

'It's time to act': Right-wing paramilitaries are surging in America — and threatening democracy



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On Tuesday, *The Washington Post* profiled the right-wing paramilitaries that are popping up all over the country amid national tensions.

One such activist, Peter Diaz of Washington State, “formed his own political party and is the leader of American Wolf, a roving band of civilians who have anointed themselves “peacekeepers” amid months of tense protests over racism and policing. In the name of law and order, members of his informal group have shot paintballs at demonstrators and carry zip ties and bear spray as they look for antifascists,” said the report. “We’re the silent majority,” Diaz was quoted as saying. “It’s time to act.”

These groups have sprung up in response to both the civil rights protests following the killing of George Floyd, and the lockdown orders and other public health measures imposed to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Some of the groups are less obviously militarized, like Matt Marshall's Washington Three Percenters — so named based on the [longstanding myth](#) that only three percent of the colonists resisted the British in the Revolutionary War.

“In speeches, Marshall has preached against racism and in favor of tolerance. He advocates civic duty and civil discourse,” said the report. However, “Marshall's critics see a darker reality beneath the rhetoric. Civil rights groups contend that the Washington Three Percenters is an anti-government militia that promotes conspiracy theories and seeks to undermine democratic institutions.”

“We know that their paramilitary presence has served to heighten and escalate tense situations,” said Eric K. Ward, who heads up the counter-extremist Western States Center. “These are organizations that have created space and protected individuals who are affiliated with white nationalist organizations and ideologies. They certainly haven't shown responsible leadership.”

You can read more [here](#).