



# Inner Security

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## 1 Homeland Security

The US policy of 'Homeland Security' refers to the 'national effort to ensure a homeland that is safe, secure, and resilient against terrorism and other hazards where American interests, aspirations, and ways of life can thrive'. Being responsible for safeguarding US public security against a series of scenarios, including natural disasters and terrorist attacks, the tasks are roughly comparable to interior ministries of other countries. It was not until 9/11 happened that the United States Department of Homeland Security has been enacted under President George W. Bush (R), which is today the third largest US Cabinet department - only lagging behind the Departments for Defense and Veterans Affairs. Among others, the Department for Homeland Security incorporates the domestic intelligence Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The Department is met with criticism in light of the high bureaucratic costs and its numerous abuses against detained migrants, with calls for its abolition expressed by Senator Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D).

## 2 National Rifle Association (NRA)

Regarded as one of the most influential US advocacy groups, the NRA advocates gun rights, including firearm safety and competency. Within the last few decades the NRA has become increasingly the target of criticism, particularly in the aftermath of high-profile shootings. Senator Chris Murphy (D) and other politicians from the Democratic Party have been pushing for new regulations to stop people on terror watch lists from buying guns and have been urging to expand background checks. According to the Pew Research Center, public opinion favours to varying degrees (and up to 88%) a number of gun control measures. Nonetheless, numerous Republican politicians including Senator Marco Rubio (R) pushed back several potential regulations on the grounds of lacking evidence for stricter gun laws actually being able to prevent mass shootings. Prior in 1996, the NRA successfully lobbied the Congress to restrict the budget of the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) with respect to studying prevention of gun violence. As a result, CDC funding into gun-related violence has plummeted by 96% between 1996 to 2013. Furthermore, lobbying has made the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) struggle from having a database that is electronically searchable by name when tracing the origins of firearms.

## 3 Police Brutality

Abuse of authority from law enforcement personnel by means of applying excessive force while performing the official duties is labelled as 'Police Brutality'. Recent episodes of police brutality include the killing of Afro-American George Floyd after allegedly passing a counterfeit 20 \$ bill, which subsequently sparked riots throughout the U.S. and other countries. In Minnesota alone, where the murder happened, police have been using force against Black people at seven times the rate of Whites. On a national level, Black people are 2.5 times more likely than White Americans to be killed by law enforcement personnel, whereas this figure rises to 3.1 for Native Americans. According to the PNAS (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences) about 1 in every 1000 Black men

can expect to be killed by police, ultimately making racism a public health issue both on a psychological and physical scale. Part of the issue is regarded by observers to be in the exalted role the police has been enjoying in American society and its entanglement with White supremacy. The latter point is explicable with its history on the continent, as one of the first law enforcement units included the Slave Patrols, that were tasked with capturing and returning people who had escaped slavery. Hence, enforcing laws had been designed to subjugate Afro-Americans. By the 1990s, the doctrine of 'Zero-tolerance policing' had been gradually pushed through, which argues that leaving minor crimes unattended will lead to more serious crimes. Hence, police have been increasingly pushed to crack down minor offenses. This has led to increased police presence in low-income communities and the adoption of 'Stop-and-frisk' policies, allowing law enforcement officers to briefly detain people based on suspected involvement in criminal activities. U.S. Congress has not yet defined a clear baseline for police behaviour on national level. Hence, several states and cities have passed laws on these issues on their own. Moreover, increasing police presence has been advocated both by Democrats and Republicans, with Bill Clinton (D) regularly pushing during his presidency for 'put[ting] 100'000 more police officers on the streets', while funding of other key social services has gradually plummeted. As a consequence, law enforcement personnel have in part remained the only public resource in some communities, therefore having a massive array of complicated duties and military-grade equipment for which the personnel is not equipped for.

Obstacles for reforms include Police Unions, which impede to a large extent the implementation of discipline measures against officers that are breaching codes of conduct. According to the Washington Post, more than a quarter of police officers initially fired due to misconduct had to be reinstated, following appeals required by their union contracts. Nonetheless, reforms can get past police unions on a federal level. Indeed, police departments can be investigated on the grounds of human rights violations and 'Consent Decrees'. Within the latter, the Police Department agrees to make constitutional changes that are overseen by a federal court. Nonetheless, the success of civil suits against police is hampered by 'qualified immunity' which protects officers from lawsuits, which states that officers are working within the scope of their employment.

## 4 References

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