

IF ABE WERE PREZ



by Samuel Hux

I cannot imagine a serious person arguing that an assault weapon like the AR-15 is a legitimate hunting rifle. If you want to shoot a deer for instance you want one clean shot to kill it; you don't want to tear the flesh to pieces. The only reason for the AR-15 is to kill the enemy in military combat with a weapon that does not demand precise and expert marksmanship of the highest class to be lethal. That's why the US military developed or contracted the weapon in the first place. . . and in the last place. That's it: there are self-evident truths. Any attempt to justify the sale to civilians of such a weapon self-destructs. The proper answer to anyone who disagrees is "Shut up, I explained." Surely those who want teachers to be armed do not wish them to carry assault rifles in the classroom or think a pistol is going to discourage a heavily armed assailant. (Perhaps my "Surely" is

too casual.)

When I was a young man I enlisted in the United States Army for a tour of duty, just missing combat by a matter of weeks, for which I thank the Lord. For two years of my enlistment I served as cadreman at the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. For the last year of the two I was Supply Sergeant of an infantry company. Adjoining my supply room was the armory, where rifles and ammunition were kept under lock and key. . . unless issued to a soldier or soldiers on special duty or for practice on the rifle range. It's been several decades now so I cannot swear that this is still US Army practice. . . but I would be surprised if it is not. I assume that the security and legitimate use of the AR-15 is as precious as was that of the semi-automatic M1 Garand of my day. I have been wracking my brain recently trying to recall when—after basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina—while even in an active infantry company, I had an M1 on my shoulder as daily companion, and the only memories I come up with are occasional regimental guard duty and a the occasional full battle-dress and armor assemblies for inspection by the colonel. It is hard for me to imagine soldiers strolling about Benning today with AR-15s slung over shoulder.

The point is that unless the Army has changed radically, when not in a combat situation a soldier does not have easy access to an armed weapon of war. But a civilian can buy an assault rifle in a store as well as ammunition. How can any politician justify this? I mean of course how can he or she justify it morally? Let me put this more strongly:

When I was a supply sergeant in the United States Army I did not have the casual access to an M1 Garand that a clever psychopathic American civilian can have now to an automatic Assault Rifle as well as ammo. *Insanity* is too light a word!

I find it amazing that the most popular proposal for gun

reform—among politicians at any rate—is raising the age for purchase of weapons of war to 21. This should make parents deliriously happy. . . . don't you think? No more teenage shooters: only fully adult murderers from now on!

The only reform that makes sense, effectively and morally, is the total ban on sales of weapons of war to civilians, period. But we know full well how unlikely that is given the history of the senate and house so far. The only answer is what Joe Biden seems unlikely to do: an executive order by the president of the United States.

I have been asking around recently. . . . and few people seem to know that Abe Lincoln's *Emancipation Proclamation* was an Executive Order! But Lincoln had guts!