

## AFD Ep 311 Links and Notes - Police Budgets and Militarization

- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2017/08/07/how-much-do-u-s-cities-spend-every-year-on-policing-infographic/#71b0bab2e7b7> (from 2017, but demonstrates that this isn't a new concept)
- <https://populardemocracy.org/news/publications/freedom-thrive-reimagining-safety-security-our-communities> - abstract of report mentioned in Forbes article, free download of 100 page report
  - Key findings:
  - Among the jurisdictions profiled, police spending vastly outpaces expenditures in vital community resources and services, with the highest percentage being 41.2 percent of general fund expenditures in Oakland.
  - Among cities profiled, per capita police spending ranges from \$381 to as high as \$772.
  - Consistent community safety priorities emerged across jurisdictions. Most notable among them are demands for mental health services, youth programming, and infrastructure such as transit access and housing.
- <https://www.gq.com/story/cops-cost-billions>  
Los Angeles is a prime example: Mayor Eric Garcetti's 2020-2021 city budget gives police [\\$3.14 billion](#) out of the city's \$10.5 billion. That's the single biggest line item, dwarfing, say, emergency management (\$6 million) and economic development (\$30 million). Garcetti is also planning to raise the LAPD's budget [by 7 percent](#)—to support bonuses for officers who have a college degree—while he's also trying to institute pay cuts for more than 24,000 civilian city workers (to cope with budgetary fallout from the coronavirus outbreak).

In other major metro areas, the trend continues: Oakland PD receives [nearly half](#) of the city's discretionary spending( \$264 million out of \$592 million), dwarfing every other expenditure, including human services, parks and recreation, and transportation combined. A whopping 39 percent of Chicago's 2017 budget went to police, and still the department got even more money, peaking in 2020 with a 7 percent increase to nearly \$1.8 billion. Mayor [Lori Lightfoot](#) told reporters that no matter how dire the city's budget shortfall gets as a result of coronavirus, she is "not ever gonna cut back on public safety."

In Minneapolis, the city council and Democratic mayor Jacob Frey passed a \$1.6 billion budget for 2020, bumping up the Minneapolis Police Department's funding by \$10 million (to \$193 million) in order to add an extra class of recruits. But according to the local [ABC affiliate](#), programs and agencies that could actually prevent crime get a relative pittance: \$31 million for affordable housing, \$250,000 for community organizations working with at-risk youth, and just over \$400,000 for the Office of Crime Prevention.

- <https://ny.curbed.com/2020/6/5/21279214/nyc-defund-nypd-police-budget-affordable-housing-using-homelessness>  
The city's proposed budget for [fiscal year 2021](#)—which is set to be implemented in July pending approval from the City Council—includes a whopping \$2 billion in cuts across multiple agencies, including education, housing, [parks](#), health and social services, and the NYPD. The cuts are being made in response to an expected [\\$9.5 billion dip in tax](#)

[revenue](#) owing to the pandemic. Cuts to the police department, meanwhile, amount to 0.3 percent.

On top of barely feeling budget cuts, NYPD spending has majorly increased in recent years. Between fiscal years 2014 and 2019, NYPD spending increased 22 percent, according to New York City [comptroller Scott Stringer](#). Total spending on the NYPD during that five-year period was [disproportionately high](#) compared to other agencies: \$41.1 billion was spent on police and corrections while \$9.9 billion was spent on homeless services and \$6.8 billion on housing preservation and development. In fact, if you combined the city's spending on homelessness and housing in recent years and quadrupled that sum, that figure still wouldn't surpass what the city has spent on policing and corrections during the same period

- <https://labornotes.org/2020/06/its-way-past-time-redistribute-obscene-police-budgets-schools-hospitals-and-buses>

Big cities like Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Detroit, Baltimore, and Houston spent more than 25 percent of their general fund budgets on their police departments, according to a 2017 [report by the Center for Popular Democracy](#).

Chicago and Oakland spent even more, 40 percent. And while New York City's share was far lower at 9 percent (because the city had a much larger total budget, including a system of public hospitals), the dollar amount it spent was staggering, almost \$5 billion—or \$581 per person. The city's police budget has since risen to \$6 billion.

All told the United States spends [\\$100 billion on policing each year](#), and then another \$80 billion jailing people. It's the one line on city budgets that's rarely on the chopping block, in good economic times or bad, whether crime goes up or down.

In Baltimore, for every dollar spent on police, 55 cents is spent on schools, five cents is spent on the city's jobs programs, and a penny is spent on mental health services and violence prevention.

Taxpayers also pay for police brutality. Cities pay millions in legal fees and settlements of police misconduct lawsuits; Chicago, for instance, spent \$55 million in 2017 and \$113 million in 2018.

During last year's teachers strike in Oakland, an elementary schooler on the picket line piped up with the chant, "What do we want?" "Paper!" "When do we want it? Now!" It had to be said out loud, that students deserve paper at their public schools.

Workers in a New York City public hospital had to organize a pressure campaign to get soap in the bathrooms. Transit workers in D.C. had to threaten a strike to get [functioning brakes on their buses](#).

Police are often deployed against social problems they have no idea how to deal with—confronting people who are homeless or substance abusers, or who can't access mental health care. They often respond with the tools of their trade: violence and arrests. When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

Even with crimes like drugs and burglary, throwing police at the problem doesn't solve the desperation that is often the root cause. Arresting and re-arresting people only makes their situation worse, creating a vicious cycle that disproportionately punishes people who live in poor communities, particularly people of color.

In Minneapolis, African Americans are 20 percent of the population, but 60 percent of the arrests. Nationwide, a 2017 Prison Policy Initiative study found that [people who were arrested multiple times were disproportionately Black](#); 88 percent of them were arrested for nonviolent crimes.

Policing is both harmful and expensive. It drains public money that could otherwise go to measures that would address the actual, underlying problems—things like drug treatment programs and creating good jobs. With rising poverty and record unemployment, we need such programs more than ever.

- <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/trump-makes-it-easier-police-get-military-equipment-n815766>
- <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/police-militarization-fails-to-protect-officers-and-targets-black-communities-study-finds>

Mummolo found predominantly black areas witnessed more of these SWAT deployments than white neighborhoods, but this happened even if the areas had low rates of crime. Every 10 percent increase in the number of African-Americans living in an area corresponded with a 10 percent increase in SWAT deployments per 100,000 residents.

Mummolo surveyed 6,000 people on their feelings toward law enforcement after they each read a mock news article about a police chief looking for a budget increase. All of the news vignettes contained the same text, but the photos differed. Some featured police in normal gear, while others showed militarized police.

The respondents expressed losing confidence in policing, with support from black participants being 21 percentage points lower than white respondents. The respondents were also more likely to perceive a city as being violent if they saw militarized photos.

Overall, the respondents' support for funding for law enforcement fell by 4 percentage points with police militarization photos, and their desires for police patrols took a 3 percent hit.

- <https://www.pnas.org/content/115/37/9181>
  - <https://www.newsweek.com/how-americas-police-became-army-1033-program-264537>
- Faced with a bloated military and what it perceived as a worsening drug crisis, the 101st Congress in 1990 enacted the [National Defense Authorization Act](#). Section 1208 of the NDAA allowed the Secretary of Defense to "transfer to Federal and State agencies personal property of the Department of Defense, including small arms and ammunition,

that the Secretary determines is— (A) suitable for use by such agencies in counter-drug activities; and (B) excess to the needs of the Department of Defense." It was called the 1208 Program. In 1996, Congress replaced Section 1208 with Section 1033.

Police in Watertown, Connecticut, (population 22,514) recently acquired a mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicle (sticker price: \$733,000), designed to protect soldiers from roadside bombs, for [\\$2.800](#). There has never been a landmine reported in Watertown, Connecticut.

Police in small towns in Michigan and Indiana have used the 1033 Program to acquire "MRAP armored troop carriers, night-vision rifle scopes, camouflage fatigues, Humvees and dozens of M16 automatic rifles," the [South Bend Tribune](#) reported.

And police in Bloomington, Georgia, (population: 2,713) acquired four grenade launchers through the program, [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) reported.

Given the proliferation of military weapons and military training among America's police departments, the use of military force and military tactics is not surprising. When your only tool is a hammer, after all, every problem looks like a nail.