

**Newsweek**

Crime: Losing the Street War

Newsweek

Jan. 8, 2006 issue - A recent surge in violent crime is creating anxiety at the Justice Department and posing potential political problems for the Bush administration. The 3.7 percent rise for the first six months of 2006, cited in a new FBI report, was greater than expected and included a 9.7 percent spike in robberies. (Minneapolis and Oakland, Calif., saw jumps of more than 30 percent.) Police groups say the surge comes at the same time the White House has drastically cut aid for state and local law enforcement programs. "We don't have the support from Washington," says Los Angeles Police Chief Bill Bratton.

Government figures show the FBI has shifted agents off standard criminal cases to work counterterrorism; the bureau has 994 fewer criminal case agents than it did on September 11, 2001—an 18 percent drop. (A Justice Department rep says it's "highly unlikely" the crime increase is tied to federal funding, but they've dispatched teams to investigate.) The numbers have caught the attention of top Democrats on Capitol Hill. "If you look at the figures, they're pretty striking," says one Democratic aide, who is not authorized to speak publicly about policy. In a recent letter to FBI Director Robert Mueller, Judiciary Committee member Sen. Dianne Feinstein called the crime increases "alarming."

—*Michael Isikoff and Andrew Murr*

URL: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16409852/site/newsweek/>

© 2007 MSNBC.com