

By Debra Sweet

Anand Gopal has written a fascinating book after learning Pashto and living in Afghanistan for 5 years. *No Good Men Among the Living*, through the stories of 3 Afghans, tells the tale of how the US quickly defeated the Taliban in 2001, and then so oppressed, alienated, and night-raided the population, that they revived the Taliban, and created thousands of indigenous operators becoming enriched by US contracts.

[Gopal, on Democracy Now! recently](#), described night raids, “special” operations, targeted killings, paramilitary forces, a “proxy war of Afghans being paid by the US to fight against the Taliban.” If you ask somebody, “What you think about the United States?” in Afghanistan, they will say, “Oh, these are the people who come and kick our doors down in the middle of the night and take our loved ones away.”

So the Special Operations forces, these are the ones who are doing what are called counterterrorism operations, which means, for example, night raids--going into people's houses, taking people who are suspected to be Taliban or al-Qaeda, sending them to Bagram. In previous years, they were sending them to Guantánamo. It also means targeted killings, so there's a list of people, list of Afghans who are supposedly enemies of the United States, who will be targeted through drone strikes or through conventional types of attacks.

But Harlem, USA? When 400 New York police raided 3 housing projects in Harlem at 5:30 am on June 4, residents described feeling as if “terrorists” were breaking down their doors. 40 young men were arrested on “gang” conspiracy charges, largely based on Facebook postings when they were juveniles. A [woman resident said](#) :

I woke up, opened my bedroom door and there was a gun in my face. Nobody knocked on my door. My son was not in the apartment. They told me, ‘Shut the fuck up’ and put my hands up, put handcuffs on me, smashed my face into a wall. They never told me what they were there for... They wouldn't let my seven-year-old grandson come out of the room, who was in there screaming. They told me they will ‘get to him later.’ They tore my house up...

We'll report further on the outrageous conduct of the raids, the threats of evictions within the larger move to criminalize Black and Latino youth. **What is the connection to the combat training soldiers and Marines got to kick down doors in Afghanistan and Iraq, and what they do in urban police departments now, as “insurgents” become “gang bangers?”**

The New York Times recently reported that [War Gear Flows to Police Departments:](#)

During the Obama administration, according to Pentagon data, police departments have received tens of thousands of machine guns; nearly 200,000 ammunition magazines; thousands of pieces of camouflage and night-vision equipment; and hundreds of silencers, armored cars and aircraft. The equipment has been added to the armories of police departments that already look and act like military units. Police SWAT teams are now deployed tens of thousands of times each year, increasingly for routine jobs.

Neenah, Wisconsin, which last had a murder 5 years ago, now has a “mine-resistant” truck, and “In the Indianapolis suburbs, officers said they needed a mine-resistant vehicle to protect against a possible attack by veterans returning from war.”



The last vehicle from Iraq returned to U.S. This vehicle arrived at the Port of Beaumont, Texas, Sunday, May 6th, 2012.