

## When it's Time for Vigilantes

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There's a tendency in the prepping and survival community to focus on the big disasters, those things we refer to as TEOTWAWKI events. That makes lots of sense, as preparing for those disasters also prepares us for lesser disasters that might come our way. But it's easy for that focus to turn into tunnel vision, blocking out other things we might need to see.

As I sit here writing today, I keep a close eye on satellite radar, watching the weather closely. The day before yesterday, we received 5 ¼" of rain and today looks like it might outdo that. That rainfall was bad enough to cause flash flooding in the town I live in, as well as the nearby city. Worse than that was a 100,000-gallon backup of raw sewage through the storm sewers and contaminating the freshwater treatment plant. We couldn't use the water coming out of the tap, as it wasn't safe to drink.

Where is that sort of scenario in our disaster planning? Honestly, for most of us, it's not. It's not a big enough item to catch our attention. Nevertheless, the prepping we do for those TEOTWAWKI events covers that as well, as it means we have water supplies and the means to purify more water.



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Nevertheless, there are areas in our preparation to survive TEOTWAWKI events that may not be realistic, areas where we've made some wrong assumptions. If we allow those assumptions to shape our planning, we might find ourselves planning for some of the wrong things.

Now don't get me wrong here. There's a certain amount of assuming that goes with making any plan. Even professional planners in emergency organizations do it. But those professional planners also take a step back from their plans and try to poke holes in them. Part of that is looking for what's wrong with their assumptions or what will happen if those assumptions end up being untrue.

One of the assumptions I see a lot in the prepping and survival community is that a TEOTWAWKI event will cause a breakdown of society; more accurately, a breakdown of law and order. There's a general assumption that government will collapse when a severe enough disaster strikes, including law enforcement and the judicial system. We'll have to protect ourselves because those tasked with that job won't be there to do it.

I'm not trying to say that there won't be a breakdown of law and order. That's happened before, and it can just as well happen to us. But I don't think we see clearly what a world without law and order will look like. We think we'll be on our own, with everyone else trying to get what we have. While that may happen, that's not the biggest risk.

## Nature Abhors a Vacuum

You've probably heard the saying, "nature abhors a vacuum." It's most used about geopolitical issues. One such example is the rise of ISIS in the Middle East, which can be attributed to a political vacuum caused by US forces prematurely pulling out of Iraq after the second Gulf War. As long as US troops were in Iraq, propping up the fledgling democratic government, those terrorists kept their heads down.

But when the US pulled out, without the Iraqi government or military ready to assume power without that support fully, the terrorist quickly came together, taking territory called either ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) or ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant). It took the United States putting a coalition together and going back in to defeat ISIS and bring relative peace back to the region.

A little closer to home, we saw an uprising happen in Seattle during the summer of 2020. A group of protestors claimed several blocks of downtown Seattle as an "autonomous zone," effectively throwing out the police with the support of the mayor and city council. For four weeks, CHAZ controlled this zone, which claimed to be free from federal, state, and city law and governance. To make that point, the barriers that the inhabitants erected at the borders of their zone stated, "You are now leaving the USA."

But that doesn't mean that there wasn't any governance in place. Raz Simone, a rapper, declared himself a "warlord" and took over the area. While he did call himself by that title, he objected when former president Trump used it, claiming it made him look like a terrorist.

Yet Simone and his closest allies "policed" the area under their control and did so violently. That's almost amusing, as part of the justification for creating the zone was in protest of police brutality, specifically the killing of George Floyd.

By the way, it only took four days for the warlord and his goons to take over.

## Don't Let the Goons Win

This is a perfect example of what is likely to happen anytime the local government fails. We're not going to face a world of anarchy for long. Instead, some warlord is going to rise to take over. There will be law and order, but it will be the law and order that the warlord wants, not what anyone else wants. In that, your "rights," as guaranteed by the Constitution, won't matter at all.

Warlords are despotic dictators; nothing more. Even the title is nothing more than something granted by the media to try and make them look better. But the reality is that they aren't benevolent rulers. No warlord ever took power to give liberty to people. They did it because they wanted power for power's sake.

Those who talk about anarchy are warlords looking for an opportunity. They know that they can't take on the government, so they need the government to fall first. Then they are ready to step in and take over. While their plan isn't to use a disaster to give them that opportunity, they are opportunists who can be sure to recognize the chance that a breakdown in the government caused by a disaster is just what they need. Since they will be somewhat organized, with a group of armed people available to them, they are the ones who are most likely to try and step in to take over.

What do you think that means for your family or survival team? What will it mean for the stockpile of supplies you have stashed away in your home? These people aren't the type who will let you stay in your home, eating your food; they're the type who will come and "confiscate" it in the name of the "greater good." That greater good is feeding themselves, not those who are hungry.

If you think you can take on these people, defending your home from attack, realize that you're not dealing with just a gang of hungry people who have gathered together to get what they can. These will be professional criminals, unrestrained by the law and willing to use force to get what they want. By the time they attack your home, you can be sure that they will have had other battles behind them, and they'll have a pretty good idea of what to do to take you out, so they can take what you have. They'll be well-armed and ready to rumble.

There's a vast difference between fighting such a group and fighting a loosely organized gang of desperate, hungry people. For one thing, they will have a lot more resources to back them, and for another, there will be more of them. Turning aside such an attack will do nothing more than convince them they need to come back with more forces and with greater violence. About the only thing a "win" can do is provide you with a brief respite, during which you can make good your escape.

## Stopping the Warlords

I hope I've succeeded in convincing you that you don't want to give the warlords time to step in and take over when things go wrong. Instead, we need law-abiding citizens to step up and provide for the protection of society, should our law enforcement and judicial system fail for some reason. Our country has a long history of this, starting in Colonial America and passing through the Old West. While it is mainly considered illegal today, it is the only hope for the ordinary citizen if the law breaks down.

I'm talking about vigilante justice or vigilantism – law enforcement undertaken without legal authority by a self-appointed group of people. While that might go against the grain and goes against the idea of us separating ourselves from society so that we can protect our families, it may be what's required so that we can protect our families.

If the threats out there are going to be bigger than what we can deal with on our own, we need to solicit the help of others. That means gathering a group of people together, who all share the common interest of keeping peace in the community and protecting its citizens from these warlords. If you and I don't step up to gather such groups together, who will? If someone else does, how can we be sure they won't be a warlord who sees an opportunity to take over the community and rule?

So, where do we find these people? You can start with people that you know. Whether from your survival team or your circle of friends. Then look for groups of men and women who are likely to have the same desire to protect your community, such as:

- Church men's groups
- The local shooting range
- Hunting, fishing, and other sportsman groups
- Local militia groups
- Veteran's groups, like VFW and the American Legion

Obviously, you're going to want to stick with groups that are already armed and have some training. That's why I've listed the groups I did. Other groups might have similar interests but do not have the necessary exercise or attitude to help. A group like Mom's Demand Action might have as much interest in keeping your community safe as you do but is more than likely to demand some "common sense" gun control measure, like everyone giving up their guns so that the warlords won't use theirs.

The other big challenge you're going to encounter is that every group will think they have a right to be in charge. This could lead to infighting between the groups, going totally against your authentic purpose, and weakening your combined groups, possibly to the point where you will be giving the warlords the opportunity they're looking for.

There is no perfect solution to this, but I'd recommend starting by bringing the heads of the different groups together to form a council. If everyone has an equal place at the table, there's less chance of disputes within the group. Work democratically within that council, at least until natural leaders emerge and are recognized by everyone.

Another good tactic to use is to divide your area of operations up by group so that each group is responsible for a portion of your area, allocating those areas based on population and the size of the group. It probably won't be possible, but if those groups could be patrolling the places they live in, that would give them even more reason to work together to protect their own homes and families.

You're going to have to move quickly on this. Remember, it only took four days for a warlord to emerge in CHAZ. So it's best to start with whoever you can and then look to recruit other groups to join you, expanding your area of operations. As it grows, safety will increase, and those who would try to take over will be more likely to move on to other sites, where they won't be faced with such stiff opposition. They may be back someday to give it another try, but you'll at least have earned yourself a reprieve.

## One Final Point

There's going to be one more problem forming these groups and getting them to work together; that's food and other critical resources. Everyone will be concerned about feeding their families, and few of them will have a stockpile of supplies like you do. The preoccupation with meeting those needs may very well interfere with them being cooperative, undermining the organization you're trying to bring for everyone's safety and well-being.

You can't just tell these people to ignore that need or deal with it on their own, especially if they find out that you have food. Somehow, your vigilante group will have to go farther than protecting the community and work together to provide for the needs of the families represented within the group.

Allow me to make two recommendations along these lines.

The first is to build a directory of unlikely food sources in your area. I'm talking about places that most people won't know, such as food wholesalers, distribution centers, and local farms. Your group can also work to gather food from those resources, distributing it amongst yourselves. This will help bring even more people under your fold, as they will join to get access to that food. As time goes on, you should have enough people to start some strenuous farming efforts.

The other recommendation is to stockpile a few hundred pounds extra of rice and beans. These are inexpensive foods but will be enough to sustain life. When you're starting, before you can put that first recommendation into effect, this will give you something that you can use to bring the group together by helping meet the members' needs. Those few hundred pounds may not last very long, but at least they'll help get you started and show your goodwill to the group.

Ultimately, your vigilante group will become the new government, at least until the stable government can be reconstituted and start functioning again. The chances are that those who emerge as leaders amongst the vigilantes will have the opportunity to take part in that new government, helping the rest of your community in a whole way, rebuilding the community and, through it, people's lives.



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