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Americans have second thought over security and liberty

by George Bao

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 2 (Xinhua) -- After 9/11 many Americans accepted the government invasion of their civil liberties in exchange for securities, but 10 years later more Americans become worried about the further losing of their liberties.

Local press reported that police authorities in Pima County, Arizona, fired 71 shots in seven seconds at 26-year old Jose Guerena, a former Marine who served two tours in Iraq.

Guerena was killed while his terrified wife and 4-year old son hid in the closet. The SWAT team that killed him was there to serve a narcotics search warrant as part of a multi-house drug crackdown. As Guerena lay dying with his wife pleading for help, the SWAT team barred paramedics from entering the home.

Guerena's wife asserted that her husband grabbed his gun because he thought his family was the victim of a home invasion, not a police raid. Deputies initially justified their actions by claiming that Guerena fired at officers but later said he kept the gun safety on and never pulled the trigger.

According to an investigation carried out by the CATO Institute, a libertarian think tank in the U.S., "America has seen a disturbing militarization of its civilian law enforcement over the last 25 years, along with a dramatic and unsettling rise in the use of paramilitary police units for routine police work. In fact, the most common use of SWAT teams today is to serve narcotics warrants, usually with forced, unannounced entry into the home."

The CATO study found that some 40,000 of these raids take place every year, and "are needlessly subjecting nonviolent drug offenders, bystanders, and wrongly targeted civilians to the terror of having their homes invaded while they're sleeping, usually by teams of heavily armed paramilitary units dressed not as police officers but as soldiers."

"These raids bring unnecessary violence and provocation to nonviolent drug offenders, many of whom were guilty of only misdemeanors. The raids terrorize innocents when police mistakenly target the wrong residence. And they have resulted in dozens of needless deaths and injuries, not only of drug offenders, but also of police officers, children, bystanders, and innocent suspects," the report said.

Meanwhile, the Associated Press reported that the New York Police Department (NYPD) has been spying on ethnic communities with the assistance of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), questions concerning violation of liberty and overstepping of jurisdiction arise.

A recent investigation undertaken and published by the Associated Press alleged that during the 10 years following the September 11 terrorist attacks the NYPD has "become one of the nation's most aggressive domestic intelligence agencies," targeting the communities of

ethnic minorities "in ways that would run afoul of civil liberties rules if practiced by the federal government."

As the U.S. marks the 10th anniversary of the devastating 9/11 attack, polls showed a change in public opinion in matters concerning security and rights.

According to a USA Today/Gallup Poll survey, Americans who would favor the U.S. Government doing everything to protect them against terrorism - including violation of civil liberties - has gone down drastically.

Only 25 percent agreed to such a trade-off compared to 47 percent in January 2002, according to the survey.

Survey respondents pointed out that the federal government has entered into their lives so much, they don't need more interference from Washington.

The Conservative Action Alerts sent out a mass e-mail to Americans, asking them to put pressure on their representatives at the U.S. Congress to end the increasing violation of civil liberties.

It says that after 9/11 many Americans just accepted the dismantling of their civil liberties - after all, additional security measures, such as those under the USA Patriot Act, were supposed to be temporary.

But 10 years later, provisions of the Patriot Act continue to be extended; and the actions of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Transportation and Security Administration (TSA), and now the New York City Police Department (NYPD), have further undermined the Constitution by violating Americans' Fourth Amendment rights and protections, it says.

Americans are under attack; and the government is justifying its actions in stripping citizens of their constitutional rights under the guise of national security, according to the e-mail message.

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