

USWA Calls for Congressional Investigation into Police-State Assaults in Miami

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***Union condemns use of federal Iraq reconstruction funds to subsidize "homeland repression" at FTAA meetings***

**PITTSBURGH** — The United Steelworkers of America (USWA) is [calling for a Congressional investigation](#) into "a massive police state," created in part with federal funds, to intimidate union members and others critical of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and limit their rights during FTAA meetings in Miami last week.

"Last week, the fundamental rights of thousands of Americans ... were blatantly violated, sometimes violently, by the Miami police, who systematically repressed our Constitutional right to free assembly with massive force, riot gear and armaments," said Leo W. Gerard, USWA international president, in a letter to Congressional leaders.

"It is condemnable enough that a massive police state was created to prevent American citizens from directly petitioning FTAA negotiators for redress of their grievances," Gerard said in the letter. "It is doubly condemnable," he added, "that \$9 million of federal funds designated for the reconstruction of Iraq were used toward this despicable purpose. How can we hope to build democracy in Iraq while using massive force to dismantle it here at home?"

Citing "countless instances of humiliating repression in which the Miami police force disgraced itself," Gerard said that Miami police chief John Timoney should be fired, all charges against peaceful demonstrators should be dropped, and a Congressional investigation into the Miami police department's systematic repression should immediately be launched.

"To do less would be to endorse homeland repression in the guise of homeland security," Gerard's letter concluded.

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