



## Mac Deford: Newtown Massacre; How Will It End?

By: Thomas McAdams Deford – December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012

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Right after the Newtown schoolchildren were shot to death, President Obama promised "to use whatever power this office holds" to prevent further massacres. There is "no excuse for inaction."

- New York's Mayor Bloomberg, reacting to Obama: "It's time for the president to stand up and lead and tell this country what we should do. This should be his Number 1 agenda," adding that "the National Rifle Association's power is vastly overrated."

- A CBS poll taken over the two-day period immediately after the Newtown murders found 57% thought gun control laws needed to be more strict, a big jump compared to 39% a year ago. In the days immediately after the Arizona shootings involving Congresswoman Giffords, there had been a similar jump in those wanting stricter controls.

- Former Arkansas governor and Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, the day the young children were killed: "After we have systematically removed God from our schools, we should not be surprised at the carnage."

- Former Alaska governor Palin, stressing the need to put more faith in God, attacked "the political and media elites" for their comments designed "to avoid facing the reality of a fallen culture."

- Texas Congressman Louie Gohmert suggested that if the school principal had "had an M4 in her office," she could have stopped the killings.

- The Congressional Research Service, in a report issued on gun control last month, noted that 11,000 Americans are murdered each year by guns, which accounts for two-thirds of all homicides.

- A recent study by the Harvard School of Public Health found that the US "murder rate is roughly 15 times that of other wealthy countries."

- In Japan, which has the strictest gun laws in the developed world, 11 people were killed by guns in 2008, one-tenth of 1% of the Americans killed that same year by guns.

- In 1996, following a mass shooting that killed 35, Australia banned assault weapons and tightened licensing requirements. Within 10 years, the gun murder rate had dropped by 59%. In the 18 years prior to the ban, there had been 13 gun massacres; since then, none.
- Robert Levy, the chairman of the libertarian Cato Institute said, after Newtown: "We would be better advised to focus on early detection and treatment of mental illness."
- Florida's Senator Marco Rubio, considered a potential GOP presidential candidate for 2016, said he "remains a strong supporter of the 2nd Amendment," adding that he would be "open to measures that could keep guns out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill."
- In Colorado, a single-day record was set for gun-purchase background checks the day after the Newtown shootings; the backlog has yet to be cleared.
- Meanwhile, Cerebus Capital Management, a hedge fund, announced it was selling the company that makes the .223 Bushmaster, the semi-automatic rifle used in the Newtown massacre.
- David Gregory, the host of NBC's Sunday morning "Meet the Press," asked 31 senators on the NRA approved list, almost all Republicans, to discuss the issue two days after the massacre: "We had no takers."
- Commenting on a NY Times op-ed piece, one reader suggested, "Ask your congressman, 'Have you taken money from the NRA or its lobbyists?'"
- In 1959, before the NRA had kicked into high gear, a Gallup poll found 60% of Americans were in favor of "a law that would ban the possession of handguns," except for police and security officials: 36% were against the law. Fifty years later, the figures had reversed.
- In the last two decades, guns owned by Americans have increased from 200 million to 270 million. In the same period, states that prohibit the carrying of concealed weapons have gone from seven to one; and a court in that last hold-out state has just declared the law unconstitutional.
- Two Democratic senators, both with "A" ratings by the NRA, wavered. Joe Manchin of West Virginia: "Everything should be on the table." Virginia's Mark Warner: We need "stricter rules on the books."
- Joe Scarborough, the host of MSNBC's "Morning Joe," a conservative Republican who served four terms as a Congressman, always with NRA's "A" rating, pulled a dramatic switch: "Our Bill of Rights does not guarantee gun manufacturers the absolute right to sell military-styled high-caliber semi-automatic combat assault rifles with high-capacity magazines to whoever the hell they want. It is time for Congress to put children before deadly dogmas. It's time for politicians to start focusing more on protecting our school yards than putting together the next fundraiser."

- Five days after going into lockdown in reaction to the massacre - it had deactivated its Facebook, and its Twitter account had gone silent - the NRA announced it was "prepared to offer meaningful contributions to make sure this doesn't happen again."

- In Michigan, the Republican governor vetoed legislation, which had passed the state legislature the day before the Newtown shooting, authorizing concealed weapons in schools. While in South Carolina, a Republican state legislator introduced a similar bill that would allow school employees to carry guns in schools. And in Ohio, their Republican governor announced he would sign legislation that would make it easier to renew gun licenses and carry concealed weapons.

- In California, local legislators introduced a bill that would require background checks, with one-year permits, for all those buying ammunition. And Democratic Senator Diane Feinstein announced she will introduce an updated version of the assault weapons ban, which expired in 2004, on the first day the Senate is in session in the new year.

By then Christmas will have come and gone, the dead 6- and 7-year-olds in Newtown will be buried and off the front pages of our newspapers. The NRA will have come roaring back to life, its "meaningful contributions" a band-aid over the bloodshed. Will Obama's rhetoric, as Bloomberg fears, be once more just that? Or will, under his leadership, the US finally do something?

President Obama, January, 2011, immediately after the Giffords' shooting in Arizona:  
"We cannot and will not be passive in the face of such violence."

Bloomberg: "We are the only industrialized country that has this problem. In the whole world, the only one."

And likely to remain so?