

**Violent Voices:
Anti-Government Extremism Takes on New Intensity**



An ADL Center on Extremism Special Report

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I. Introduction

"The antichrist [President Obama] will sign this [health care legislation] and start stealing money from our hard earned paychecks immediately, with his newly hired IRS agents as his strongarm. Bloodshed is coming..." Post by "mmpaints" on the American Preppers Network Forum, March 22, 2010.

During the first few months of 2010, anti-government extremism has taken on a new level of intensity in the United States. The arrests of the Hutaree militia in Michigan illustrate this passion, which exists both within and outside the militia movement. Unfortunately, the Hutaree arrests may come to be seen not as the culmination, but rather as a first step in what may need to become a major national law enforcement operation.

Monitoring of internet chatter, documented in this report, indicates that many militia members and other extremists believe that the recently passed health care legislation will be followed by the mass legalization of illegal immigrants, postponement or elimination of democratic elections, martial law and gun confiscation. In response, these anti-government extremists are saying, in many different forums, that they believe that violence may be, or clearly is, both necessary and justified.

The extent of these sentiments, combined with their sometimes shocking virulence, should serve as a warning sign that the violent rhetoric of today may be followed up with violent actions in the future.

II. Triggers

“And since when was violence and threats of violence not the American way? Ever heard of the American revolution?” Comment posted by “keithmtx,” in response to Foxnews.com article, March 25, 2010.

While many initiatives launched by the Obama administration have prompted extremist reactions, some of the most explicit threats related to the health care legislation. However, it is noteworthy that the overheated and alarmist rhetoric is not really about health care per se. Rather, the new extremist narrative – also supported conspiracist radio ideologues – is that the recently passed law is part of a more nefarious effort to institute “socialism” or “fascism”—or worse. Many on the anti-government right have asserted that the health care reform effort is in fact key to evil efforts to implement a tyrannical government by any means necessary. For such people, the specific measures of the bill are almost irrelevant; it is the bill itself that symbolizes a dark future for America.

“The bill that passed has NOTHING to do with healthcare,” wrote “TXplt” on the Gun and Game Forums on March 22. Rather, “...it is used solely as a vehicle to push an agenda—to destroy what is working in our insurance industries, to increase our government intrusion into citizens’ lives...and to eventually act as a vehicle for our power hungry miscreants to attempt to dictate every aspect of our lives.” A poster called “stainless,” writing to the Assault Web forums on the same day, thought the situation even more dire. “I don’t think you quite understand the scope of this bill,” he wrote. “From now on the gov. has absolute control of our lives...They can now declare a health ‘Emergency’ and shut down any portion of our society they want at any time. I suspect we will begin to see the practical affects [sic] of this control fairly quickly.”

Such sentiments have been common and passionate, as the following varied examples show.

- “If this hellshare is signed tomorrow by our government, I will not pay the taxes, I will not submit to this illegal and unlawful bill. The government of the United States is now a runaway, criminal organization and we the people are not constitutionally required to follow them, we have the constitutional authority to rise up and take our country back.” Post by “HighGround” to the AR-15 Forums, March 19, 2010.

- "I just had a horrible thought. Now that the government has gone rogue and ignoring the people, how long before they buy into Sharia Law?...How far are we from this nightmare with a man who has Muslim roots and was heavily financed by Muslim countries at the helm of a tyrannical government?" Post by "Emily" to the Tree of Liberty Forums, March 24, 2010.
- "There's gonna be another rounding up of the 'Jews,' but this time it's gonna be Americans who don't believe in the gov. and there [sic] gonna call us names. Prepare for it. Get your mind set for it because I know that I'm gonna be doing my part." Post by "Big Philly" to the Survivalist Boards, March 26, 2010.
- "Have you read the bill? It is a full police state bill. Your body is now owned by the state. Your children are owned by the state. Your blood, sperm, ovaries, all reproductive methods are owned by the state. Your organs are owned by the state. This is a Nazi Eugenics bill with full bailout financing to the federal reserve front companies (big insurance)." Post by "Sane" to the Prison Planet Forums, March 22, 2010.
- "The Obama Health Care bill is as illegal as sin and they should at least tell us all which government they are working for, the US or the NOW [New World Order]. Pay attention when Nancy [Pelosi] mentions our founders, she's NOT referring to the founders that wrote our Constitution & Bill of Rights, but rather makes [a] mental extrapolation and is referring to the UN—seat of the NOW." Comment by "Problem" on the Infowars Web site, March 26, 2010.
- "Obamanation is tearing this country apart. Behind the scenes he has an enormous purple-lipped grin spreading from ear to ear. He sees the damage he is doing. And he loves it." Post by "Wood Devil" to the Assault Web Forums, March 23, 2010.

III. Portents of Doom

"Guns, private property, will be the next thing. Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini and Pol Pot, all did the same thing. We are peaceful, hard working, good Christian folks. But, when they come for my guns, they are getting my bullets, FIRST!" Post by "grizctv" on the Gun and Game Forums, March 22, 2010.

If the health care bill represented the first step on a "slippery slope" for many of its most extreme opponents, there has been no shortage of extremist speculation on where that slope might lead. To most, this was the first step in the "conspiracy's" gamble for power. "THEY are making this power grab now because if they don't it will be too late," declared "Negativefunction" on the Infowars Web Site on March 26.

Because many of the extreme health care opponents believe that the bill was passed against the overwhelming wishes of the American people, and that this fact would be reflected in the upcoming Congressional midterm elections in November, a strong conspiracy current has been that the Obama administration's next step after healthcare will be to in some way nullify or prevent those elections, so that it can stay in power.

For many, the method will be the declaration of martial law. "I'm not sure how," said "Hank Mayweather" on the Infowars Web Site on March 26, "but they will steal the next election if indeed there is one. Perhaps marshall [sic] law will provide the cover to postpone or eliminate the election altogether. Are the American people really aware of just how dangerous the situation is in this country?"

Others, however, believe that the Obama administration will attempt to subvert the November elections (and the later 2012 presidential elections) by legalizing millions of illegal immigrants who would then vote to keep Democrats in office. "My fear," wrote "-06" to the Tree of Liberty Forums on March 25, "is that the Kenyan will give amnesty and voting privileges to the immigrants and seal his reelection with bought votes."

"JimmyMac65," posting on the New Hampshire Militia forums on the same day, thought it was all tied together. "After shoving 'HealthCare' down our throats, THEY are not even giving US time to recover before going onto ILLEGALS. They are deliberately trying to provoke the American People, this IS the agenda...A Way to declare Martial Law."

Many further believe that martial law will be accompanied by gun confiscation. "With the unconstitutional Obamacare health scam passed into law," wrote Indiana militia leader William Flat on a Myspace blog on March 23, "you can expect draconian gun-control provisions (that were embedded into the bill) to be enforced!!" With the people rendered unarmed, there would be no way to prevent martial law and tyranny—and it was the health care bill which would have made this nightmare possible.

Other examples of similar remarks include:

- "They are pushing for [the] endgame and going to try to arrest as many as possible; they will not let anyone stand in their way and that is what this is all about. They MUST pass the rest of their control/destroy America bills before November. Every communist/totalitarian regime has had to arrest and even kill thousands of millions of people to exist. These people are no different; will their police/military force actually kill and arrest American people for defending the Constitution?" Comment by Ragnar on the Infowars Web Site, March 26, 2010.
- "Seriously, if that monkey declared martial law in this country, those libs would be executed within 72 hours, give our countrymen a little credit here. I have dibs on Pelosi's skull. I will put it at the bottom of my outhouse so I can pee in her face daily." Post by "jimbob" on the New Hampshire Militia Forums on March 25, 2010, in response to a suggestion by another poster that martial law might prevent the next election.
- "We remain calm until what? All of us have an RFID chip under our skin? Weapons and ammo are completely impossible or illegal to get? Marshall [sic] law has been declared? A back door deal has been made to officially retire the Constitution and declare a more socialistic form of government in the name of progress? Post by "Chinook" on the New Hampshire Militia Forums on March 25, 2010.
- "They think we will stand by and wait for them to use the same methods to pass Immigration Reform/Amnesty, Cap and Trade, or whatever else they want. I am goddamn tired of it. I am doing a gear check right now. Posted by "Sayitwithamini-14" to the A Well Regulated Militia Forums, March 22, 2010.
- "This is going to get a lot worse[.] We are only about 72 hours after the passage of the act[.] Wait til you see what takes place 1 or 2 months from now and in November when they begin martial law

procedures or shooting people..." Post by "Bryan" to the A Well Regulated Militia Forums, March 24, 2010.

- "The very last thing we want is a civil war here, but I too think that is where we are headed as soon as all of their agenda is in place. I suspect there will be some sort of 'false flag national crisis' in order to suspend the mid-term elections so as to retain their grip on power." Post by "Viking" to the New Hampshire Militia Forums, March 25, 2010.
- "They will be emboldened by this 'win.' They will hit us with amnesty, mass automatic voter registration and cap/tax. In addition they have something in their evil bag of tricks, as they are not concerned about the mid term elections...They have a plan...to postpone the mid terms...if they pass amnesty, we are up a creek." Post by "libertyinourday" to the New Hampshire Militia Forums, March 25, 2010.

IV. Daring to Call It Treason

"Why doesn't the FBI go and arrest Obama, Reid and Pelosi for treason and we all call it a day? It would be so much simpler than having the people do it for you." Comment by "Sadge" in response to Foxnews.com article, March 25, 2010.

For many of the most agitated anti-government extremists, the recent legislation was actually the work of some sort of dedicated conspiracy with malign ends. This leads them to one conclusion: that those responsible for the bill had, in fact, committed treason. Not surprisingly, many people accompanied such conclusions with calls for a corresponding punishment -- death.

"Domestic enemies in office," wrote "Adino" on the Tree of Liberty Forums on March 25, "They should all be removed and imprisoned." Who were the so-called "domestic enemies?" For many, they were Democratic representatives and senators. "When you start talking about terrorists imposing their will on our nation," explained "Doc Velocity" on the Above Top Secret forums on March 24, "you must realize that Congressional Democrats are the terrorists who in no way represent the MAJORITY of the American People."

For many, hanging seemed to be the most appropriate "solution" to the allegedly treasonous acts committed by officeholders. "The Liberals suffer from excessively short necks," wrote "Bobn" on the Tree of Liberty Forums on March 24. "I propose that a simple solution exists." A few minutes later, a fellow member, "TCPatriot," agreed: "Sure cure for liberalities = Long drop and a short rope." On the A Well Regulated Militia Forums, "Flight-ER-Doc" had similar ideas. "Lamppost, Rope, Congress," he wrote. "...There must be 500 or so lampposts on Pennsylvania Avenue in D.C."

Other anti-government activists have preferred shooting. "I think each and every one of these

f---rs needs a big f---ing hole in the back of their heads for treason against the people," wrote "Charlie/NHPatriot" on the New Hampshire Militia Forums on March 25. "Redcap," writing on the AR-15 Adviser Forums on March 22, had a strikingly similar opinion: "Every piece of s---t that voted for this f---ing abortion deserves to eat a bullet."

Some other representative examples of opinion about "treason" include:

- "They kill us with air spraying, food and water [a reference to conspiracy theories about the American people being poisoned]...they need to face treason and the hang man." Comment by "Olddog" on Infowars Web site, March 26, 2010.
- "Violence is not the answer, but dealing with treason properly is." Post by "StagPower" to the AR-15 Forums, March 25, 2010.
- "They are TRAITORS to the People & the Constitution...I'm glad there [sic] feeling the heat from their treasonist actions..." Post from "Wonderer" to the Tree of Liberty Forums, March 24, 2010.
- "PIE-LOSIE [Nancy Pelosi] is gonna burn flat out in hell for all her indiscretions and I will be right next to her for mushing her in." Post by "Angelfire" to the AR-15 Adviser Forums, March 25, 2010.
- "It's NOT nice to THREATEN them...when what they really need is "PROMISED" or better yet to be sitting on a horse with [a] noose hanging in front of them from a tree limb." Post by "Motel Bravo" to the Assault Web Forums on March 26, 2010.
- "Why the f*%#k isn't there a march being planned by every 'patriot' in a state near DC to arrest and put these scumbags on trial." Post by "WrenchNinja" on the A Well Regulated Militia Forums, March 25, 2010.
- "Only people who have wronged America need fear for their lives." Comment by "Woodburner2" in response to Foxnews.com article, March 25, 2010.

V. Justifying Violence as a Tactic

"Impeachment from the rooftops, 'cause voting and calling don't work no more." Post by "Deersniper" on the Gun and Games Forums, March 20, 2010.

When the proponents and condoners of violence in response to government action have bothered to provide a justification or rationalization for the desirability or need for violence, their answer has usually been that other methods have been tried and failed—violence is the only tactic remaining.

Frequently used is language often attributed to Ed Howdershelt, an obscure individual who self-publishes science fiction novels on the Internet: "There are four boxes to be used in defense of liberty: soap, ballot, jury, and ammo. Please use them in that order." Even before the passage of the health care bill, there were many who used this sort of language. In December 2009, for example, "Sgsaur" commented on the Pat Dollard Web Site that "we've tried the soap box & the ballot box to no avail. Maybe it's time to start thinking INSIDE the box—the bullet box."

In recent weeks, an increasing number of extremists have concluded that other options had been exhausted, and that now it was time for the "bullet box." Some even felt that the situation was dire enough to "skip" some of the boxes. "The ballot, much more often than not," wrote "ouisie" to the Unorganized Militia Yahoo Group on March 25, "has been discovered to be merely a Sick JOKE where truly important matters, like Freedom, Liberty, Independence, and Sovereignty are concerned...a Different kind of VOTING is, with the FEET, and if Necessary, the INDEX FINGER."

Others have provided a more direct justification for violence in the form of a quotation by Thomas Jefferson: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots & tyrants." This quotation, though used by anti-government extremists such as militia groups even in the 1990s, has become particularly popular among anti-government activists more recently.

When Republican House Minority Leader John Boehner of Ohio denounced some of the recent threats and violent acts against elected representatives who had voted for health care reform, "Reb" remarked on the Assault Web Forums on March 24, "Oh, I get to differ. It is exactly the American way. It's the way Thomas Jefferson said we'd at times have to do to set things straight." On the AR-15 Forums that same day, "Lchuck8" agreed: "'Bout f'ing time someone reminded these communists that they SERVE the people

and when it has come to this that the only way is that the Tree of Liberty shall be watered with the blood both tyrants and patriots.”

Many people, in fact, rejected Boehner’s statement that violence was not the “American way.” A couple of days before the health care vote, “HighGround” commented on the AR-15 Forums that the Founding Fathers would have “dethrone[d] the political leaders by force. I’m sure they expect us to do the same. How dare we let our country fall after so many have shed their blood to keep us free?” On the Glock Talk Forums on March 25, “buckhunter3987” contradicted Boehner: “Well, actually it is...We did not form the republic through peaceful means.” It has been common for opponents of the health care bill to compare themselves to the colonists who started the American Revolution.

A sampling of similar sentiments include:

- “All the grassroots campaigning, all the tea parties, all the rhetoric, has focused on trying to work from the bottom up. This approach has NOT worked. Come the elections of 2010 and 2012, whether we work within the ‘system,’ use the ballot box or the bullet box, use peace or firepower to “clean house,” whatever comes...MUST BE DONE FROM THE TOP TOWN!” Post by “Big Dog” on the Gun and Games Forums, March 20, 2010.

“Personally, I only plan to use the first three boxes. The tree of liberty is withering, however, and at an intellectual level, I do understand those who are resorting to threats of violence. Even so, I do hope it doesn’t come to open rebellion.” Blog entry by “William Wallace” on the Coincidence Theories Blog, March 25, 2010.

- “Soap box (protest, petition), Ballot box (Vote in November), Jury box (lawsuits by States and People), and Ammo box. They say to think two steps ahead, better check your brass now.” Post by “SixpkAmerican” to the First Tennessee Rifles Forum, March 24, 2010.
- “Over 200 yrs ago, many, many men and boys left families and work to defend their beloved country. Why should we be different?...What this gov’t needs TODAY is a true ARMED SHOW OF FORCE from its citizens. That’s right, I said it—an armed show of force!” Post by Tim Taylor to the Well Regulated American Militias Forum, March 25, 2010.
- “They don’t listen to the American people, I personally would[n’t] mind seeing some extreme violence if that’s what it takes to finally get the point across. What did our forefathers do? They took up arms against

an oppressive government." Comment by "Crew38memphis" in response to Foxnews.com article, March 25, 2010.

- "This is Domestic terrorism? Not the American way? No, I think not! I believe it's called civil unrest & uprising and yes it has always been the American way. Americans have always stood up and will continue to stand up against tyranny. And Obama and Pelosi are both tyrants. Comment by "sickandtired75" in response to Foxnews.com article, March 25, 2010.

VI. Calls for Violence

“Political struggle doesn’t work—because of a lot of reasons, too many of them on us. Let the bullets fly.” Post by “J. Croft” on the A Well Regulated Militia Forums, March 21, 2010.

Many anti-government extremists have lately begun projecting their own feelings on the broader American public. “So how long before Americans riot?” asked “reddog801” on the Prison Planet Forums on March 21. “How long before there is civil unrest? Bring the troops home because they are going to be needed in America.” Maybe “it” has started, suggested “TheMrMitch,” a moderator on the Assault Web Forums on March 24. “Get the tar and feathers ready.”

Others haven’t been satisfied about simply preparing for a future conflict. “Well, I guess someone needs to step up and put at least a few of them in their place...under the earth,” wrote “Wood Devil” on the Assault Web Forums on March 22. “Maybe then the rest of them will wake up.” When someone on the Tree of Liberty Forums suggested putting people who voted for the health care bill “out to pasture” in November, “PissedOffAmerican” responded on March 25 that putting them out to pasture wasn’t good enough, because they could possibly come back in the future. “They need to be put UNDER the pasture,” he stated. “It’s the only logical long term solution to the problem.” To that, “Freedom or Death” wondered whether “the sub-human communist PIGfilth would make good fertilizer.”

For not a few, it was even the time for war. “Many on this forum have already stated as well, WE ARE AT WAR,” posted “APatientMan” on the A Well Regulated Militia Forum on March 25. “Lock and load, boys,” posted “backwoodzwarrior” to the same board, “our time has come. Good luck and I’ll talk to ya on the other side, wherever that might be.”

One of the most vocal proponents of violence recently has been “Seaangel” on the Well Regulated American Militias Forum. “It is time to overthrow the government, and replace it with actual people who follow GOD, and the Constitution!!!” he wrote on March 23. “Washington needs to be destroyed!!!” Seangel declared that he was “tired of talking” and that people should “make the plans, and go take down these enemies!!!” In other posts, he repeated such sentiments, urging people to “take out the trash.”

Some people praised Joseph Stack, who flew a small plane into an IRS office building in Austin, Texas, in February 2010 as a suicide attack. “Joe Stacks

of the world stand up!!! We need you now!!" is one typical example, written by "peplsuck" in a comments page for a Foxnews.com article on March 25.

When dissent against such calls to violence has occurred, it has typically not been on the grounds that violence is wrong, but rather that now is not yet the right time for violence and that the people who urge violence are being premature. Criticizing "armchair revolutionaries," "hamster" wrote on the Glock Talk Forums on March 25 that "I don't think violence and destruction of property is the answer yet." On the Tree of Liberty Forums, "sj01" posted on March 25 that "I'm not sure we are quite there YET. I think it has to become far more personal for people to really turn loose the violence." Brewer, on the A Well Regulated Militia Forums, wrote on March 25 that "we all know now is not the time...Let the steam build." On the other hand, in a subsequent post, he wrote that "When the time does come, it has to come swiftly and harsh like a lightning bolt. They are fond of the term 'Shock and Awe' because that is what they fear the most."

One thing to note is that posts that have actually *appeared* in many of these Internet forums, comment sections and discussion boards are not necessarily all of the posts that people have attempted to *make*. In many of the places where these discussions have taken place, complaints by members have revealed that moderators were deleting many of the most radical posts. To give one example, "HiramRanger," a moderator on the AR-15 Forums, warned one poster when he stated on March 20 that "We will NOT jeopardize this sight [sic] by posting content which can be deemed a threat to any public official. Find someplace else for that, don't bring it here."

Other representative sentiments regarding violence include:

- "So how much do you think the price of .223 ammo is gonna spike tomorrow?" Post by "ZombieHunter" on the Gun and Game Forums, March 21, 2010, just after the news that the health care reform bill had been passed.
- "It seems civil conflict is unavoidable one way or the other, and all the preppers [survivalists] had the foresight to be ready." Post by "resteva" on the Assault Web Forums, March 24, 2010.
- "This is a war that the people of America will not win without violence. Votes no longer matter as this has been shown by this Congress and President." Comment by "thomjeffer" in response to Foxnews.com article, March 25, 2010.

- "I think I remember an old adage from long ago, can't remember where I heard it or who said it...but it went something like this: If a man won't change his ideals with words, then you change his mind with a bullet." Post by "boondock-saint" on the Above Top Secret Forums, March 24, 2010.
- "Are we going to lie down and let these bastards take away our freedoms a little at a time or is now finally the time to rise and fight back? This has been going on for 40 years or more, Clinton, both Bushes and now this comy-jihadist [sic] mother#ucker and nothing has been done. I weep for my country as I watch her fall because I alone can not hold her erect, WE the people must unite and fight or suffer the tyranny alone." Post by "coldbore141" on the Assault Web Forums, March 23, 2010.
- "Violence...I think we're missing the point of violence, gentlemen. It's to send a message, not to simply kill; you can kill any guy on the street, but when a congressman dies, things are bound to be understood and change. The problem as to why violence has not manifested yet is because there is not an obvious, near target; we have Obama and his ilk, but these figureheads are unreachable, and not attackable for obvious reasons. There's no one else that we know of that is supporting this except the underlings such as Congress and Senate. Theoretically speaking, these would be the people to hit, or possibly those underneath them." Post by "Sickle_and_Hammer" on Above Top Secret Forums, March 24, 2010.
- "Now is the time to rise up. It's that simple. These folks clearly don't care about the Constitution. The blatant disregard cannot be dismissed anymore." Post by "cujet" on the Assault Web Forums, March 24, 2010.
- "Maybe tar & feathering will come back into style." Post by "Puppy" on the Glock Talk Forums, March 25, 2010.
- "When you can't out vote them, you out gun them. For freedom, any means justifies." Comment by "spadeace" in response to Foxnews.com article, March 25, 2010.
- "Well, I believe that line has been drawn and when yall [sic] get a plan let me know...I would rather die free than live a slave. What Obama and his coharts [sic] have done is spit on my country and that is not

acceptable." Post by "James Paul Wilkerson, Jr.," on the Well Regulated American Militias Forum on March 25, 2010.

- "I smell revolution, and it smells better than fresh apple pie coolin on grandmas window sill! At this rate, it won't be long before people are firing at the Big House! You were told it was coming, but you chose not to listen and go against the will of the people. This is what you get when you forget who you work for!!!" Comment by "arizonaright" in response to Foxnews.com article, March 25, 2010.

VII. Reactions to Threats and Intimidation Incidents

"If you're an ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE and the people who elected you to represent them want to beat, maim, or kill you based on what you're doing as their representative, what the f--k does that tell you about your fulfillment of your job mandate?" Post by "Frost 7" on the AR-15 Forums, March 25, 2010.

One of the most interesting aspects to the highly agitated wing of anti-government activists has been the reaction to the incidents of harassment and intimidation directed against Congressional supporters of the health care reform bill since its passage. Whereas most Americans were disturbed or even shocked by the threats and other incidents, and calls condemning such violence were common, the reactions among this circle of people were strikingly different.

A common reaction among agitated opponents was the notion that the elected officials "had it coming" and should have expected such a reaction. "I don't know why they didn't expect this would bring violence," wrote "Reb" to the Assault Web Forums on March 24, "Are they really that dumb?...They've effectively taken away all the other options 'We the People' had to use besides violence." "I'm NOT for violence," announced "glock27bill" on the AR-15 Forums on March 25, "but they brought this upon themselves...the wishes of their constituents were loud & clear. Vandalism is probably one of the mildest acts of outrage they could hope for."

An interesting discussion was touched off in the Tree of Liberty Forums on March 24 when one poster, "AzProtector," though saying that he didn't care about any of the death threats and other incidents, expressed a hope "that anyone contemplating such action...take care to avoid injuring bystanders...Wives, children, etc..." This was sharply opposed by "IDK," who wrote that "in real war there are no bystanders. If they are on the side of evil they need to be taken out."

Another member in turn, "Lt's Wife," found this statement "extremely disturbing." "We are not currently in a war of that type," she wrote. "...Threats of death to members of Congress, and their famil[ies] is over the line." However, she added, "The time to lock and load will come soon enough." "JoeGoliad" asserted that the "women and children of the do-badders are off-limits. Period." However, he clarified his remark by stressing "bystanding women." Nancy Pelosi, in contrast, was "fair game." One of the last words was had by "BluesStringer," who wrote that he agreed with "JoeGoliad" to a "large degree," but "these traitors have to feel the

same pain they've inflicted on us over the years. I wonder what Randy Weaver would say about wives and children being off limits? How about the surviving family members of the wives, children and mothers who died at Waco?"

A second common, though very different, reaction to news of the intimidation events was to be suspicious about the incidents themselves. "The radicals that run this country will do anything and everything to sucker us into a spot where we can be used as propaganda," explained "LRRP 5th SF" on the Assault Web Forums on March 25. "I believe this will include fake threats and possibly even real violence done to convince the people that we, not they, are the real terrorists here."

Particularly popular is the notion that the intimidation incidents have been "false flag" events; that is, events staged by the government to make it seem as if some other party carried them out. "Don't believe them," warned "Bugout Bear" on the Tree of Liberty Forums on March 24. "...They NEED you to believe they're being threatened. They NEED a provocation." For some people, there was a clear Nazi analogy: the Reichstag fire of 1933, in which the arson of the German parliamentary building was used as an excuse by the Nazis to crack down on their opponents. "Somehow all this talk of violence," commented "tonydeangelis" on a Foxnews.com Web page, "...comes across as what the Nazis did to insure full power by burning down the Reichstag and blaming it on others so they could use it as a vehicle to achieving full power control."

A variation on this premise was to claim that Obama and his supporters *wanted* violence. "The liberals want violence," stated "sidneydave" in a comment left on the Foxnews.com Web Site on March 25, "so they can send in the Gestapo and brown shirts." While some recommended not "giving them what they want," others said you can't "turn Gandhi" when dealing with a communist regime: "No, you have to turn up the anger and vitriol—the rage and civil disobedience to a boiling point."

A sampling of reactions to the news of threats and intimidation incidents includes the following:

- "Lord willing it doesn't, but if something bad happens to one of these people, I guess we could call it our very first health care death panel." Post by "Lavender" on the Tree of Liberty Forums, March 24, 2010.
- "The natural discontent over this health care bill is a perfect time for gov't to provocateur [sic] a patriot group attack against itself. It would accomplish several goals. Short term it would put a damper on

dissent and further divide the forces of freedom. Long term, it would give TPTB [The Powers That Be] more ammo to attack the resistance and act as one more reason to go after the guns." Post by "killzone" on the Assault Web Forums, March 22, 2010.

- "I certainly do not oppose the threats. They are, after all, well deserved. As a bystander, I am only waiting to see what is next." Post by "Soffitrat" on the Tree of Liberty Forums, March 24, 2010.
- "They may be using this as a false flag!...it sounds like they are fishing for things to take down groups." Post by "Dave" on the Virginia Militia Yahoo Group, March 24, 2010.
- "I like how it is assumed the 'tea party people' are behind this. Would anyone here put it past the idiots on the left doing things now knowing they have a perfect scapegoat? I would put absolutely NOTHING past these vermin...nothing." Post by "GMP" on the AR-15 Adviser Forums, March 25, 2010.
- "If they keep passing bills that the people are against, soon it won't be just threats and vandalism. They will have to have armed body guards 24/7 for them and their staff. They think the people will just go on excepting [sic] all this crap they keep ramming down our throats." Post by "Bad Hand" on the Tree of Liberty Forums, March 25, 2010.
- "While I don't condone the acts of violence I can understand why people would act out that way. A lot of people are tired of being stepped on and abused. They quite simply are doing this to let the politicians know how they feel because the people really don't have a voice anymore...Maybe violence (when no one gets hurt) will let them know that some of the people are tired and won't be pushed around anymore." Post by "dac1204" on the Glock Talk Forums, March 25, 2010.
- "I'll pray for their salvation, their safety is their problem." Post by "tygerkittn" on the Tree of Liberty Forums, March 24, 2010.
- "If these claims are true, they should have seen it coming. They called the American people traitors for standing up against them because they were not listening to us." Post by "firemedic2000" on the AR-15 Forums, March 25, 2010.
- "Well, when you refuse to listen to your constituents...anything can happen. This is just the beginning for these dirtbags!! Time to

escalate?" Post by "Olddogg" on the Tree of Liberty Forums, March 25, 2010.

- "...I wouldn't put it past Liberals to do this to create an enemy to rally around and make the Tea Party people look like thugs." Post by "holyjohnson" on the Glock Talk Forums, March 25, 2010.
- "Sounds like the perfect platform for a false flag attack, to end up coming after our guns again!!" Post by "kestrel0313" on the Tree of Liberty Forums, March 24, 2010.
- "This is quite amusing. To think that the dirty liberals believe that there would be no consequence for breaking with their vow of upholding the Constitution and rule of law." Post by "Grantbo" on the Tree of Liberty Forums, March 24, 2010.