

The *TRUE* meaning of "GUN CONTROL"

(in the words of its proponents)

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The following essay originally appeared in the February, 1997 issue of *American Survival Guide* magazine. It is posted here with permission of the publisher, Y-VISIONARY Publishing, L.P., 265 South Anita Drive, Suite 120, Orange, CA 92868-3310. (Underlining does not reflect hypertext and is for emphasis only.)

Note April 19, 2001 and March 26, 1997 updates to this piece which appears at the end of this file.

"Gun control" is a vague term that means different things to different people. For example, it is unlawful for 14-year-olds to buy firearms (or for that matter, cigarettes or alcohol). There are, to be sure, many adolescents who exhibit more common sense than their parents. However, experience has shown that the activities of people below a certain age (be it 18 or 21) should be restricted due to their general lack of maturity and judgment. Laws against minors purchasing firearms are but one of many restrictions society places on young people that most of the public would find reasonable. They are, nonetheless, a form of gun control.

"Gun control" as envisioned by extremist groups such as Handgun Control, Inc. (HCI) means something entirely different. To them gun control is a means to an end -- gun prohibition. And not just for minors, violent criminals, or those who warrant institutionalization. Groups like HCI ultimately seek to prohibit firearms ownership by anyone except the government (i.e., the police and military). Two points that are central to prohibitionist thinking are: (a) in order for a society to be civilized, ordinary people must be disarmed; and (b) disarmament of the citizenry can only be achieved gradually, or as HCI's founder put it, "a slice" at a time.

Gun-prohibitionists, being true elitists, deem themselves to know what is best for the rest of us and camouflage their true agenda in order to lessen resistance from the citizenry. However, when writing in statist newspapers such as *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* gun-prohibitionists are often quite candid about their ultimate goal. In an op-ed piece entitled "*Disarm The Citizenry*", *The Washington Post*, Friday, April 5, 1996, page A19, columnist Charles Krauthammer wrote:

Ultimately, a civilized society must disarm its citizenry if it is to have a modicum of domestic tranquility of the kind enjoyed by sister democracies such as Canada and Britain. Given the frontier history and individualist ideology of the United States, however, this will not come easily. It certainly cannot be done radically. It will probably take one, maybe two generations. It might be 50 years before the United States gets to where Britain is today. Passing a law like the assault weapons ban is a symbolic - purely symbolic - move in that direction. Its only real justification is not to reduce crime but to desensitize the public to the regulation of weapons in preparation for their ultimate confiscation.

(emphasis added)

Back issues of *The Washington Post* are available on microfiche in many public libraries or from the paper's Back Issues Department at (202) 334-7239. Get a copy of Mr. Krauthammer's column and show it to the next person who asks how you can oppose "just one more" gun law. If that person happens to be a reporter, ask how he or she would feel about being "desensitized" to government regulation of the press.

Mr. Krauthammer's belief that the disarmament of the American public must be achieved gradually is nothing new. The July 26, 1976 issue of *The New Yorker* magazine contained an interview with Nelson T. Shields, III. "*A Reporter At Large - Handguns*", page 53. Mr. Shields (also known as "Pete" Shields) was a founder of the National Council To Control Handguns, which subsequently changed its name to Handgun Control, Inc. (HCI). On pages 57-58 of *The New Yorker* article, Mr. Shields was very forthright as to the ultimate agenda of his then-fledgling organization:

"We're going to have to take one step at a time, and the first step is necessarily - given the political realities - going to be very modest. Of course, it's true that politicians will then go home and say, 'This is a great law. The problem is solved.' And it's also true that such statements will tend to defuse the gun-control issue for a time. So then we'll have to start working again to strengthen that law, and then again to strengthen the next law, and maybe again and again. Right now, though, we'd be satisfied not with half a loaf but with a slice. Our ultimate goal - total control of handguns in the United States - is going to take time. My estimate is from seven to ten years. The first problem is to slow down the increasing number of handguns being produced and sold in this country. The second problem is to get all handguns registered. And the final problem is to make the possession of all handguns and all handgun ammunition - except for the military, policemen, licensed security guards, licensed sporting clubs, and licensed gun collectors - totally illegal."

(emphasis added)

Charles Krauthammer and Pete Shields are not alone in their desire to see the American public disarmed. Attorney Ronald Goldfarb wrote in an op-ed piece in *The Washington Post*, "[n]o reform can be meaningful without a tough program for dismantling existing arsenals, applying not just to handguns but to all assault weapons (and ammunition). After a brief amnesty, the dismantling of all unregistered and unregulated weapons must be swift and thorough." "*Domestic Disarmament*", *The Washington Post*, November 21, 1993, page C3. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D., N.Y.) Advocates that a 10,000 percent tax be levied on certain types of ammunition, effectively raising its cost out of sight. "*Guns Don't Kill People. Bullets Do.*" *The New York Times*, December 12, 1993, page E15. Adoption of "a prohibitive excise tax on the sale of ammunition" is also advocated by Lloyd Cutler, White House Counsel to both Presidents Carter and Clinton. "*License and Restrict Handguns*", *The Washington Post*, December 21, 1993, page A23. After passage of the "Brady Bill" (which imposed a five business day waiting period on the sale of handguns) *The Washington Post* editorialized that, "[t]here remains much more to (especially in regard to banning assault weapons),. . ." "*Gun Law From Barth To Brady*", *The Washington Post*, December 1, 1993, page A24. In another editorial entitled "*Gun Control In Haiti*", this same paper equated gun control with firearms confiscation by American troops occupying that island. *The Washington Post*, November 29, 1993, page A22.

"Disarmament", "restrict", "confiscation", "prohibitive tax", "banning". That is language used by people who don't want other people to bear arms, period.

UPDATE. . . .

The Washington Post Wednesday, March 26, 1997 Page A19

In an op-ed piece entitled "**End the Domestic Arms Race**" Hubert Williams, president of a group calling itself the "Police Foundation" bemoans the presence of "200 million guns in private hands". Mr. Huber advocates:

"In the short term, of course, the police must be given the firepower that's required to combat the firepower they now face. In the long run, however, we need fewer guns. Semiautomatic weapons and other weapons of war have no legitimate place in civil society and ought to be banned outright, right now. . ."

(emphasis added)

The Washington Post Tuesday, April 17, 2001 Page A16

In an editorial entitled "**Guns at the Fairgrounds**" the Post's editorial board discusses a proposed extension of the county's "gun free zones" to include "multipurpose exhibition facilities" such as fairgrounds. This measure is intended to shut down gun shows that have been very popular in Montgomery County. The editorial states, in pertinent part:

"If we had our way, there would be a federal ban on the general sale of handguns. Failing that, we support regulating the sale and ownership of handguns, registration of those weapons, licensing of handgun owners, a federal law closing gun show loopholes, tighter gun safety measures and curbs on the easy flow of other firearms."

(emphasis added)

Once again, gun control boils down to -- **a gun ban.**