

# The War Comes Home

## Timoney, Miami & Demonizing Protest

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The State's response to the protests in Miami reveals the stark similarities between war, counter-terrorism, and the suppression of dissent at home. Congress slipped \$8.5 million to security in Miami from a recent appropriation earmarked for the "war on terror" in Iraq, ostensibly to rebuild that shattered nation.

Viewing the wreckage left behind by thousands of riot police, Miami mayor Manny Diaz proudly proclaimed, "This should be a model for homeland defense." Even more cynically, Governor Jeb Bush boasted: "I think Miami's put on a great show. I'm really proud of what they've done."

And what a show it was. Borrowing media tactics from 'the invasion of Iraq, the Miami police department invited mainstream journalists to "embed" themselves in their ranks in order to ensure a pro-police perspective. Meanwhile, the independent media was blatantly targeted for attack. When police saw journalist Ana Nogueira, a reporter for Pacifica Radio, covering a peaceful jail solidarity protest, they were heard to say, "She's not with us," before they arrested her.

Widespread reports from participants and observers clearly document a pattern of brutal and extra-legal police tactics; in response, the human rights group Amnesty International has called for a full investigation.

Where will investigators lay the blame for the bloodbath on Biscayne? Miami police chief John Timoney was presumably hired for just this occasion. From terrorizing punks, homeless people, and buskers in Tompkins Square Park in 1988 to his personal jihad against Camilo Vivieros and others after the 2000 Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, Timoney has built his career illegally attacking protesters. Timoney is an innovator in the use of surveillance, agents provocateurs, and the dissemination of outrageous lies about protesters (in Miami, residents were warned that anti-globalization protesters were spoiled rich kids who would be using squirt guns full of acid and urine). Indeed, the larger Timoney-style tactic of satanizing subversives should be countered on a variety of fronts.

Meanwhile, in a memo leaked to the media this past November, the FBI asked for help from local police departments in cracking down on the antiwar/global justice movement. The memo reveals just how thoroughly the FBI understands current protest tactics. Flatteringly, they dwell on a list of "effective and innovative strategies" used by protesters. This is of note for two reasons: these tactics work, but they are now anticipated.

Among many protest tactics, the memo specifically notes: human chains, the wearing of protective gear, use of the Internet, independent media, and most disturbingly, the use of "training camps." Presumably, "training camps" are places where nonviolence workshops are held. But after two years of unrelenting war-on-terror propaganda, the local police, the media, and the general public are bound to think of Al-Qaeda.

The FBI memo concludes by asking local police departments to inform the FBI of "indicators of protest activity." This is clearly not an agency merely trying to enforce the law. It is being used as a secret police, advancing the agenda of neoconservative extremists against a remarkably well-behaved protest movement.

When the mainstream media asked the agency to explain itself, an FBI official said, "We're not concerned with individuals exercising their constitutional rights. But it's obvious that there are individuals capable of violence at

these events. We know that there are anarchists that are actively involved in trying to sabotage and commit acts of violence at these different events, and we also know that these large gatherings would be a prime target for terrorist groups.”

Such a statement accomplishes several things. First, the outright lie (obvious to anyone who has read the memo in question) that the FBI and police aren’t actively investigating groups who operate within the confines of the law. Second, the blame is shifted onto a scapegoat, “anarchists,” about whom the general public has heard nothing but lies. This latter group is blamed for violence at protests, which is in fact systematically instigated by the police in nearly every instance. Third, by mere inference, anarchists are associated with “terrorist groups.” This same dishonest technique was successfully used to convince half of the US public that Iraq was responsible for the attacks of 9/11.

As the war-on-terror rhetoric unwittingly admits, there is only one war being waged today. It is a war being waged by a greedy oligarchy against everyone else—most particularly against those few who take a stand against it. What we saw in Miami is a greater integration of their media, their military, their police, and all institutions of repression.

Since civil liberties violations increase when the Bush regime isn’t getting its way, Miami is probably just a taste of things to come. An upcoming globalization conference in Georgia, the Republican National Convention in New York, and the presidential elections themselves are all likely staging-grounds for further police terror. In 2004, it will be critical for us to keep the pressure up against Bush’s police state. Despite its dangers, mass civil disobedience is successfully luring the State out into the open, where its true nature—violent coercion—can be seen by all.

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