US police kill more innocents than terrorists despite sinking crime rates

March 24, 2014

Crime in America has been steadily going downwards for years, dropping around 20 percent between 1987 and 2011. At the same time, police work has become increasingly safer, with deaths from gunfire among officers sinking by 33 percent over the past few years. Nevertheless, militarization in the law enforcement has surprisingly taken up in numbers as budget spending doubled, soaring from 40 billion dollars in 1982 to over 100 billion in 2012.

What is more, the ranks of state and local police personnel swelled from 603,000 to 794,000 between 1992 and 2010, which is about two-thirds as many officers as the entire active-duty US military, according to the Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics.

So why is this police force build-up at a time when the crime is on its lowest in the entire history of the United States? Advocates of militarized policing claim that this is exactly the result of more better-armed and highly-paid police forces protecting the peace. But the fact is that crime has also been down in cities where law enforcement numbers have been cut to decrease budget spending.

Policing in America has actually been ramping up despite sinking crime rates. As the effort to build a stronger law enforcement army in the country continued, a clear escalation in police brutality was simultaneously registered by numerous watchdog groups nationwide, particularly since the tragedy of 9/11.

But even before then, US lawmakers were never reluctant to give police officers more power over the rest of the population, particularly with the 1970 "no-knock" law that allowed police to conduct searches and arrests without presenting a warrant.

Since then, the rights of police in the United States compared to those they were protecting (or policing) have been increasing exponentially, with SWAT team raids soaring from hundreds annually in the 1970s to 70,000-80,000 in 2013 alone, according to a report by the libertarian CATO institute.

As a result of this, the concept of police safety has at some point overshadowed that of its initial goal, which was to "protect and serve." Far from serving the nation, officers nowadays get increasingly embroiled in harrowing murders and attacks on civilians.

In one case, a South Carolina police officer seriously hurt a 70-year-old man when he mistook the septuagenarian's cane for a long rifle. In another, an unarmed man was shot at by a New York policeman for behaving "erratically" and was later charged with causing injuries to several bystanders, who were hit by stray bullets.

In fact, while being a police officer has been getting less dangerous, the possibility of being killed by a cop has risen dramatically. All data on murders committed by police are, of course, classified, but estimates carried out by many US non-for-profits indicate that your chances of being killed in a terrorist attack are far slimmer than dying at the hand of a police officer who mistook you for a threat.

Damning evidence of this trend has been captured on video that show police beating black-and-blue or even needlessly gunning down people, even those unarmed or standing with their hands up or armed with nothing but a stick.

Now police have taken up the habit of confiscating such damaging videos to avoid publicity and associated bad reputation, even though federal courts have consistently held that citizens have a right to photograph and videotape officers engaged in police actions.

It's no surprise that, with military-styled policing on the rise, these killings of civilians and overall police brutality are rarely punished. In fact, about 95 percent of shootings end up being "justified" by US courts.

So, such is the alarming reality of today's justice system that the body count of US police action grows, while the grasp of law enforcement on public life gets tighter, at the same time eroding citizens' constitutionally protected rights.