43rd KZGN News Talking Points Editorial

Should police departments be prohibited of accessing excess military equipment for their departments?

First, I want to mention that last Friday, I got stopped by a gentleman at the gas station. He commented to me about one of my past editorials. Since the comment was about an editorial some time ago, I won’t get into it again now. However, I did appreciate his stopping me and providing me more information I didn’t have. Thank you, sir.

Today’s editorial: Should police departments be prohibited of accessing excess military equipment for their departments?

Did you happen to see the New York Times report providing the President’s opinion about police departments getting excess military equipment? Here’s what the New York Times reported, “The president announced Monday that he was barring the federal government from giving certain types of military-style equipment to local police forces and sharply restricting others, and called for a broader shift in law enforcement practices across the country, in which community connections and transparency are the norms and mistrust and aggression are the exceptions.”

So, here’s the President saying that he is moving to stop the flow of excess military equipment to police departments. This is from a man that has no concept of what it is to be a police officer. He has no concept of standing strong in the face of a riot and being out numbered 100 to one. He has no idea about the officers’ families watching the TV news showing their husbands, wives, fathers and mothers out there standing a rigid line to stop a riot, when they are just hoping they live through the riot and come home safe and well.

Let’s take it a step down from the riot scenario. How about when officers have to serve search warrants on drug labs? Often times these are well armed people hold up behind steel reinforced structures that you can’t just bust in by hitting the door with a breach tool. How about them searching out suspected terrorists? Shouldn’t departments be allowed to have the necessary equipment to protect themselves from bombs going off? Let’s even take it to another level. What about in times of weather disaster or earthquakes? Often, surplus military equipment can be well used in these terrible times. Distribution of foods and supplies, and aide in relief efforts can be better accomplished using former military vehicles and equipment. A standard police cruiser does not get around well in disasters.

There are a lot of occurrences that the use of excess military equipment can be well utilized by local governments and police departments. Again, this is the federal government over stepping their responsibility. Thinking they know what is best for the cities and counties that are on the front lines in times of civil unrest or disasters. In my opinion, it is none of their business how the city and county police departments equip themselves. This is a local issue, an issue to be decided by the local governments and the police departments. What’s next, ban the use of bullet proof vests? So the officer doesn’t look intimidating? The president thinks this banning of equipment would improve the relations between the police and the communities they serve.

Again, this is the federal government thinking they know what’s best for me and my town.

I’ve lived in Cleveland, Ohio; El Paso, Texas; Flagstaff, Arizona; and came to Ridgecrest, California in 1979.

Well, news flash Mr. president. I have never feared any of those police departments. I have never thought of them as the enemy. Whenever I was approached by a police officer and asked questions, I stopped, answered their questions and then moved on. I didn’t run away from them. When I called the police to come and help me for a particular problem, they always came to help me. I was never worried about the equipment they had. The officers on the street deserve to have the best and most current equipment they have available. They are the front line and first responders when disaster hits. We expect them to be there when we need them. We expect them to do their job to protect and serve. We expect them to protect our cities and towns from bad people. We expect them to be there in times of weather and earthquake disasters. And guess what Mr. President? They are always there. The Feds won’t be there when the next riot hits. The Feds won’t be there when the next terrorist attack hits. The Feds won’t be there when the next tornado or earthquake hits. Our local police officers and county sheriffs will. They need and deserve to have the best equipment available to do their job. Remember Mr. President. All that military equipment was bought with our tax dollars. The equipment is not yours to decide who it goes to.

The equipment is our equipment. When the military is done with the equipment, letting it flow down to we the people is the right thing to do.

Here’s a video of what it can mean to have the right equipment to protect and serve. This is not a standard fire truck. It is a military truck adapted to local needs.

[https://www.facebook.com/mpora/videos/10152697660547854/](https://www.facebook.com/Mpora/videos/10152697660547854/)

In conclusion, Mr. President, butt out of local affairs. You and your advisors don’t have all the answers. You don’t know what is right for local communities. Do not interfere with our local police departments getting the equipment they need. Our lives depend on them. Yours doesn’t.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. I’d like to know what you think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.