

Police State America

book review

Fifth Estate Collective

2003

a review of *Police State America: U.S. Military 'Civil Disturbance' Planning*, edited by Tom Burghardt. April 2002
Arm the Spirit/Solidarity: Toronto, Montreal, San Francisco. Contributions by Frank Morales, Michael Novick, Ron Ridenhour, Arthur Lubow, Mitzi Waltz, Douglas Valentine, and Tom Burghardt.

In shocking detail, the meticulously researched articles in this anthology expose the national security state's sinister blueprint for destroying democracy and crushing dissent. Deploying "civil disturbance" strategies as part of a comprehensive doctrine of "homeland defense," police, national guard and elite Army counterinsurgency units are gearing up for "operations other than war" in US cities.

"What we are dealing with in fact is an intensification of the military character of the police, a "gloves off" exposure of the military character of the police, in a period during which the need for state repression to enforce economic exploitation has grown considerably. We can liken this understanding to a correct handle on the question of "globalization" Capitalism has always been a global system, from its birth in the triangular trade in slaves and the products of slave labor. Imperialism is a stage of capitalism, and the current manifestations of international capitalist organization, "free trade" and integrated international production processes are 'more of the same'—from the Introduction—"The Police as Domestic Army of Occupation" by Michael Novick

"...the convergence of the military and the police, in the interests of corporate sponsored social control, both here and abroad, follows quite logically from popular American obeisance to their needs. With one half of all federal resources devoted to the generals and their assorted industries of death, it was only a matter of time (timing), given the needs and sick desires of the corporate rich, that the cop on the street would one day become a special ops soldier, trained to discourage dissent and to suppress protest, if necessary, violently."—from "US Military Civil Disturbance Planning: The War at Home" by Frank Morales

This book contains very well researched articles on the military's influence on domestic police agencies. Quite a few of the articles point to the fact that plans for a "Homeland Security" Department were in place at least a few years before September 11th and "everything changed." It is extremely relevant with US master fascist John Ashcroft recently calling for further integration of the military and domestic law enforcement and the repeal of the Posse Comitatus Act (the 1878 law is supposed to keep the military out of domestic law enforcement). Of course, anti-authoritarians and radicals have seen this coming for years, but it is nice to have a book with all sorts of documented government sources to share with the non-believers who would dismiss us as paranoid. Many of the articles are reprints from the under-appreciated and excellent magazine *Covert Action Quarterly*. (For more than 25 years, *Covert Action Quarterly* has published hard hitting news and analysis on the U.S. military-intelligence-media complex. Subscriptions are \$22 for one year or \$38 for two years and can be obtained by writing: Covert Action Quarterly; 1500 Massachusetts Ave. NW #732; Washington D.C. 20005.) Included in *Police State America* are articles containing details on surveillance on activists, law enforcement response to globalization protests and police intelligence centers. Well worth the read.

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