




Are Nationalized Police on the Horizon?

“Dawn of National Police Force,” read the  Tuesday Drudge headline. The [story](#) in question, in New York’s *Daily News*, concerns proposed federal guidelines for the New York Police Department — overseen by a central-government-appointed “monitor” — and formulated in the wake of the 2013 ruling that the department’s stop-and-frisk practices are “unconstitutional.” What concerns many, however, is that this intrusion represents movement toward something certainly unconstitutional: federal control of local police.

As the *News* reported, the guidelines range from the innocuous to the perhaps insidious, from a reminder that “most people are good, law-abiding citizens” to injunctions such as “Don’t be racist” and “Do not engage in racial profiling,” though sex and age profiling are apparently okay (*The New American* [treated this](#) in-depth yesterday). And while one could imagine that “Bolshevik” Bill de Blasio’s NYC needed little help crafting politically correct police standards, “help” they are certainly getting. As the *News* wrote:

The monitor, Peter Zimroth, asked Manhattan Federal Judge Analisa Torres on Monday to approve the stack of new training materials that will be presented to the class of cadets graduating in June. He included in filings more than 75 PowerPoint slides that delve into the nitty-gritty of police work, detail [constitutional stop-and-frisk practices](#) — and give remedial directions.

But can federal involvement in local police truly be considered a remedy? Or is it a cure worse than any disease that might exist?

Of course, the guidelines’ defenders might point out that “the material was developed in collaboration with the NYPD and City Hall,” as the *News* wrote and Zimroth claimed. But critics worry that this federal intrusion is the camel’s nose inside the tent.

Or, perhaps, further inside the tent. As *The New American’s* Alex Newman [wrote](#) last month, the feds had already set in motion an organized plan to insinuate themselves into local police departments:

Under the guise of “restoring trust” between communities and police departments that have been [militarized by the federal government](#), the Obama administration’s Justice Department [announced this month](#) that it had selected six U.S. cities to serve as pilot sites, to develop and deploy federal guidance for local police....

The plan, which is controversial because it is in line with Obama administration goals to [further nationalize and federalize local law enforcement](#), ...will use U.S. taxpayer dollars to deploy “experts” and “researchers” charged with training officers to act in a manner that the DOJ deems just — in essence doing the bidding of the Obama administration.

... The first six cities to be targeted as pilot sites will be Birmingham, Alabama; Fort Worth, Texas;



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Gary, Indiana; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Stockton, California.... However, other police departments are also in the cross hairs. According to the official announcement, an unspecified number of “police departments and communities that are not pilot sites” will also be targeted for more DOJ “training” and “technical assistance.”

But what’s wrong with training and technical assistance, especially if it’s freely accepted? The issue concerning critics is that destructive changes are more effectively made not via revolutionary change, but evolutionary change. Suddenly seize power and you may spark a revolt; aggregate it incrementally and people may barely notice and can, over time, be eased into a subordinate position — it’s the [phenomenon of the proverbial frog](#) slowly cooked in the pan of water.

Note that the desire to centralize police power has already been expressed. In response to the tragic shooting of a black man by a South Carolina police officer, Al Sharpton — who has [visited the White House](#) approximately 85 times, which includes one-on-one meetings with Obama — recently [called for](#) “national law on policing.” Also note that during the fiasco in Ferguson, Missouri, Attorney General Eric Holder [said](#) that his DOJ was “prepared” to dismantle the town’s police department “if that’s what’s necessary”; the idea was that its duties would be assumed by a larger entity such as the state police.

So how could law enforcement be nationalized incrementally? Here’s the process critics fear:

1. Offer federal “help” first to large statist cities, as they’re more amenable to big-government “remedies.” But make your programs available to any municipality that will have them.
2. Knowing that “he who pays the piper calls the tune,” get them addicted to federal funding and then threaten to withhold it if they balk at Washington intrusion. Gradually increase the federal control via incremental regulation creation.
3. Using incidents such as the Ferguson shooting as a pretext, orchestrate a plan whereby smaller departments are absorbed by larger ones; continue this process until, for the most part, only large law-enforcement entities exist.
4. Once these large departments are dependent on federal money and are already operating based on federal guidelines, it’s one more small step to nationalize them completely. And given man’s imperfection, there will always be Ferguson-type incidents to use as a pretext for further control.

Yet this really constitutes a loss of control — by the people. After all, if you don’t like your local police’s policies, next election you can vote, as the case may be, for a different sheriff or a mayor who’ll appoint a better police commissioner. But when your police are controlled by Washington politicians, who are chosen by the 100 million or so Americans who vote in national elections, the will of the 15,000 people in your town is essentially rendered meaningless.

One of the illogical and unexamined aspects of the knee-jerk instinct to federalize matters as remedy is it presupposes that a bureaucrat 1,000 miles away will somehow be more just than a bureaucrat one mile away. Why? How does it make sense that an official whose name you may not know and from whom you might not be able to get even an e-mail response will be more attentive to your needs than someone who lives in your community, shops at the same stores, and whom you can approach face to face any business hour? Why assume that an official elected by you and your neighbors will be less sensitive to your needs than an official elected by everyone else?

Of course, it’s clear why a control-hungry federal politician would want to centralize powers. But when average citizens exhibit such an instinct — an emotional predisposition — a psychological explanation is



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warranted.

One factor suggesting itself is “Familiarity breeds contempt” or, as Jesus put it, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town.” It’s as with what I learned in my professional tennis days: The fellows I practiced with — even though they were lesser players — would be more of a threat in tournaments than other competitors of the same level. To the strangers it might be, “I’m playing the *number-three seed* (drum roll)”; to my practice partners it was, “I’m playing Selwyn.” Because they knew the human side to me, I just didn’t seem as imposing. Likewise, people don’t take those in their own town whom they address by their first name as seriously as strangers in Washington whom they address formally in correspondence.

Then there’s the “bigger is better” phenomenon. When you’re a child and there’s a problem, you go to someone big (an adult) to sort matters out. Of course, grown-ups are only helpful in this regard because they’re bigger (hopefully) in maturity. This disparity doesn’t in principle exist when all concerned are adults; in this case, going to big government is akin to a child going to a big age-mate for remedy: There’s no reason to suppose he’s bigger in wisdom and a better counselor. But he might be better at sorting things out with his fists and at bullying you.

Of course, many could view this childlike reaction as childish. But remember that we’re talking about *instincts* here, which are formed during the early years and are frustratingly resistant to change. Thus the saying, “Give me a child until he is seven and I will give you the man.”

Whatever the explanation, the threat posed by the instinct to centralize power reflects anything but childlike innocence. In fact, nationalizing American police has long been a communist goal, as Alex Newman [explained in his piece](#). And with sheriffs across the nation refusing to enforce unconstitutional federal (and state) gun laws, this goal is understandable. After all, you can’t get a whole nation to sing your tune if freelance musicians are roaming the countryside.



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