

Critical Update and Clarification on Operation Protect the Protectors, from Stewart Rhodes

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by [Stewart Rhodes](#) , [July 27, 2015](#)

Our Operation Protect the Protectors has been a phenomenal success nationwide, with many Oath Keepers in every state answering the call, and we have seen other groups and individuals also step up, in true American spirit, to do likewise. The response from the recruiters, from the local police, and the local communities has been overwhelmingly positive. They are grateful and touched by our willingness to take a stand in defense of our current serving military who are not being allowed to arm up in self defense even after the horrific terrorist attack in Chattanooga, TN. And by doing so, we are making long overdue connections in our local community that will pay important dividends as we work hard to get our communities better prepared for whatever is to come.

However, there has been a bit of confusion since the DOD memo(s) have come out directing the recruiters to call the local police when armed citizens show up to stand guard, and also some confusion because Army and Marine public affairs officers have issued statements “requesting” that citizens not post guard at recruiting centers and reserve centers. Some have taken that to mean we can no longer guard recruiters, or that the recruiters no longer want us there. Both beliefs are in error.

We WILL continue to guard recruiting and reserve centers.

“But what about the DOD memo?,” you may ask. Here are my thoughts on that:

We don’t stop protecting the protectors just because sell outs in the Pentagon are acting as puppets for Obama and trying to order recruiters to call the cops and report people guarding them or because DOD mouthpieces publish a statement asking us to stand down. If we were to stand down and stop protecting the recruiters, that would just put them back where they were – unarmed and defenseless. And it would put us in the position of doing exactly what our enemies want us to do. They want us to stop guarding the recruiters because it makes Obama and his minions look bad. We should not do what our enemies want. We should do what they DON’T want. And what they don’t want is for us to continue to lead the way by showing the American people what they should do in the face of terrorism – they should step up and provide security to their local community.

And when we guard a local recruiting office, we are providing real protection for those recruiters. And our enemies don’t want them protected. Radical anti-gunners love to see unarmed, defenseless victim zones, where there will be more dead victims of “gun violence” when the inevitable attack comes. They want more dead recruiters to help push restrictions on guns. They can’t wait to dance in the blood of the victims and use it to push their agenda.

Most importantly, the local recruiters across the country love us and know the directive from the brass in DC is bull. And what we have heard from actual recruiters is “hey, I can’t ask for your help but you are free to do as you think best” WINK. and they let us know they are NOT calling the cops. They just roll their eyes and laugh at that. So why bend to Obama’s will? We won’t.

And this is not putting the recruiters in a position of having to buck their chain of command. All they have to do is what they are already doing – just go about their day. The DOD did not direct the recruiters to “turn us away” because they can’t do that. The recruiters cannot tell us to leave a public sidewalk or parking lot (and wouldn’t even if they could – they LOVE us being there) and that is why the DOD did not order them to tell us to go away. Nor did the DOD try to directly tell us to go away either. They cannot

order us veterans around. All they can do is “ask” us to stop protecting the recruiters – a request we are declining to grant. They did tell the recruiters to notify the police and to fill out a threat report, but that is it. And the recruiters we have talked to are ignoring that, on their own.

Until and unless we have rank and file local recruiters telling you THEY personally don't want you there, we need to be there. So long as we have volunteers willing to post guard we need to be there.

We are not under UCMJ and thankfully not under Obama's thumb or the thumb of politically poisoned sell out generals – the perfumed princes in the Pentagon. As Obama purges the officer ranks we will see more crap like this. There will be an increasing divide between the patriotic Rank and File and the brass weenies who have sold their soul. Just a fact. If the brass doesn't like it, THEY need to fix that, not us. It is not our job to smooth over that friction between the brass and the rank and file.

Guarding the recruiters, especially after Obama and his puppets in DOD try to stop us, is the very best time to be doing this. This is THE BEST Outreach we can ever do. We will be there till the recruiters tell us to leave and they really don't want us there, or until we run out of volunteers.

MESSAGE FOR OATH KEEPERS STATE AND LOCAL LEADERS: The main point is that I don't want to see any categorical, state-wide stand downs in reaction to statements and directives coming from DOD. Otherwise, run the op as you already were, adapting to local circumstances.

We will continue to guard recruiter stations (and reserve centers, etc – anywhere they are open to the public and vulnerable) until the idiotic and evil disarmament policy is changed, and they are able to go armed to defend themselves. We will do so UNLESS and UNTIL the local recruiters at each station personally tell us they DON'T want us there and don't need us there (that they have their security covered some other way). You don't need to get an overt request from them that you be there, or an overt statement from them that they want you there. They are being pressured to not even talk to us, remember? So, just stand watch over them until and unless they personally tell you they don't want you there or don't need you there. And of course, presuming you have enough volunteers. If for any reason you can't cover a recruiting station for a period of time, let them know so they can make other arrangements and so they have a heads up on increased exposure.

An whatever you do, DO NOT post on social media any statement about not being able to protect any particular recruiting station, or those in any particular area. Don't give terrorists intel on where you will not be. Keep them guessing. Because many of our teams are covert, or a mix of covert and overt, the terrorists can never be sure whether a particular recruiting or reserve center is being watched by us (Or other groups). That is what we want – strategic and tactical uncertainty in the mind of the enemy. Even a suicidal jihadist wants a successful attack, and our being there, or possibly being there, acts as a deterrent for that reason. They don't want a failure, by having their attacker stopped before he can attain a high body count of victims. Keep them guessing, and don't give them intel on which centers are not being protected.

As always, you can run this operation in an overt manner, a covert manner, or a mix of the two at your discretion. And really, that should be up to the discretion of the local team leader on the ground depending on the circumstances at each recruiting station. In the wake of the DOD statements/directives, you do NOT have to do it in a more covert manner. You CAN, if you think that is best, but that is up to the local team leader who will make that decision based on his assessment of his AO. How you do it will depend on the local situation, and I want flexibility on that, as per the original call to action.

Different states have different legal/political/social environments, and even within a state different counties and towns have radically different legal/political/social environments, and that is why it is best for the local team leaders to have the flexibility to use their discretion to adapt and overcome in their own local AO using their own common sense and best judgment. That is the whole point of CPT – to develop effective local teams who know their local community well and are respected and trusted in that community.

Therefore, there are NO hard and fast rules from national on this. In some places, our guys have gone

overt, open carry (and in a few even with open carry long guns, though most only open carry handguns and have their long guns in the vehicle). Some have gone concealed carry, but standing in front in open view (that is how we are doing it in Kalispell, Montana. We started out open carry of handguns until the property manager asked us to conceal them. So now we go concealed handgun). Some have gone totally covert. Do whatever works best in each local area.

I personally think a mix of overt and covert is great since you get an overt deterrent, and a covert backup/QRF, but it is really up to you and your local team leaders to decide. You need to let your team leaders adapt to local circumstances and do what is best in their AO.

I just don't want any categorical stand-downs in a state. If a particular recruiting center says they don't need us (and it is clearly their sincere belief), then don't go there, or watch them covertly. But that doesn't mean to back off state wide. Take it on a case by case basis at each recruiting center/reserve center. And, of course, if a property owner tells you that you can't be there, we have to respect private property. Find another way to keep an eye on those recruiters until either they are allowed to go armed, or until your state steps up to protect them by actually posting armed guards in front of the buildings.

What the governors should be doing is calling out their state defense forces, and their state National Guard units and posting them as armed guards in front of every recruiting and reserve center. I find it baffling that they don't do this. It's a no-brainer and is something you should push them to do. But until they do what is right, we need to show the way.

Again, the local teams need to have the discretion to adapt and overcome in their own local AO using their own common sense and best judgment. That is the whole point of CPT.

And as for the contention that this is "just for show" and is not doing any good:

It is hardly "only for show" since the individual recruiters at the stations we are able to protect are in fact being protected. It matters to them, and it gets real results for them. We are not saying we will guard each and every recruiting and reserve office in America. We are saying we will guard as many as we can. And that is where communication with those local recruiters comes in. If we are guarding a particular station but no longer have enough volunteers to keep doing it, just let them know, so they can make other arrangements for their security. Where we can provide security, we should. And this is really simply a CPT operation. What are those CPT teams for, if not to provide local security to their communities when needed? That is the whole point, right? And to show the way. We are leading by our example, showing what the whole community should be doing. The next step is to get our community organized and trained enough that when there is a security threat, it is not just the local Oath Keepers and Three Percenters out there, but all able bodied citizens, as the Founders intended.

The American people are being presented with a false choice of either suffering terrorism, arson, murder, etc on one hand, or having to accept a militarized police state on the other hand. If we don't show them a third way – the Founders way – who will? That is our duty. That is why we did what we did in Ferguson, MO, for example. We were showing them a better way. Same here. And that is hardly "just for show." And this is the best RTI opportunity we have ever had. By being out there, we are talking directly to the active duty military (and young men and women who are about to enter service), we are talking directly to our local police, to our local business owners and citizens, and we are also showing everyone that we are there to back up our military and police (so long as what they are doing is constitutional). That is the very best outreach we can possibly do. Talk about winning hearts and minds. Now both the military and police knows who really has their backs – we do – so long as they honor their oaths. And the local citizens now know that we are hardly "anti-government" since we are helping protect the current serving military employees of the national government, and we are helping protect them against terrorists. That goes a long way toward countering the SPLC led smear campaign against us.

Use this operation to turbo-charge your CPTs and your organizing in your community. Use it to launch a discussion with your local police and local government about the very real security issues we face, such as the vulnerability of our schools to terrorist attack. Use this to build community and to get Americans off the couch and directly involved in their own security.

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Stewart is the founder and National President of Oath Keepers. He served as a U.S. Army paratrooper until disabled in a rough terrain parachuting accident during a night jump. He is a former firearms instructor, former member of Rep. Ron Paul's DC staff, and served as a volunteer firefighter in Montana. Stewart previously wrote the monthly Enemy at the Gates column for S.W.A.T. Magazine. Stewart graduated from Yale Law School in 2004, where his paper "Solving the Puzzle of Enemy Combatant Status" won Yale's Miller prize for best paper on the Bill of Rights. He assisted teaching U.S. military history at Yale, was a Yale Research Scholar, and is writing a book on the dangers of applying the laws of war to the American people.