Written by
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Myth #3: Gun Control Has Reduced The Crime Rates In Other Countries

1. Fact: The murder rates in many nations (such as England) were ALREADY LOW BEFORE enacting gun control. Thus, their restrictive laws cannot be credited with lowering their crime rates.1
2. Fact: Gun control has done nothing to keep crime rates from rising in many of the nations that have imposed severe firearms restrictions.
* Australia: Readers of the USA Today newspaper discovered in 2002 that, "Since Australia's 1996 laws banning most guns and making it a crime to use a gun defensively, armed robberies rose by 51%, unarmed robberies by 37%, assaults by 24% and kidnappings by 43%. While murders fell by 3%, manslaughter rose by 16%."2
* Canada: After enacting stringent gun control laws in 1991 and 1995, Canada has not made its citizens any safer. "The contrast between the criminal violence rates in the United States and in Canada is dramatic," says Canadian criminologist Gary Mauser in 2003. "Over the past decade, the rate of violent crime in Canada has increased while in the United States the violent crime rate has plummeted." 3
* England: According to the BBC News, handgun crime in the United Kingdom rose by 40% in the two years after it passed its draconian gun ban in 1997.4
* Japan: One newspaper headline says it all: Police say "Crime rising in Japan, while arrests at record low."5
3. Fact: British citizens are now more likely to become a victim of crime than are people in the United States:
* In 1998, a study conducted jointly by statisticians from the U.S. Department of Justice and the University of Cambridge in England found that most crime is now worse in England than in the United States.
* "You are more likely to be mugged in England than in the United States," stated the Reuters news agency in summarizing the study. "The rate of robbery is now 1.4 times higher in England and Wales than in the United States, and the British burglary rate is nearly double America's."6 The murder rate in the United States is reportedly higher than in England, but according to the DOJ study, "the difference between the [murder rates in the] two countries has narrowed over the past 16 years."7
* The United Nations confirmed these results in 2000 when it reported that the crime rate in England is higher than the crime rates of 16 other industrialized nations, including the United States.8
4. Fact: British authorities routinely underreport crime statistics. Comparing statistics between different nations can be quite difficult since foreign officials frequently use different standards in compiling crime statistics.
* The British media has remained quite critical of authorities there for "fiddling" with crime data. Consider some of the headlines in their papers: "Crime figures a sham, say police,"910 and "Police figures under-record offences by 20 percent."11 "Police are accused of fiddling crime data,"
* British police have also criticized the system because of the "widespread manipulation" of crime data:

a. "Officers said that pressure to convince the public that police were winning the fight against crime had resulted in a long list of ruses to 'massage' statistics."12
b. Sgt. Mike Bennett says officers have become increasingly frustrated with the practice of manipulating statistics. "The crime figures are meaningless," he said. "Police everywhere know exactly what is going on."13
c. According to The Electronic Telegraph, "Officers said the recorded level of crime bore no resemblance to the actual amount of crime being committed."14
* Underreporting crime data: "One former Scotland Yard officer told The Telegraph of a series of tricks that rendered crime figures 'a complete sham.' A classic example, he said, was where a series of homes in a block flats were burgled and were regularly recorded as one crime. Another involved pickpocketing, which was not recorded as a crime unless the victim had actually seen the item being stolen."15
* Underreporting murder data: British crime reporting tactics keep murder rates artificially low. "Suppose that three men kill a woman during an argument outside a bar. They are arrested for murder, but because of problems with identification (the main witness is dead), charges are eventually dropped. In American crime statistics, the event counts as a three-person homicide, but in British statistics it counts as nothing at all. 'With such differences in reporting criteria, comparisons of U.S. homicide rates with British homicide rates is a sham,' [a 2000 report from the Inspectorate of Constabulary] concludes."16
5. Fact: Many nations with stricter gun control laws have violence rates that are equal to, or greater than, that of the United States. Consider the following rates:

High Gun Ownership Countries

Low Gun Ownership Countries

Country

Suicide

Homicide

Total*

Country

Suicide

Homicide

Total*

Switzerland

21.4

2.7

24.1

Denmark

22.3

4.9

27.2

U.S.

11.6

7.4

19.0

France

20.8

1.1

21.9

Israel

6.5

1.4

7.9

Japan**

16.7

0.6

17.3

* The figures listed in the table are the rates per 100,000 people.
** Suicide figures for Japan also include many homicides.
Source for table: U.S. figures for 1996 are taken from the Statistical Abstract of the U.S. and FBI Uniform Crime Reports. The rest of the table is taken from the UN 1996 Demographic Yearbook (1998), cited at http://www.haciendapub.com/stolinsky.html .

6. Fact: The United States has experienced far fewer TOTAL MURDERS than Europe does over the last 70 years. In trying to claim that gun-free Europe is more peaceful than America, gun control advocates routinely ignore the overwhelming number of murders that have been committed in Europe.

* Over the last 70 years, Europe has averaged about 400,000 murders per year, when one includes the murders committed by governments against mostly unarmed people.17 That murder rate is about 16 times higher than the murder rate in the U.S.18

* Why hasn't the United States experienced this kind of government oppression? Many reasons could be cited, but the Founding Fathers indicated that an armed populace was the best way of preventing official brutality. Consider the words of James Madison in Federalist 46:

Let a regular army, fully equal to the resources of the country, be formed; and let it be entirely at the devotion of the federal government; still it would not be going too far to say, that the State governments, with the people on their side, would be able to repel the danger . . . a militia amounting to near half a million of citizens with arms in their hands.19

1Kleck, Point Blank, at 393, 394; Colin Greenwood, Chief Inspector of West Yorkshire Constabulary, Firearms Control: A Study of Armed Crime and Firearms Control in England and Wales (1972):31; David Kopel, The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy: Should America Adopt the Gun Controls of Other Democracies (1992):91, 154.
2Dr. John R. Lott, Jr., "Gun laws don't reduce crime," USA Today (May 9, 2002). See also Rhett Watson and Matthew Bayley, "Gun crime up 40pc since Port Arthur," The Daily Telegraph (April 28, 2002).
3 Gary A. Mauser, "The Failed Experiment: Gun Control and Public Safety in Canada, Australia, England and Wales," Public Policy Sources (The Fraser Institute, November 2003), no. 71:4. This study can be accessed at http://www.fraserinstitute.org/shared/readmore.asp?sNav=pb&id=604 .
4"Handgun crime 'up' despite ban," BBC News Online (July 16, 2001) at http://news.bbc.co.uk/low/english/uk/newsid_1440000/1440764.stm
. England is a prime example of how crime has increased after implementing gun control. For example, the original Pistols Act of 1903 did not stop murders from increasing on the island. The number of murders in England was 68 percent higher the year after the ban's enactment

(1904) as opposed to the year before (1902). (Greenwood, supra note 1.) This was not an aberration, as almost seven decades later, firearms crimes in the U.K. were still on the rise: the number of cases where firearms were used or carried in a crime skyrocketed almost 1,000 percent from 1946 through 1969. (Greenwood, supra note 1 at 158.) And by 1996, the murder rate in England was 132 percent higher than it had been before the original gun ban of 1903 was enacted. (Compare Greenwood, supra note 1, with Bureau of Justice Statistics, Crime and Justice in the United States and in England and Wales, 1981-96, Bureau of Justice Statistics, October 1998).

5"Crime rising in Japan, while arrests at record low: police," AFP News (August 3, 2001); "A crime wave alarms Japan, once gun-free," The Philadelphia Inquirer, 11 July 1992.

6"Most Crime Worse in England Than US, Study Says," Reuters (October 11, 1998). See also Bureau of Justice Statistics, Crime and Justice in the United States and in England and Wales, 1981-96 (October 1998).

7See BJS study, supra note 6 at iii.

8John van Kesteren, Pat Mayhew and Paul Nieuwbeerta, "Criminal Victimisation in Seventeen Industrialised Courtries: Key findings from the 2000 International Crime Victims Survey," (2000). This study can be read at http://www.unicri.it/icvs/publications/index_pub.htm . The link is to the ICVS homepage; study data are available for download as Acrobat pdf files.

9Ian Henry and Tim Reid, "Crime figures a sham, say police," The Electronic Telegraph (April 1, 1996).

10Tim Reid, "Police are accused of fiddling crime data," The Electronic Telegraph (May 4, 1997).

11John Steele, "Police figures under-record offences by 20 percent," The Electronic Telegraph (July 13, 2000).

12See supra note (Crime figures a sham...)

13Ibid.

14Ibid.

15See supra note (fiddling).

16Dave Kopel, Dr. Paul Gallant and Dr. Joanne Eisen, "Britain: From Bad to Worse," NewsMax.com (March 22, 2001).

17The number of people killed by their own government in Europe averages about 400,000 for the last 70 years. This includes Hitler's extermination of Jews, gypsies and other peoples (20,946,000); Stalin's genocide against the Ukrainian kulaks (6,500,000); and more. R.J. Rummel, Death by Government (2000), pp. 8 and 80.

18At our historic worst, murders in the United States approached 25,000 in 1993 -- or 23,180 to be exact. So even applying our highest single-year tally over the past 70 years would mean that Europeans have experienced 16 times as many murders as we have in the United States.

19THE FEDERALIST 46 (James Madison). Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF