



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on December 11, 2015

Top Cops Call for an Armed Citizenry to Combat Crime; Terrorism

After militant Islamists killed 14 people in San Bernardino, some sheriffs and police chiefs are defying the party line and calling on citizens to arm themselves. Law enforcement's typical message is, "Call the police. Let the professionals handle things." But now a brave few have raised a call to arms, telling citizens that since police can't be everywhere at once, it is up to individuals to protect themselves and their communities until police can arrive.



In a Facebook [video](#) post, Police Chief Randy Kennedy of Hughes Springs, Texas, responded to President Obama's call for [more gun control](#) in the wake of the deadly attack in San Bernardino, which is being investigated by the FBI as an act of terrorism. Appearing in the video in a beige Western hat, he addressed the president directly. "Mr. Obama, you need to understand what the Second Amendment is for. It is not for hunting; it is there for the American people to protect themselves against the criminal element, to protect themselves against terrorists and radical ideology, it is also there to protect us against a government that has overreached its power. You are not our potentate, sir; you are our servant," the east Texas police chief said. He added, "I strongly encourage you to trust the law-abiding American citizen because ... we won't let you down."

The New American spoke with Chief Kennedy and asked him about that trust. He said that he made his video "for the people in my community," adding, "Someone in New York or even Dallas can't understand what we face here. There's this idea that this is Mayberry and the most we have to deal with is the town drunk or Earnest T. Bass throwing rocks through windows. That's not the case."

He told *The New American* that he has worked on cases with the FBI and other agencies, including one case involving a serial killer. In some instances he has had to rely on citizens getting involved and helping him effect arrests. He said he is comfortable asking those citizens to arm themselves because "trust works both ways." He expects the citizens in his community to trust him and he trusts them.

When asked about the video he made, he said he doesn't believe his remarks are extreme in the least. "The silent majority is not wanting to remain silent anymore," he said, "All I did was add my voice to the majority." He said he decided to make the video because he watched the president's speech hoping to hear real solutions to the problem of terrorism. Instead he heard "the same old thing." He said, "I watched to hear his solution. All I heard was, 'We're not at war with Islam, don't be mean to Muslims, I'm not going to protect the border, and by the way, I want to add more gun restrictions on law-abiding citizens.'"

That's a disturbing message coming from the president, he said, because, "Anytime you have a situation where the law abiding are prevented from owning guns, that's an end run around the Second Amendment." In both the video and the interview with *The New American*, Chief Kennedy stressed that he is not advocating that everyone get a gun and carry it or that guns be used without discretion. His



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message is for the “law-abiding” citizens of his community who know how to use guns safely and with good judgment.

Chief Kennedy is not alone either. Other police leaders are saying the same thing. In upstate New York, Ulster County Sheriff Paul Van Blarcum also used Facebook to get a message out to citizens in his community. The [post](#), which begins, “ATTENTION LICENSED HANDGUN OWNERS,” says:

In light of recent events that have occurred in the United States and around the world I want to encourage citizens of Ulster County who are licensed to carry a firearm to PLEASE DO SO. I urge you to responsibly take advantage of your legal right to carry a firearm. To ensure the safety of yourself and others, make sure you are comfortable and proficient with your weapon, and knowledgeable of the laws in New York State with regards to carrying a weapon and when it is legal to use it.

I also want to remind all Police/Peace Officers both active duty and retired to please carry a weapon whenever you leave your house. We are the thin blue line that is entrusted in keeping this country safe, and we must be prepared to act at any given moment.

The post appeared on the official Facebook page of the Ulster County Sheriff’s Office one day after the ISIS-inspired mass shooting in San Bernardino.

More than 1,300 miles south of Ulster County, New York, another sheriff also posted to Facebook using his office’s official page. Hendry County, Florida Sheriff Steve Whidden [wrote](#):

In the wake of the recent attack on Americans in San Bernardino County, California, it is evident that we as a nation are under attack by radical Islamic terrorists. These people have vowed under their religion to destroy all who do not follow their beliefs. Radical Islam has openly declared war on us and has vowed to attack us here — on our soil — and they are here with more coming.

Because terrorists “have promised that more Paris-style attacks are still to come” and “we do not know when, we do not know where, and we do not know how many will come against us,” Sheriff Whidden is encouraging citizens in his county who have concealed carry permits to carry their guns with them whenever they can:

Our county is small in numbers and I feel that we are unlikely to be targeted by these evil people. However, as your Sheriff, I encourage all who are legally eligible, and trained to carry concealed weapons to do so. I do not want any of us to be helpless victims if we should fall under attack.

His post goes on to offer information about how those who qualify, but do not yet have their concealed carry permits, can obtain one. He also encourages those who “are not interested or do not have time to obtain” a permit to carry in other ways that the law allows. The sheriff also urges citizens to exercise caution and “be aware of your surroundings” as well as working with law enforcement by reporting “anything or anyone that appears to be suspicious.”

Another Florida sheriff has spoken out in favor of an armed citizenry, as well. Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey also used his department’s official Facebook page (and YouTube channel) to post a video urging citizens to arm themselves within the law and be proactive in defending themselves and their communities. “Let there be no mistake in what I’m about to say: The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun,” Sheriff Ivey says in the video, “If you are a person who is legally licensed to carry a firearm, now is that time — more than ever — to realize that you, and you alone, may very well be the first line of defense for you, your family, and others around you in a terrorist or active



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shooter based scenario.”

The sheriff made it clear that he is “no way suggesting” that citizens “take on a vigilante role.” He said, “What I am saying is that we need to be mentally and physically prepared to respond to an attack.” He said that citizens could use that preparedness and their guns to “defend and survive an attack by armed, evil people until the cavalry can arrive.” Throughout the nearly seven-minute video, Sheriff Ivey expresses his faith and trust in law-abiding citizens. Like Police Chief Kennedy, he seems to realize that “trust works both ways.” Near the end of the video — which has been viewed nearly four million times — he provides information on firearm training offered by his office, as well as how to begin the process of getting a concealed carry permit.

While many of these posts and videos are recent events, the existence of police chiefs and sheriffs encouraging law-abiding citizens to arm themselves is not new. In 2011, Sheriff Chuck Wright in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, held a press conference after a woman was attacked by a repeat offender in a park. He told the assembled press, “I’m tired of looking at victims saying, ‘There’s life after this.’ I’m tired of saying, ‘We’re sorry, we can’t keep them in jail.’”

Speaking of the attacker, he said, the man “doesn’t fight police or men folk — he just goes after women,” adding, “It’s too bad someone with a concealed weapons permit didn’t walk by. That would fix it.” Several times during the press conference the sheriff said, “I want you to get a concealed weapons permit.” He even suggested a good choice for a personal defense weapon. “They got one called The Judge that shoots a .45 or a .410 shell. You ain’t got to be accurate; you just have to get close.” He said the best gun control “is when you can get your barrel back on the target quick. That’s gun control.”

In 2013, Milwaukee sheriff David Clarke, Jr. — a strong advocate of both the Second Amendment and common sense — also encouraged the law-abiding to arm themselves so that they can defend themselves while waiting for police to arrive. He appeared on CNN for an “interview” with Piers Morgan, who — par for the course — spent the entire time berating the sheriff while talking over him instead of allowing him to answer questions.

More recently — in fact, only days before the attack in San Bernardino — Maricopa County, Arizona, Sheriff Joe Arpaio delivered the same message: Law-abiding citizens should be armed and able to defend themselves and their communities. In a press release dated December 8, his office said:

On November 30, 2015, while launching his 22nd annual mall posse patrol, for which armed posse volunteers patrol the valley malls during the holiday season, Sheriff Arpaio called on armed citizens to take a stand against domestic and international terrorism and other mass shooting events. His message went unheard until three days later when the San Bernardino incident took place.

Since then his message has reached over 14 million people via social media, and has garnered overwhelming support from many of those people.

“Now it’s the police chiefs’ turn,” says Sheriff Arpaio. “So many other people have joined the call, I want the chiefs to take a stand for what is right, and let the people who legally carry guns to protect themselves and the people around them. Let them know it is okay to do so during a mass shooting scenario until we can arrive. Everyone knows that while law enforcement is never far away, we cannot be everywhere at the same time all the time — but we will get there.”

So, while the anti-gun crowd will undoubtedly make the standard accusations about “armed vigilantes” and “simple arguments turning into bloodbaths” as communities turn into “the wild west,” the real



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message is that law-abiding citizens are trustworthy and responsible. And while police are on their way to a crime scene — whether it's a deranged individual or a coordinated terrorist attack — those law-abiding citizens are already there. They are “the first line of defense.”



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