

The Real Issue Behind the Ferguson, Missouri Police Response: Protest Is Treated As Terrorism In America Today

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Washington Post writer Radley Balko is the leading expert on [militarization of police in America](#). Balko has testified to Congress and written books on the subject.

Balko said today that the real issue behind the Ferguson, Missouri police response wasn't the militarized police response – or the minor incidences of looting, rock-throwing and possibly Molotov cocktails by a handful of protesters – but a crackdown by government on *all* protest:

What we're seeing in Ferguson, this is not a local issue, really. I mean, this is something that's been driven by national policies, by policies that Congress has approved of and has oversight of, and could end tomorrow, if they wanted to.

The idea that when we take domestic police officers and we train them like soldiers and we give them military gear and we dress them up like soldiers and we tell them they're fighting a war—you know, war on crime or war on terror—they're going to start to see themselves as soldiers. And that's just a mindset that's not—that really isn't appropriate for domestic policing. And I think you saw that in the way that they responded to protests—not just in Ferguson, but also, you know, a lot of the crackdowns on the Occupy protesters, on the crackdowns at the political conventions over the years. I mean, this has become our default response to protest in the U.S., and it's something that, you know, I think could be very antagonistic toward the very idea of free speech and the First Amendment.

The FBI treated the peaceful protesters at the Occupy protests – who were protesting too big to fail banks, and who were predominately *white* – [as terrorists](#). More [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

[Highly-militarized, federally-coordinated](#) police used such brutal violence to break up the Occupy protests – see [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#) – that the Egyptian military used the crack down on Occupy as [justification for the murder of protesters in Tahir Square](#), Egypt. (Despite media portrayals, the Occupy protesters [were not violent](#).)

Violence was also been unleashed against [peaceful protesters](#) outside of Republican and Democratic conventions. And reporter [Amy Goodman was arrested](#) at the Republican convention for [documenting violence against protestors](#).

The real issues are that:

- Peaceful protest is [considered terrorism](#) in modern America
- [Journalists are considered terrorists](#) in modern America
- Americans have [lost virtually all of our Constitutional rights](#)

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