

Obama Is Wrong: We Don't Lead the World in Mass Violence

by Conrad Black



The predictable has followed the atrocities in El Paso and Dayton. Barack Obama raised the standard when he issued a statement condemning “language coming out of the mouths of any of our leaders that feeds a climate of fear and hatred or normalizes racist sentiments.” This is a bit rich coming from someone who sat with his wife contentedly in the pews of Jeremiah Wright’s Chicago church for 20 years listening to his white-baiting apologia for black violence and international terrorism, including the 9/11 attacks.

There are the usual hortatory fulminations about “crushing” white supremacy and other “racist” attitudes, contending for air-space with the customary promises of prayers for the dead, wounded, and bereaved—commendable to the extent they actually occur. We are assured that the cities “will come back” and will “come together,” (of course they will, communities

survive), and police chiefs with four stars on each shoulder like General George S. Patton congratulating their officers, in the case of Dayton, very deservedly. In El Paso, I would like to know more about why firing continued, at least intermittently, for twenty minutes and the murder suspect escaped briefly in his car before being apprehended.

At least there has been no replication of the tragically [incompetent police failure](#) at the Parkland, Florida high school last year where 17 people were murdered and 17 injured while security waited outside.

The clear meaning of Obama's remarks are that President Trump is contributing to a climate of violence by making statements that emphasize racial distinctions. There is no truth to this; the president has made no such statements. It strains credulity to imagine there is something racist about wishing to restrict the right of entry to the United States of people from terrorism-plagued or sponsoring countries, or to establish a border where people are admitted according to agreed forms and methods. There is nothing desirable about the descent to [Mexifornia](#) that open borders have promoted.

When Timothy McVeigh blew up the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995, killing 168 people, President Clinton blamed the attack on Rush Limbaugh. President Obama and his attorney general, Eric Holder, regularly denounced the police and when five police were killed and nine wounded by an African-American, it was an unfortunate coincidence. The San Bernardino Islamist shootings of 14 people in 2015 were, Obama said, an awful case of "workplace violence."

Yet the Cleveland and Poway synagogue attacks, and most other such hideous outbursts, have been widely imputed to a general ambiance this president supposedly has created. President Trump's own statement on Monday, laying the blame on violent video games, is closer to the truth than politicians blaming other politicians, but no partial solution of the problem will

come from such simplistic responses.

President Obama's assertion on Monday that "No nation on earth comes near" the proportions of the mass violence problem of the United States is false. The Crime Prevention Research Center has made an exhaustive study of the incidence of mass killings, following the FBI definition excluding incidents that kill fewer than four people and gang fights over turf, or incidences of authentic guerrilla war. By these standards, covering from 1998 to 2015, and 53 attacks and 57 shooters within the United States and 2,354 attacks and over 4,800 shooters in the rest of the world, the U.S. accounts for 1.49 percent of the world's killings, 2.2 percent of the attacks, and 1.15 percent of the public shooters, although the United States has 4.6 percent of the world's total population. Out of the 97 countries rated, the United States ranked 64th in attacks and 65th in fatalities. And the other countries compared were not the world's 96 least organized and civilized national jurisdictions.

Norway, Finland, Switzerland, and France, the first three very high standard of living countries, all have at least 25 percent more mass killings per capita than the United States. The other 96 countries as a group, including relatively very nonviolent countries such as Canada, Australia, and Singapore, have had a rate of increase in mass killings that is 291 percent higher than that of the United States.

President Trump has suggested that violent video games may contribute to the problem. They may, but there isn't much that can be done about them as freedom of expression and the illegality of censorship are serious obstacles. The same problem arises with extremely violent movies. The age of viewers could perhaps be raised, but that would be difficult to enforce and most offenders are of adult age anyway.

The gun-free zone theory has been a total failure. Ninety-eight percent of American mass public shootings have occurred

in places where guns are banned, apart from in the hands of police. The Democrats' customary solution is to federalize gun laws and impose restrictions. We might expect that this would generalize the results of heavily gun-regulated areas such as the open firing ranges of large virtual no-go areas in Chicago, Washington D.C., and the recently celebrated Baltimore. The new gun regulations in New Zealand following the recent Christchurch mosque shootings, which left 51 people dead, have resulted in almost total noncompliance.

The problem is not really with most bird/duck 12-gauge shotguns, limited to three shells; or most hunting rifles for small game, which are semi-automatic 22s that hold 10 to 13 rounds; or semiautomatic 9-millimeter or .45-caliber hand-guns that hold anywhere from eight to 15 shots. In police shootouts with armed criminal suspects, according to Thomas Sowell (who was a Marine pistol instructor), only one shot in seven hits its target. Limiting magazine size for self-defense could escalate the danger of the death of innocents because of the low hit-rate. Where there may be room to do something is with AR-15 and AK-47 and similar guns that allow someone to get a great many bullets off without changing magazines.

The immediate place to start may be restriction of sale of the most dangerous assault weapons and of methods of adaptation to upgrade weapons, ("bump-stocks" are a frequent example of this, and were banned in 2019 following the use of 12 guns equipped with such devices in the worst mass killing in U.S. history in Las Vegas in October 2017, where 58 were killed and 851 were wounded or injured).

Maybe sales of guns should be restricted to people 25 or over. Background checks should include relevant material brought forward from late juvenile years in school records. Sites that feature extremist manifestos should be monitored carefully and incitements to criminal violence should be removed at once and the authorship traced where possible and investigated.

These and similar practical measures would achieve something, as would a return to sensible detention and treatment of severely maladjusted (psychotic) people. So called "red flag" laws as urged by the president would help, but will require the reorientation of police and magistrates to identify offenders who are mentally disturbed. And there should be more publicity of successful interventions that stop mass violence before it happens; they are frequent and deserve to be highlighted.

Nothing will be achieved in the sterile debate between enemies of the National Rifle Association and advocates of better mental health checks, or by the partisan name-calling of the most stupid of the Democratic contenders (cue Beto O'Rourke). They have empurpled the air with claims that Trump is a racist. Sheriff Bull Connor of Selma, Alabama in 1964 was a racist; so is Al Sharpton. No leading figures in either party of the country today is a racist, and white supremacy is no worse than other notions of racial supremacy. The president was right at Charlottesville in 2017 when he said that Antifa was as bad as the Nazis and the Klan.

Those, even normally sensible commentators, moaning about a sick and broken American society, should contemplate the implications of the achievement (principally) by the Left, of creating a nihilistic, [atheistic culture](#) that devalues human life through abortion, euthanasia, barbarous depictions of violence, sexist assaults on the family, "value neutral" education, and the opprobrious deconstruction of the American national ethos. Nobody should then profess to be sickened and shocked by what they have, themselves in [large measure, wrought](#).

Note: I wish to thank my cyber friend, Dr. Carr Smith of Mobile, Alabama, for his assistance with some of the firearm details here.

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