1033 program has been credited by many scholars as the driving force that shifted domestic policing towards militarization, as it allowed the government to grant local law enforcement agencies surplus military equipment. In addition, the U.S-Mexico border has been drastically militarized over the past few decades in response to the threat to national security. It is apparent that the shift of law enforcement agencies becoming

more militarized will increase across the United States in the years to come. There seems to be no halt to the 1033 program providing local law enforcement agencies surplus military equipment. Coupled with the war-like rhetoric of the ongoing War on Drugs and national security, local law enforcement will continue to expand their military units and display their militarized equipment in response to an uprising that might pose a threat. As this trend of militarization in our law enforcement agencies becomes increasingly visible and widens, our criminal justice system will become more of an authoritarian state. Law enforcement agencies that are becoming more militarized reveal a small glimpse of the direction wherein these agencies are gearing towards authoritarianism.

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