

Roth: White, male, (Christian?) American terrorists

By [Jim Roth](#), Director and Chair of the Firm's Clean Energy Practice Group. This column was [originally published in The Journal Record](#) on January 18, 2016.



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On Jan. 2, protestors stormed the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Tehran, Iran, after the execution of 47 people in Saudi Arabia. This mass execution included several Shiites and a Shiite cleric, Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr. The tension was high between Shia and Sunni Muslims, which culminated with these executions. Some protestors attempted to enter the embassy,

but the police thwarted their efforts and some arrests were made.

That same day, armed protestors took over a government building in response to two individuals being convicted of arson. This self-styled militia group claims that it is defending its territory from government overreach. The group boasts that they have 150 militiamen occupying the government building and the surrounding territory, but eyewitnesses have reported that there only appears to be 15 armed protestors on site. It has been two weeks since the militiamen took over the building, and the government has not yet responded or acted to disperse the group.

Would it surprise you to know that the latter siege occurred in the state of Oregon and was conducted by Americans who are mostly white, male and perhaps even Christian? The convictions that supposedly sparked this protest came after two Oregon ranchers (also white male Americans) set fires that spread onto lands owned by the Bureau of Land Management. Due to minimum sentencing guidelines, these two individuals (Dwight Hammond and his son Steven Hammond) were sentenced to five years in prison, which enraged the “militiamen” now illegally occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon.

Some media outlets did not use the term “terrorists” when describing the Oregon “protestors” in their initial reports. They used the phrase “self-styled militia group” or something similar. Now that the protestors have occupied the federal building for more than two weeks, and understanding their use of force to effectuate their illegal demands, the word “terrorist” seems to be a better fit.

In 2010, Ammon Bundy – the leader of the purported anti-government militia group in Oregon – received a federal loan from the Small Business Administration for more than \$500,000. The Bundy family has an extensive track record of both protesting against the federal government and, perhaps

paradoxically, funding federal campaigns. Notably, Ammon's father, Cliven Bundy, was involved in an armed standoff with the Bureau of Land Management in Nevada in 2014.

However, the Hammond family and other locals in Harney County, Oregon, do not seem to support the hostile takeover of our Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Even father Cliven Bundy has denounced the legitimacy and effectiveness of the siege led by his anti-government son.

Isn't it ironic that the purported cause célèbres that allegedly prompted Bundy's terrorist act don't even support the actions of these self-appointed marauders? In fact, since the siege began, the convicted arsonists have in fact reported to prison to do their time.

Imagine if these "militiamen" who stormed and occupy an American government building were Muslim? Or brown-skinned? Might their terroristic acts have received greater condemnation and perhaps even death or arrest by now?

If we proud Americans genuinely support the rule of law, then any terrorism ought to be viewed for the act that it is and the effects that it creates, and not tied to any faith, skin color or national origin. Let's begin by arresting these armed white hypocrites and show them how judicial process works in America. Then maybe the next time they have a grievance against the rest of us who own the property they purport to take, they can let an unarmed jury decide their fate.

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