

## **Man with neo-Nazi ties leading patrols in Arizona**

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### **Body**

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PHOENIX Minutemen groups, a surge in Border **Patrol** agents, and a tough new immigration law aren't enough for a reputed **neo-Nazi** who's now **leading** a militia in the **Arizona** desert.

Jason "J.T." Ready is taking matters into his own hands, declaring war on "narco-terrorists" and keeping an eye out for illegal immigrants. So far, he says his **patrols** have only found a few border crossers who were given water and handed over to the Border **Patrol**. Once, they also found a decaying body in a wash, and alerted authorities.

But local law enforcement are nervous given that Ready's group is heavily armed and identifies with the National Socialist Movement, an organization that believes only non-Jewish, white heterosexuals should be American citizens and that everyone who isn't white should leave the country "peacefully or by force."

"We're not going to sit around and wait for the government anymore," Ready said. "This is what our founding fathers did."

An escalation of civilian border watches have taken root in **Arizona** in recent years, including the Minutemen movement. Various groups **patrol** the desert on foot, horseback and in airplanes and report suspicious activity to the Border **Patrol**, and generally, they have not caused problems for law enforcement.

But Ready, a 37-year-old ex-Marine, is different. He and his friends are outfitted with military fatigues, body armor and gas masks, and carry assault rifles. Ready takes offense at the term "**neo-Nazi**," but admits he identifies with the National Socialist Movement.

"These are explicit Nazis," said Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project. "These are people who wear swastikas on their sleeves."

Ready is a reflection of the anger over illegal immigration in **Arizona**. Gov. Jan Brewer signed a controversial new immigration law in April, which requires police, while enforcing other laws, to question a person's immigration status if officers have a reasonable suspicion that the person is in the country illegally.

But Brewer hasn't done enough, Ready said, and he's not satisfied with President Barack Obama's decision to beef up security at the border.

Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu said there haven't been any incidents with the group as they **patrol** his jurisdiction, which includes several busy immigrant smuggling corridors. But Babeu is concerned because an untrained group acting without the authority of the law could cause "extreme problems," and put themselves and others in danger.

"I'm not inviting them. And in fact, I'd rather they not come," Babeu said. "Especially those who espouse hatred or bigotry such as his."

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Law enforcement officials said patrols like Ready's could undercut the work of the thousands of officers on duty every day across the border, especially if they try to enforce the law themselves in carrying out vigilante justice.

Ready said his group has been patrolling in the desert about 50 miles south of Phoenix, in an area where a Pinal County Sheriff's deputy reported he was shot by drug smugglers in April.

Bureau of Land Management rangers met Ready's group during one patrol, and they weren't violating any laws or looking for a confrontation, said spokesman Dennis Godfrey.

The patrols have been occurring on public land, and militia members have no real restrictions on their weaponry because of Arizona's loose gun laws.

The militia is an outgrowth of border watch groups that have been part of the immigration debate in Arizona. Patrols in the Arizona desert by Minutemen organizations brought national attention to illegal immigration in 2004 and 2005.

Such groups continue to operate in Arizona, and law enforcement officials generally don't take issue with them as long as they don't take matters into their own hands.

Border Patrol spokesman Omar Candelaria said the agency appreciates the extra eyes and ears but they would prefer actual law enforcement be left to professionals.

Former Minutemen leader Al Garza recently created the Patriot's Coalition, which uses scouts and search-and-rescue teams to alert the Border Patrol and provide first aid to illegal immigrants.

Depending on the availability of volunteers and the scouts' evidence of border crossers, patrols can vary from several times a week to once a month, Garza said. The operation is about 500 people, and includes a neighborhood watch program, legislative advisers and a horseback patrol, he said.

Technology, rather than manpower, is the focus of Glenn Spencer's American Border Patrol. The group is based at his ranch near the border. The five-man operation flies three small airplanes to ensure that the Border Patrol is present and visible along the international line.

Spencer also uses Internet-controlled cameras and works with a group called Border Invasion Pics, which posts photos of people they suspect are crossing illegally.

"Sitting out there with a bunch of volunteers looking for people is generally a tremendous waste of people and time," Spencer said. "And it's also dangerous."

Ready said he's planning patrols throughout the summer.

"If they don't want my people out there, then there's an easy way to send us home: Secure the border," he said. "We'll put our guns back on the shelf, and that'll be the end of that."

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