

Thank you Chairman Bishop and this subcommittee for having this hearing on what I believe to be an important subject that is often overlooked in the national discourse. What has been happening in and around Atlanta over the police training facility is part of the ongoing repercussions of the BLM and Antifa riots in 2020.

In my capacity as the Senior Writer for Townhall, I covered many of these BLM and Antifa riots firsthand and I can tell you these were very destructive events, not just in the moment and to the cities in which they occurred, but also to our nation's overall approach to law and order. During that chaotic time in our country's history, the same story repeated itself: the far-left organized to attack not only police officers but also neighborhoods and innocent bystanders, many of whom were minorities. Sometimes, the anger was over justified police actions, like in the riot in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

I want to be clear, yes, there were BLM protests that were peaceful. The common statistic cited is around 93 percent of them were peaceful and to that I say, thank goodness, because in that 7 percent of violence, over \$2 billion worth of damage was done to places across the country, sometimes repeatedly in the same area. Dozens of lives were lost and an untold number were hurt or injured, myself included.

I also want to be clear that Antifa is very much a real movement within the United States and they can pose a real threat to the safety of innocent Americans. They are not, as Rep. Jerry Nadler claimed, a myth. I have seen their destructive actions firsthand. They go by different names, such as Rose City Antifa or the DC Youth Liberation Front, but they are united in their radical beliefs to take down not just their local police department, but the United States as we know it.

In the aftermath of so many riots, I've seen the ongoing decay that lawlessness brings in so many of our cities. The criminal element saw how fragile a police force can be when they are unfunded and under-supported. These days, it does not take a controversial police action to spark riots. We saw this in Chicago and Los Angeles just a few weeks ago.

Today, the issue is not necessarily funding. Because of the increase in crime, localities who did take money away in the name of social justice have put the money back, but the damage was done. Today's criminals have no fear, because why would they? Law enforcement is understaffed and, even when arrests are made, pro-criminal DAs give them sweetheart deals so they go back out and commit crimes again. What is being done under the guise of anti-racist measures has led to minority communities being terrorized by this encouraged criminal element.

Because of what happened three years ago, the far-left is emboldened to occupy a forest to attack police, the construction company, and the downtown area. It's a forest-version of the "autonomous" zone created in Seattle that was allowed to exist, despite its dangers, for almost a month in 2020.

I do not know where this country is headed, but I anticipate if the tensions are not lowered, events like the outcome of the 2024 presidential election may spark another wave of violence that the country might not come back from. The anger and the breakdown of order is real, it's visceral. I have seen it for myself, in both our inner-cities and at our southern border, where I have just come from. The law enforcement agencies and the judicial system must take steps now if they want to prevent a continuation of the recent violence. If they do not, then I suspect I will be as busy as I was in 2020. Thank you.