



Gun Industry in Us: Consequences and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Violence is all-prevalent. At some places, the causes of violence are obviously political. It is also induced by apolitical factors and can be compounded by various social situations that lead to precarious outcomes. In USA, the violence caused by rampant use of guns is turning terrifying. The rising gun crime is a major concern there today. This paper tries to give an analysis of this predicament and trace out the political doublespeak that is adding to the emerging scenario.

KEYWORDS : America, Gun Industry, Mass Shootings

The recent mass shootings in America are a disturbing phenomenon. Some of the statistics on US gun violence reveals how mass shootings and other firearm incidents have become a routine in a country with nearly as many guns as people. There have been about 294 mass shootings in 2015 and some 9,956 people have been killed in various gun incidents (Gunter, 2015). It is obvious now that more Americans die in gun homicides and suicides every six months than have died in the last 25 years in every terrorist attack and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq combined (Furler, 2015).

According to research by PolitiFact, a project run by *Tampa Bay Times* to check the truth in US politics, there were about 1.4 million firearm deaths in US between 1968 and 2011 compared to 1.2 million US deaths in all wars ever fought by the country. President Barack Obama while facing staunch opposition to his desire for tighter gun laws asked the media to compare the number of US citizens killed by terrorism to those killed by gun violence. President Obama revealed that US spends more than a trillion dollars per year defending itself against terrorism, which kills a tiny fraction of the number of people in comparison to those killed by ordinary gun crime (Gunter, 2015). According to figures from the US Department of Justice and Council on Foreign Affairs, around 11,385 people died on average annually in firearm incidents in the US between 2001 and 2011. In the same period, only 517 people were killed in terror-related incidents annually (BBC News, 2016).

With such an alarming state of affairs in a hegemon nation like US, the spread of unbridled violence in rest of the world can be well imagined. The guns manufactured to get people killed in other parts of the world are backfiring. The gun culture perpetuated by US in outside world is eating up its own people. The booming gun industry is presenting a predicament. Today, guns outnumber the masses in US. There are more guns than people living there. Sounds atrocious.

Interestingly, as guns have turned into mortal monsters, more death-defying than any terrorist (by the definition of US), they are also considered as a source of entertainment, sport and self-defense for millions of Americans. On June 18, 2015, following a mass shootout at a church in Charleston, South Carolina, the morning edition of the *Charleston Post & Courier* carried the news on its front page but had a sticky note Ad attached to it on the same day that was about the 'Ladies Night at a particular gun shop'. The Ad promised a pistol or revolver, and 50 rounds of ammo for use on the shooting range, including eye and ear protection (Dogan, 2015).

The paradoxical situation has reached to a brim where newspaper editorials advocate a humdrum approach towards handling of such a tricky issue. The *Economist* writes, "Those who live in America, or visit it, might do best to regard mass shootings the way one regards air pollution in China: an endemic local health hazard which, for deep-rooted cultural, social, economic and political reasons, the country is incapable of addressing" (MS, 2015).

Intellectuals and policy makers in US cannot afford to draw such a trivial analogy. It makes zero sense. Air pollution and gun violence are divergent problems. One is health hazard and latter a life hazard. Per-

haps the continuity of mass killings has led to normalization of such happenings. The pain and rage over a period has started turning into a general practice that is eventually getting lost in the din. It has been complicated by failure of leaders and politicians to push for a national debate on gun control agenda, without being cornered by any lobbying political fringe.

For US, the architect of war on terror and inventor of all sort of propaganda, the moral dilemma is getting murkier with rising internal gun violence. While US terms outsiders as wicked "suicide bombers" indoctrinated by a particular belief system, their own homegrown mass shooters strive for a label today. For Americans, they are not terrorists, they are "the pseudocommando—a type of mass murderer who kills in public during the daytime, plans his offense well in advance, and comes prepared with a powerful arsenal of weapons. He has no escape planned and expects to be killed during the incident". Research in US suggests that the "pseudocommando" is driven by strong feelings of anger and resentment, flowing from beliefs about being persecuted or grossly mistreated (JAAPL, March 2010).

Therefore, the plausible reasons given for a "pseudocommando" to be a mass murderer are his 'anger and resentment' and a calling for better mental health care. Whilst the "Fidayeen" have no such 'research' to back-up their discontent, so their revulsion is inevitably related to their religion! What logic!

They say dictators contain the seeds of their own destruction. So do guns. They contain the bullets for their makers. When guns roar, they don't listen to anything or anyone. Guns have proven to be the ship-pers of death in the world.

If gun is supplied and smuggled to wreak havoc everywhere else, how can it spare its source? Its high time, not only US, but all other nation-states who champion violence for their own designs, stop playing with human lives.

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