



Seattle police recruits Tre Smith, left, and Travis Duennes work together through a practice scenario at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission in Burien, Wash.

Demilitarizing our cops

States retooling police training

By GENE JOHNSON
Associated Press

BURIEN, Wash. — When prosecutor Dan Satterberg used to visit Washington state’s police academy, the seas would part before him. Recruits would snap to attention, backs to the walls, and allow him to pass.

Now, they greet him and start a conversation.

“It takes a lot longer to walk down the halls,” said Satterberg, the elected prosecutor in Seattle’s King County.

The friendlier attitude reflects a campaign underway here and elsewhere around the U.S. to “demilitarize” the police and produce officers who think of themselves as guardians of their communities, not members of an occupying force.

Calls for demilitarizing law enforcement began a few years ago but gained urgency after the violent protests over the shooting of unarmed 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, last summer.

The philosophy was endorsed this week by President Barack Obama’s 21st Century Policing task force. As part of that change in thinking, Obama curtailed the government’s practice of supplying armored vehicles, heavy weapons and other military-style equipment to police departments.

But it isn’t just about the gear.

While some critics say that good officers already consider themselves protectors and that police need the best equipment to defend themselves and the public, many law enforcement leaders see a need for a broader change in police training and culture.

That includes getting cops to use their wits rather than their weapons whenever possible, as well as instilling a strong moral compass. Supporters say the approach could reduce cynicism, corruption and maybe even suicides among officers.

“We are at this moment where we have to re-engineer how we recruit, how we train and how we supervise,” said Chuck Wexler, president of



A pair of recruits wrestle during training in fighting at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission in Burien, Wash.

the Washington, D.C.-based Police Executive Research Forum.

“De-escalation, crisis intervention, better communication skills — all of these things are what the 21st century police officer needs to have in any situation, whether it’s talking to a citizen you may have stopped or trying to defuse a situation where a mentally ill person has picked up a rock or a weapon.”

For the past few years, the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, which trains the state’s local police and sheriff’s deputies, has emphasized such skills.

The state academy relies heavily on a curriculum called “Blue Courage,” developed by a former Aurora, Illinois, police commander with support from the U.S. Justice Department. It was first used in 2013 at Arizona’s largest police academy, after local chiefs listened to a presentation.

“It struck a chord,” said Lyle Mann, executive director of the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board. “There was this feeling that the militarization, the focus on officer safety, this whole confrontational kind of thing was morphing in a way that didn’t feel good to those progressive chiefs.”

The Justice Department has spent \$1.5 million so far on Blue Courage, and it has been introduced at the New York City and Baltimore County police departments, as well as academies in Nebraska and Arizona.

Washington state’s academy has boosted the training hours devoted to

handling people with drug or mental problems, and Blue Courage principles have been incorporated into fire-arms and defensive tactics classes. Recruits can fail a training exercise if they use force when it may have been avoidable.

Where recruits were once berated by instructors and indoctrinated with stories about police killed in the line of duty, they are now offered lessons from neuroscience about how the brain reacts to respect or disrespect.

They are taught that police can’t do their jobs unless citizens see their authority as legitimate — something that is eroded with every questionable use of force, rude interaction or corrupt cop.

Hillary Clinton received sensitive info on private email account

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton received information on her private email account about the deadly attack on U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi that was later classified “secret” at the request of the FBI, according to documents released Friday, underscoring lingering questions about how responsibly she handled sensitive information on a home server.

The nearly 900 pages of her correspondence released by the State Department also contained several messages that were deemed sensitive but unclassified, detailed her daily schedule and contained information — censored in the documents as released — about the CIA that the government is barred from publicly disclosing.

Taken together, the correspondence provides examples of material considered to be sensitive

that Clinton, the front-runner for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination, received on the account run out of her home. She has said the private server had “numerous safeguards.”

Clinton’s decision while secretary of state to opt out of a State Department email account has become a political problem for her, as the Republican-led House committee investigating the Benghazi attacks has used the disclosures of her email usage to paint her as secretive and above standard scrutiny.

Clinton, campaigning in New Hampshire, said Friday she was aware that the FBI now wanted some of the email to be classified, “but that doesn’t change the fact all of the information in the emails was handled appropriately.”

Asked if she was concerned it was on a private server, she replied, “No.”

State Department

spokeswoman Marie Harf said, “It was not classified at the time. The occurrence of subsequent upgrade does not mean anyone did anything wrong.”

It’s not clear if Clinton’s “homebrew” computer system used encryption software to communicate securely with government email services. That would have protected her communications from the prying eyes of foreign spies, hackers, or anyone interested on the Internet.

Last year, Clinton gave the State Department 55,000 pages of emails that she said pertained to her work as secretary sent from her personal address. Only messages related to the 2012 attacks on the U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, that killed four Americans, including a U.S. Ambassador, were released by the department on Friday. The 296 emails had already been turned over to the House committee.

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BRIEFLY

U.S. officials: Iran enters Iraqi fight for key oil refinery

WASHINGTON (AP) — Iran has entered the fight to retake a major Iraqi oil refinery from Islamic State militants, contributing small numbers of troops — including some operating artillery and other heavy weapons — in support of advancing Iraqi ground forces, U.S. defense officials said Friday.

Two U.S. defense officials said Iranian forces have taken a significant offensive role in the Beiji operation in recent days, in conjunction with Iraqi Shiite militia. The officials were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

One official said Iranians are operating artillery, 122mm rocket systems and surveillance and reconnaissance drones to help the Iraqi counteroffensive.

IS militants purge Syrian town of Assad loyalists

BEIRUT (AP) — Islamic State group militants hunted down Syrian government troops and loyalists in the newly captured town of Palmyra, shooting or beheading them in public as a warning, and imposing their strict interpretation of Islam, activists said Friday.

The purge, which relied mostly on informants, was aimed at solidifying the extremists’ grip on the strategic town that was overrun Wednesday.

It also was part of a campaign to win the support of President Bashar Assad’s opponents, who have suffered from a government crackdown in the province during Syria’s civil war.

The capture of Palmyra has raised alarm that militants might try to destroy one of the Mideast’s most spectacular archaeological sites.



\$25,000

\$25,000

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