

What Doesn't John McCain Want You To Know?

WWW.NRALIVE.COM
FEBRUARY 2002

AMERICA'S 1st
Freedom

OFFICIAL JOURNAL of the NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

The
Violence
Policy
Center
Asks...

Can
You be
Trusted?

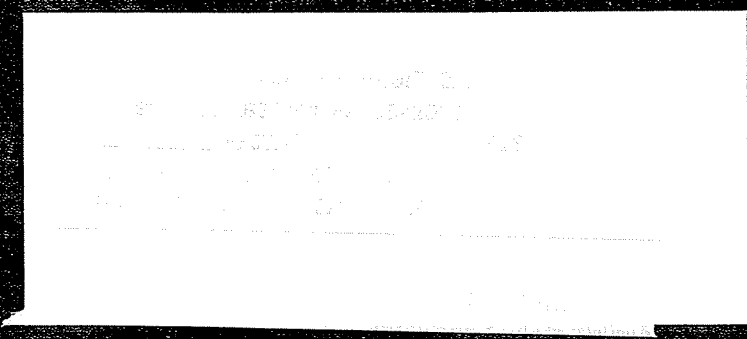




Illustration by Gary Locke

What Doesn't John McCain Want You To Know?

Anti-gun groups, led by Americans for Gun Safety, have teamed with U.S. Sen. John McCain to exploit terrorism in order to advance their gun control agenda. Their first target of opportunity is the traditional American gun show.

by JAMES PATE

GUN SHOWS IN THE UNITED STATES—as John McCain and the former Clinton administration staffers at Americans for Gun Safety (AGS) explain it—have suddenly become an irresistible magnet for foreign terrorists.

These terrorists regularly sneak into shows, the McCain/AGS claim goes, to exploit a “loophole” in federal law and buy large numbers of guns. This hogwash is being sold to the American people in a slick ad campaign funded by New York City billionaire Andrew McKelvey.

McKelvey founded AGS and spends millions every year in a personal crusade to restrict Second Amendment rights. Operating with unaccountability, his agenda includes efforts to abolish gun shows, federally regulate all gun sales between private citizens, and register all law-abiding gun owners.

Despite all McKelvey’s expensive ads, the gun show “loophole” argument ignores the fact that federal laws already prevent criminals—and that word includes terrorists—from going to gun shows and buying firearms, everywhere in the country.

And, despite the ad blitz, the idea that Osama bin Laden and other terrorist bosses overseas arm themselves with small arms bought in the United States makes as much sense as Alaskans having ice flown in from Florida.

Peshawar, Pakistan, located only a few miles from Afghanistan’s busiest

border crossing, is one of the world's most notorious cash-and-carry gun markets. Machine guns are common. One can send a 12-year-old boy with a few \$20 bills to the bazaar to buy an AK-47 as easily as an American mom sends her child out for a loaf of bread.

Hand grenades are available, as are surface-to-air missiles and rocket launchers. Leftover U.S.-made Stinger missiles from the CIA-sponsored war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan have moved through the same black market.

Unlike U.S. gun shows—where licensed dealers must do the same background checks and fill out the same federal forms as they do when selling a gun in a store—Asia's gun markets are infamous for cash-and-carry transactions. Anyone of any age who has the money can buy, no questions asked.

This begs the obvious question: If Middle East terrorists can get more guns—not to mention more powerful weapons—faster and cheaper at home, why would they risk coming all the way to the United States to stand out like sore thumbs at a gun show?

The answer is, they wouldn't. But those who hate gun shows and what they deride as "America's gun culture" are hoping logic won't apply as they seek to exploit public fear over the possibility of additional terrorist acts. McCain likely will attach his gun show bill—s.890—as an amendment to other legislation in January, possibly the homeland security bill. In the anxious climate of a wartime home front, its chance of passage is much improved.

"It is critical that NRA members and anyone else who doesn't want to see gun shows become a thing of the past get to their friends and start working the phones," said Jim Baker, executive director of the NRA Institute for Legislative Action. "We don't have much time. Everyone

should let their U.S. Senators know they oppose this cynical attack on our rights."

In a win-at-any-cost zeal to renew attacks on the right to keep and bear arms, the gun control camp acted quickly in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to exploit the nation's intense emotional turmoil. Osama bin Laden swiftly replaced the Columbine killers as the talisman by which to substitute emotion for fact in public policy debate.

If Middle East terrorists can get more guns—not to mention more powerful weapons—faster and cheaper at home, why would they risk coming all the way to the United States to stand out like sore thumbs at a gun show?

"Fact" sheets deliberately distorted cases of alleged foreign terrorists buying at U.S. gun shows. These "misinformation" sheets have been regurgitated almost verbatim by glib news reporters.

USA Today trumpeted three cases taken from the AGS releases, including that of Ali Boumelhem, a Michigan resident linked to the terrorist organization Hezbollah. Convicted one day before the Sept. 11 attacks of conspiring to smuggle guns and ammunition to Lebanon, he has become the AGS poster boy in McKelvey's zeal to spread the lie that gun shows are a steady source of guns for foreign terrorists.

AGS mischaracterized FBI testimony. The Bureau, which had Boumelhem, a convicted felon, under surveillance for months prior to his arrest, saw him shopping at three different gun shows in Michigan. He also was seen unloading "weapons and explosives" in Beirut. The implication, of course, was that these were the same items purchased at gun shows in Michigan.

AGS's source was *The Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, which was much more specific about the Beirut sighting than the AGS release. The *Bulletin* reported that Boumelhem was seen "unloading shipments of automatic weapons, explosives, grenades and rocket launchers," which are not sold at gun shows anywhere in this country.

AGS also trotted out the case of Muhammed Asrar, a Texas shop owner from Pakistan who, *USA Today* reported, "was arrested in an investigation of the Sept. 11 attacks." Omitted was the fact that the probe failed to link Asrar with the terrorist attacks, and there was no indication that he ever shipped guns overseas, or bought them for any reason other than personal protection.

"He pleaded guilty to immigration violations and illegal possession of ammunition," the newspaper reported. "The Pakistani store owner said he had bought handguns, rifles and a submachine gun at gun shows since 1994." The report failed to note, however, that submachine guns can't be bought at gun shows. So if Asrar's claim is true, he should have been prosecuted on a more serious charge, violating the National Firearms Act.

(Continued on page 68)

FIRE IT UP FOR 100,000 HOURS!

Introducing the Silver Bullet from PocketLite™ — the rugged little light with a big bright beam that uses state-of-the-art LED technology for up to 100,000 hours of continuous use! Perfect for the field, on the water, in your pocket, in your vehicle... anywhere you might need instant reliable white light.

\$15.95

Plus Shipping & Handling
Dealer Inquiries Welcome

*The Little
Light with
The Big
Beam.*

PocketLite™

To order visit our website at
www.pocketlite.net
or call: 866-548-3123

Mail Call

from page 7

school principal. The only way we can be sure of what is taught in our school is to get involved. Join curriculum committees and parents' groups. If you want to know what is taught in U.S. History, ask for a copy of the curriculum, or a course outline to see what textbooks are being used. Visit your local school and pay attention to the issues there; you can influence what policies are put in place and what is taught in the classrooms if you get involved. As for me, after I've read both my *American Hunter* and *America's 1st Freedom* magazines, I put copies in the school library. You may not be able to do that in your local school, but I suggest you find out. Today's kids like to read magazines, and

mine get used a lot. We also need to get the Eddie Eagle GunSafe Program into our schools.

We've been offering the program in our elementary school for a few years now and plan to continue. Thanks for a great magazine.

Gregory Lund
Twin Valley, MN

Kmart Outrage

In your article titled "Kmart's Corporate Cowardice," (*America's 1st Freedom*, Oct. 2001, p. 39) you ended with, "Once the threat had passed, the company reportedly planned to resume sales of firearms."

NOT TO ME! I'll buy my firearms somewhere else from now on, thank you.

William E. Graham
Salem, OR

"Mail Call" is intended to give members a chance to comment on the materials published in *America's 1st Freedom* or on other timely topics related to our right to keep and bear arms. Send your letters to: Mail Call, *America's 1st Freedom*, 11250 Waples Mill Rd., Fairfax, VA 22030-9400.

The Tradition...
The Passion...
The Commitment

Add American
HUNTER

Only \$15 for 12 action-packed issues!



Call 1-877-672-2000

Contributions, gifts or membership dues to the NRA are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes.

McCain's Secret

from page 44

Another terrorist case AGS cites is that of Conor Claxton, an Irishman from West Belfast, convicted for using a straw buyer at a Florida show to purchase guns that were mailed back to Ireland. Contrary to claims made by AGS and McCain, Claxton, who was sentenced to four years in prison, was nonetheless acquitted of the specific charge of smuggling to the Irish Republican Army.

McCain, McKelvey and their cohorts conveniently fail to mention the most important aspect of each of their examples. In every case, the system worked—the violators were arrested, tried and convicted.

Convicted felons face a possible 10-year prison sentence just for walking into a gun show. Federal law already prohibits non-resident and illegal aliens from buying guns.

They may respond that it is the

private sales between individuals at gun shows that pose a potential threat from terrorists. But if the goal of would-be terrorists is to procure firearms in quantity, it would be difficult to do so through private transactions, unless the seller was willing to commit a federal felony by "engaging in the business" without a license.

In the end, the deceit behind this campaign to further restrict the rights of law-abiding citizens serves more than a corrupt political agenda. By extension, it lends support to those who hate America's freedom and seek to destroy our way of life.

Action Alert!

Please call your U.S. Senators at (202) 224-3121 and urge them to oppose this deceitful attack on traditional American gun shows. You can also use the "Write Your Reps" tool at www.nraila.org.

Parting Shot

by ALAN KORWIN

Alan Korwin is the author of six books on gun laws, including the unabridged guide *Gun Laws of America*, and runs the Web site gunlaws.com

Gun Show Bill Is Not What They Say

Mass media publicity on the proposed McCain/Lieberman gun show bill is grossly inaccurate.

The bill has almost nothing to do with what you've probably heard so far. The so-called "gun show loophole" headlines are a minor detail and basically obscure what the bill really does.

I've just finished studying the eight pages of legalese. Here is what it calls for:

1. Unprecedented federal control over gun shows nationwide—perfectly legal gun shows become strictly outlawed without prior federal approval, licensing and registration of each show;
2. Centralized federal licensing and registration of every gun show promoter in the nation;
3. Centralized federal registration of every vendor at any gun show in the country. A private individual looking to sell a single gun would be treated as a vendor under this law and must be registered even if the gun isn't sold;
4. Centralized collection of "any other information" on gun show attendees, as determined solely by the Secretary of the Treasury;
5. Imprisonment for attending a gun show and failing to give up any information required by regulations of the Secretary of the Treasury;
6. Imprisonment of any gun show promoter who fails to register a single vendor;
7. Imprisonment of gun show promoters who are proven to have not notified every person attending a gun show of the new rules, and obtained from attendees any information the Secretary of the Treasury mandates by regulation;
8. Submission by gun show promoters of vendor registration logs a) 30 days before any gun show, and b) additional submission of updated vendor registration logs 72 hours before any gun show, and c) additional submission of vendor registration logs within five days of the close of any gun show, under penalty of arrest and imprisonment for non-compliance;
9. Identification of vendors only by use of federally approved photo ID that may include use of a social security number, electronically encoded data, or "biometric identifiers" such as fingerprint, voice print, retina scan, iris scan or similar (as defined under 18 USC 1028(d)(2));
10. Creation of a new license (in addition to a gun show promoter license), similar to FFLs, for individuals who want access to the NICS national background check system for facilitating gun show sales for private citizens;
11. Regulations to be issued by the Secretary of the Treasury on the procedures, data collections, methods and implementation of the entire process to federally

- control gun shows, in addition to the requirements made by the proposed statute; such regulations would not be known, drafted or even suggested, until after the McCain-Lieberman law is enacted;
12. Enlargement of the federal bureaucracy and appropriation from taxpayers of "such funds as are necessary" to license, register and monitor an estimated 10 million non-criminals who attend the thousands of gun shows held annually in America; and
 13. Oh yes, I almost forgot about the so-called "loophole" part the media is so excited about—the McCain-Lieberman bill would make an honest private citizen a criminal for transferring a gun to another honest private citizen, without first registering the transfer with, and getting permission from, the federal government (represented by the FBI at its data complex in Clarksburg, w.v.).

Transfer or possession of a firearm to or by a criminal (a "federally prohibited possessor") is completely unaffected by the McCain-Lieberman "loophole" bill, so I guess it's accurate to characterize it as a loophole bill.

To sum up: Perfectly legal gun sales—with no victims or criminal activity of any kind—are outlawed at gun shows by the McCain-Lieberman bill, unless the sale is pre-registered with the federal government; real crimes are totally unaffected; and the federal government take over full control of gun shows—which have been previously free of government infringement for more than 200 years. ☪

America's 1st Freedom (ISSN 1530-8448) Volume 3, No. 2, is published monthly by the National Rifle Association of America, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, VA 22030-9400, (703) 267-1000, for the benefit of its members. Membership dues (U.S. and possessions) \$35 a year, \$85 for 3 years, \$125 for 5 years. \$3.75 per year is designated for a magazine subscription. For foreign postage add \$5 a year in Canada and \$10 elsewhere. Periodicals Postage paid at Fairfax, VA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *America's 1st Freedom*, c/o National Rifle Association, P.O. Box 420648, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0648.