

HOW WAS BUNDY WRONG?

Dear Mr. Ryan Zinke,

I write to you to share some firsthand knowledge regarding the Bundy Ranch in Clark County, Nevada stand off with BLM. At the May candidates debate in Kalispell you commented on some of what transpired there in mid-April. Although you were not at the protest, there were many legislators from western states and sheriffs from various states who came to lend their support to the Bundy family.

Your comments, which I quote were: "The Park Service and the BLM have new SUVs with darkened windows and weapons and tasers. It scares me because not only was the government

wrong, the rancher was wrong and he was wronged. And then Americans rushed to the scene from all over the country, for what purpose? I assumed to shoot other Americans. The right thing should have been done. Call the sheriff. Call the FBI."

So the thousands of people who were there, including legislators, sheriffs, militia, Oath Keepers and just plain folks who showed up from all parts of the USA to support Mr. Bundy you say are wrong.

As I am sure you must be aware, there is a concerted effort among many of our western states to reclaim state land that has been illegally withheld by the federal government, and the feds were and are attempting to confiscate more land from the Bundys and other ranchers throughout the West in a giant land and resources grab.

Just prior to the Bundy standoff there was a meeting among many western state legislators held in Utah to address the issue of reclaiming what rightfully belongs to the states. Montana's own state Sen. Jennifer Fielder has since been appointed to head up a bipartisan legislative working group tasked with identifying these problems and exploring solutions. Further, there is a group of legislators who have started a consortium of western states (COWS) to work on this issue.

Thus, Mr. Zinke, you were correct in stating that the government was wrong. However, I fail to understand how Mr. Bundy is wrong.

Then there is your comment about people showing up to shoot fellow Americans. This statement is totally outrageous! I personally witnessed the goings on during the standoff and have film from the gathering. No one there to protest had guns drawn and aimed at the BLM, NO ONE! What I did witness and participate in and film was a very large group of protesters at the standoff on our knees and praying for a peaceful resolution to this very ugly tyrannical government trampling of one man's rights. By the grace of God our prayer was answered and calmer heads prevailed.

I do not believe that the plain folks at Lexington Green or the Old North Bridge in Concord in 1775 expected they would be part of a revolutionary war. They just wanted to let the overbearing British government know they had had enough of their years of tyranny. And if the Minute Men had not stood their ground on April 19, 1775, you and I would not have the freedom we have today, and you, sir, would not have the privilege of vying for a congressional seat in our American government.

There is a photo circulating the Internet that shows a man prone on a bridge with a rifle placed between two bridge barriers and this was the only weapon visible aimed at who we do not know. This person could have been a plant, and the photo may well have been staged. Odd that there were many photos

of the BLM with their automatic weapons aimed at us, the peaceful protesters, but these can no longer be found on the Internet.

As to your comment about how this should have been handled, that the sheriff should have been called: Sheriff Gillespie was indeed contacted. His reply to Mr. Bundy was to call the BLM. Hello! They were already there on Bundy property with weapons trained on us protesters. Many weapons and they hid behind their vehicle doors in their bulletproof vests. So tell me, Mr. Zinke, who came to do harm to fellow Americans?

The other grossly illegal activity by the BLM was the rounding up and deliberate killing of Bundy's cattle. Some were even shot and killed from choppers. The BLM had in place heavy equipment such as trucks and excavation equipment used to bury the carcasses. One can only surmise that this was a planned action since the equipment was already in place. I also have film of some of the aftermath of this alleged premeditated crime.

The lack of care given to the hundreds of animals they had stolen and corralled was appalling. Lack of feed and water was obvious. The mother cows separated from their young caused the death of many calves.

Do you, Mr. Zinke, expect Americans to just sit idly by while our tyrannical government does whatever it pleases, making no effort to restore our God given constitutional rights? Where were you when we needed you? I suspect that you were busy campaigning for an office that you do not deserve, particularly when you cannot even take the time to get your facts straight, much less stand with freedom loving patriots.

John O'Neil
Kalispell