

**Terrorism and the  
Assault Weapons Ban:  
The Threat to Homeland Security**

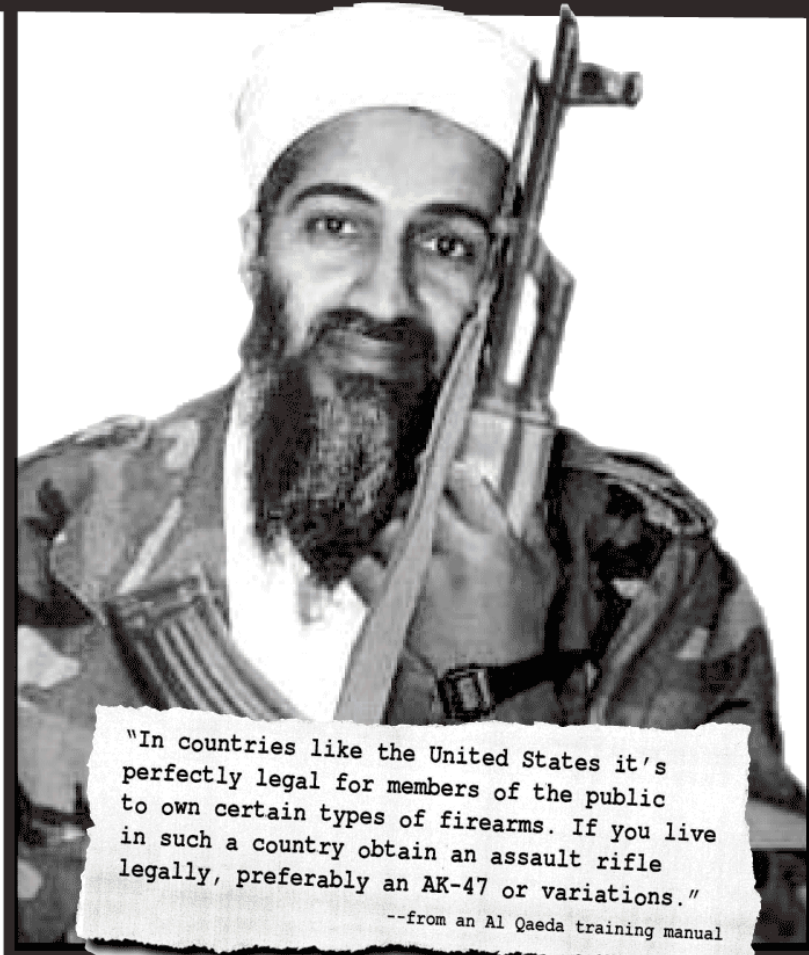
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**stoptheNRA.com**  
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**September 12, 2004**

Advertisement that ran in the New York Times and Washington Post on September 10, 2004:

# TERRORISTS OF 9-11 CAN HARDLY WAIT FOR 9-13.



## **PRESIDENT BUSH IS BLOCKING RENEWAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN DUE TO EXPIRE SEPTEMBER 13.**

**That means any terrorist in the U.S. will be free to walk into any gun shop**

and buy an AK-47, Uzi or other rapid-fire military-style killing machine. Doesn't President Bush know that every national police organization is fighting to renew the ban on these cop-killer guns? Who in this day and age would give society's worst killers—terrorists, drug dealers, violent gangs—the means to commit mass murder in a matter of seconds? President Bush: Renew the assault weapons ban!

**Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence** united with the Million Mom March  
1225 Eye Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005

Yes, I want to help stop President Bush from legalizing these killing machines! I'm enclosing my donation of  \$25  \$50  \$75  \$100  Other \_\_\_\_\_ to keep assault weapons off the streets.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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Make checks payable to Brady Campaign. Contributions are not tax deductible for personal or business purposes. 09/10/04

To help renew the assault weapons ban go to

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## Executive Summary:

This report is prompted by the absurd and dangerous possibility that, in a time of unprecedented threats to homeland security, President Bush and the Republican leadership in Congress irresponsibly plan to allow the Assault Weapons Ban to expire.

It is widely acknowledged that terrorism and assault weapons go together. The assault weapon's capacity to mass-murder within a matter of seconds makes the assault weapon a part of the essential tool kit of for terrorists. Assault weapons are used to commit terrorist acts, and moreover, terrorists use them to resist law enforcement efforts at apprehension and arrest.

This report details the threat posed by these weapons in the United States and details the political context surrounding the effort to get the Assault Weapons Ban renewed.

The information below falls into these categories:

### **--Just one month ago US authorities linked Assault Weapons and Terrorism in the United States**

On August 6, 2004, federal authorities announced that they were investigating a New Jersey man who had connections to terrorist groups and was operating a website that, among other things, advised would-be terrorists to acquire assault weapons in countries where it is legal to do so; specifically referring to the United States.

### **--Other Recent Cases:**

Other cases where terrorists have actually acquired these assault weapons within the United States for use either here or to ship the weapons to terrorist groups abroad include:

- **Beaverton, Oregon:** Authorities arrested Ali Khaled Steitiye, a convicted felon who claimed to have trained in Lebanese guerilla camps, trying to purchase an assault weapon from a licensed dealer at a gun show in Oregon in October 2001.
- **Detroit, Michigan:** On September 10, 2001, the day before the attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, Ali Boumelhem was convicted on a variety of weapons charges plus conspiracy to ship assault weapons and other arms, to the terrorist organization Hezbollah in Lebanon.
- **Florida:** In June 2001, federal agents arrested Keith Glaude when he tried to purchase 60 AK-47 assault rifles and 10 machine guns in Florida. He intended to ship the guns to an Islamic extremist group in his native Trinidad.

- **Red House, Virginia:** In Red House, VA, a militant group called Muslims of America (also linked to the terrorist group Al Fuqra) evaded American gun laws in order to buy weapons including an SKS assault rifle, and AK-47 ammunition. They were arrested in the fall of 2001.

- **Conor Claxton,** a member of the Irish Republican Army, bought more than \$18,000 worth of handguns, rifles and ammunition in the United States intending to ship them back to Ireland for the use of the terrorist group. He was sentenced to prison in 2000.

- **Tampa, Florida:** Beginning in 1998 Stephen Jorgensen purchased hundreds of firearms, including AK-47 clones called MAK-90s, with plans to ship them overseas from Tampa, Florida.

### **--Gun Shows Provide Opportunities for Terrorists to Acquire Weapons With no Background Checks:**

Legalizing assault weapons becomes an even more ominous prospect in light of the loophole in federal gun laws that lets guns be sold at gun shows without background checks. There are roughly 4,500 gun shows held every year, each one providing an opportunity for guns to easily fall into the hands of criminals and terrorists.

### **--Political Dynamics of the Renewal Effort in Congress:**

Many of the nation's key players on the homeland security issue – Tom Ridge, Rudy Giuliani, and Tom Kean – have all made statements strongly supporting the Assault Weapons Ban. In addition, many Republicans sitting on key oversight committees related to homeland security are on record as supporting the ban. On the other hand, the statements of key Republicans in Congress have been riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies as they seek to find a way to justify blocking legislation supported by over two-thirds of voters. The president has stated he supports the bill while simultaneously refusing to ask Congress to pass it, a point made all too clear in a recent exchange between reporters and the White House press secretary.

### **--Political Dynamics of the Renewal Effort in the Presidential Race:**

Pollster Doug Schoen conducted surveys in key swing states Florida, Pennsylvania and Ohio and found that the Assault Weapons Ban would inject a critical wedge issue into the presidential race. Schoen found that once voters were informed of Senator Kerry's and President George W. Bush's positions on the issue, there were dramatic consequences on the question of which candidate is best able to fight the war on terrorism. The polling indicates that the issue could provide a major boost to Kerry's standing on the terrorism issue should he choose to be outspoken on the issue.

## INTRODUCTION

*“We have a responsibility to deny weapons to terrorists and to actively prevent private citizens from providing them.”*

President George W. Bush  
Address to the United Nations  
November 10, 2001

*“Foreign terrorists could exploit, and appear to have exploited in limited cases, the general availability of firearms in the United States to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States or abroad.”*

--Congressional Research Service Memorandum:  
“Foreign Terrorists and the Availability of Firearms  
and Black Powder in the United States,”  
May 16, 2003

*“In other countries, e.g. some states of USA . . . it is perfectly legal for members of the public to own certain types of firearms. If you live in such a country, obtain an assault rifle legally, preferably an AK-47 or variations, learn how to use it properly and go and practice in the areas allowed for such training.”*

--Al Qaeda training manual, “How can I Train  
Myself for Jihad”

As our nation conducts its war on terrorism—at home and abroad—one salient and unassailable fact is conspicuously absent from the national dialogue: terrorists and assault weapons go together. The assault weapon’s capacity to mass-murder within a matter of seconds makes the assault weapon a part of the essential tool kit of domestic and foreign terrorists alike. Assault weapons are used to commit terrorist acts, and they are used by terrorists to resist law enforcement efforts at apprehension and arrest. The oft-seen file footage of Osama Bin Laden, aiming his AK-47 at an unknown target, is now a familiar reminder of the incontrovertible connection between terrorism and assault weapons.

What is not as readily understood is that Al Qaeda itself has understood how easy it will be to obtain assault weapons in the United States. An Al Qaeda manual entitled “How Can I Train Myself for Jihad” containing an entire section on “Firearms Training,”

found in the ruins of an Afghanistan training camp by United States Special Forces (and posted on a New Jersey man's website as recently as one month ago; August 2004) tellingly singles out the United States for its easy availability of firearms and stipulates that al-Qaeda members living in the United States "obtain an assault weapon legally, preferably AK-47 or variations." Further, the manual sets forth guidelines for how would-be terrorists should conduct themselves in order to avoid arousing suspicion as they amass and transport firearms.

The federal Assault Weapons Act, enacted in 1994, banned the production of assault weapons. The Act is scheduled to expire on September 13 of this year, unless the President and Congress act to renew it. Despite the President's otherwise stated aggressive anti-terrorism program of the post-9/11 era, the Bush Administration has a blind spot when it comes to assault weapons. Senator Frank Lautenberg argues, "After 9/11, Americans stood in long lines at airports giving up their toenail clippers, while the Bush administration has done nothing to prevent terrorists from acquiring military-style weapons and explosives. If we are serious about shoring up homeland security, we cannot ignore this any longer." But by letting the Assault Weapons Ban expire, President Bush is ensuring that assault weapons will be more available to terrorists -- completely undermining his claim to be the foremost defender of America's homeland security.

This report documents the undeniable connection between terrorism and assault weapons. It is taken, in part, from *Guns and Terror: How Terrorists Exploit Our Weak Gun Laws*, a Special Report issued by the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence in December of 2001, and includes additional information that has emerged since the publication of that Report.

## **PART ONE:**

**August 2004:**

### **New Jersey Man's Website Urges Terrorists To Acquire Assault Weapons**

The connection between assault weapons and terrorism was brought into sharp relief just last month when, on August 6, 2004, federal authorities announced that they were investigating a New Jersey man operating a website for terrorist organizations. This site replicated an Al Qaeda site that, among other things, advised would-be terrorists to acquire assault weapons in countries where it is legal to do so and specifically referred to the United States as one of the countries where terrorists could acquire these weapons.

To our knowledge, the fact that the website being operated from New Jersey urged terrorists to get assault weapons in the United States has not been reported.

Mazen Mokhtar, the man being investigated in NJ, operated a website called [www.minna.com](http://www.minna.com) that authorities say solicited funds and recruited people to join terrorist organizations. The Washington Post reported that [www.minna.com](http://www.minna.com) was "an exact replica" of the website [www.azzam.com](http://www.azzam.com). The operator of [www.azzam.com](http://www.azzam.com), Babar Ahmad, was arrested in London on Thursday August 5 on charges that he conspired to provide financial assistance to terrorists via the website.

[www.azzam.com](http://www.azzam.com), which [www.minna.com](http://www.minna.com) replicated, was a website "dedicated to worldwide jihad" that provided information for terrorist groups and was shut down after the 9/11 attacks. The website's content included a section called "How Can I train myself for Jihad?" According to the Washington Post, text of "How can I train myself for Jihad?" was used as an Al Qaeda training manual which was recovered by U.S. forces in Afghanistan. "How Can I Train Myself for Jihad?" had the following text under "firearms training":

*"In other countries, e.g. some states of USA, South Africa, it is perfectly legal for members of the public to own certain types of firearms. If you live in such a country, obtain an assault rifle legally, preferably an AK-47 or variations, learn how to use it properly and go and practice in the areas allowed for such training."*

Although [azzam.com](http://www.azzam.com) was shut down after September 11, "it is evident that Ahmad worked in concert with this individual [Mokhtar] to maintain the continued operation of the Azzam sites, through the use of mirror sites, when the administrators of Azzam sites shut the [Azzam.com](http://www.azzam.com) site down after 9/11," according to government investigators.

Babar Ahmad is the cousin of Muhammad Naeem Noor Khan, who was arrested in July in Pakistan. Reports indicate that Khan is continuing to provide authorities with detailed information about Al Qaeda operations specifically targeting buildings in NY and NJ, leading the Department of Homeland Security to raise the threat alert level to orange. Ahmad was found to have in his possession a document with plans and descriptions of a U.S. naval battle group operating in the Middle East. Ahmad had been e-mailed the information from an American sailor who sympathized with his cause.

In addition to publishing "How Can I Train Myself for Jihad," [Azzam.com](#) published Osama bin Laden's "Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places," which called for the violent ouster of U.S. military forces from the Middle East. The site also gave directions for raising and delivering money to the Taliban, including use of the hawala system of record-free money transfers.

Minna.com was also reported to have been used to recruit fighters for the Taliban and Chechen terrorists.

Mazen Mokhtar, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Egypt, was described in media reports as "a technologically savvy Internet whiz" as well as "an outspoken activist on Palestinian issues." Based in North Brunswick, New Jersey, he volunteered at a small storefront mosque. Neighbors reported that his home had been searched by authorities several months prior to the announcement of the investigation, and authorities had seized several large bags of materials.

## **Documentation of New Jersey Terrorism & AWB case:**

--[Washington Post, August 8, 2004: "Terror Suspect's Arrest Opens New Inquiries"](#):

--[AP, August 11, 2004: "Friends say N.J. webmaster no terrorist"](#):

--[\[East Brunswick, NJ\] Home News Tribune, August 10, 2004: "Web-site terrorist link probed in North Brunswick"](#):

--[Washington Post, Dec. 1, 2003: "A Twist in the Brady Law."](#):

An Al Qaeda training manual recovered by U.S. forces in Afghanistan included a chapter on the ease with which firearms can be obtained in the United States; it urged followers to "obtain an assault rifle legally, preferably an AK-47 or variations."



## **PART TWO:**

### **Terrorists and Assault Weapons in the United States**

Other incidents in recent years in which terrorists have actually acquired these assault weapons within the United States for use either here or to ship the weapons to terrorist groups abroad include:

- In late April of 2004 Michael J. Breit of Rockford, Illinois was arrested after firing his AK-47 in his apartment. Federal agents recovered seven guns, more than 1,300 rounds of ammunition, pipe bomb making components and other explosives, a list of government officials and political and public figures with the word "marked" written next to them, and a written plan for 15 heavily armed men to kill 1,500 people at a Democratic presidential meeting. Breit's library included The Turner Diaries, the anti-government cult novel that inspired Timothy McVeigh, and Guns, Freedom and Terrorism, the book authored by National Rifle Association CEO Wayne LaPierre, investigators said. ("Rockford Man Faces Federal Explosives Charges; Large Cache of Weapons, Ammunition and Explosives Materials Seized," U.S. Dept. of Justice Release, April 21, 2004).
- Authorities arrested Ali Khaled Steitiye, a convicted felon who claimed to have trained in Lebanese guerilla camps, trying to purchase an assault weapon from a licensed dealer at a gun show in Oregon in October 2001. (ABCNews.com, Dec. 12, 2001).
- Members of the militant Jewish Defense League have been charged with many weapons charges over several decades. In 1971, Rabbi Meir Kahane, the group's founder, was convicted on charges of manufacturing weapons. In 1987, a member of the group was arrested and authorities seized 17 firearms, including an Uzi and several rifles, in connection with an investigation into bombings in New York. In 1989, a member of the dissident JDL faction was arrested after opening fire with a semi-automatic rifle from the roof of a New York City building. On December 12, 2001, two JDL members were booked in Los Angeles in connection with a plot to bomb the offices of a Congressman and a mosque. Authorities seized several firearms in a raid of one of the member's homes. (Bob Liff, "Keeping Sights on the Enemy," Newsday, Aug. 11, 1989).
- In Red House, VA, a militant group called Muslims of America (also linked to a terrorist group called Al Fuqra) armed themselves through various retail purchases from gun shops. By lying on background check forms, members of Muslims of America bought guns including an SKS assault rifle, a 9mm pistol, and AK-47 ammunition. Vincente Pierre, another member of the group, had his wife buy a 9mm handgun for him in a straw purchase. On September 20, 2001, Ben Benu, Vincente Pierre and his wife were arrested for illegally buying guns. The arrests were part of the post-September 11th sweep of terrorism suspects. ("Gun Land – Are guns bought in the U.S. ending up in the hands of terrorists? Now with Bill Moyers, November 15, 2002).

- On September 10, 2001, Ali Boumelhem was convicted on a variety of weapons charges plus conspiracy to ship weapons to the terrorist organization Hezbollah in Lebanon. He and his brother had purchased an arsenal of shotguns, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, flash suppressors and assault weapons components at Michigan gun shows. Had it not been for a police informant, these purchases would have eluded any scrutiny. (“Man Accused of Shipping Arms, Ammunition to Beirut,” Associated Press, Nov. 21, 2000).
- In June 2001 federal agents arrested Keith Glaude when he tried to purchase 60 AK-47 assault rifles and 10 machine guns in Florida. He told authorities that he intended to ship the guns to an Islamic extremist group in his native Trinidad. Previously, that group had acquired over 100 assault weapons in Florida that it used in a 1990 attempt to overthrow the government of Trinidad and Tobago. (Elena Cabral, “Attempt to Buy Rifles Linked to Terrorist,” Miami Herald, June 2, 2001).
- Stephen Jorgensen purchased hundreds of firearms, including AK-47 clones called MAK-90s, with plans to ship them overseas from Tampa, Florida. Beginning in 1998, Jorgensen bought 800 MAK-90s, loading them on to small planes. US customs officials say the guns were headed to the FARK guerilla movement in Colombia, a group on the U.S. terrorism watch list. Jorgensen was caught because he illegally exported the guns. (“Gun Land – Are guns bought in the U.S. ending up in the hands of terrorists?” Now with Bill Moyers, November 15, 2002).
- The Blue Ridge Hunt Club was a Virginia-based militant organization that was planning domestic terrorism including assassinations as well as the destruction of bridges and airports. When police arrested several members of the group they found a stockpile of weapons including machine guns and silencers. Many of the group’s weapons—including TEC-9 assault pistols—were acquired illegally from a local gun dealer. Five members of the organization were indicted in 1995 on 36 counts of federal firearms charges. (John Hoke, “Two Militia Group Members Sentenced to House Arrest,” Richmond Times-Dispatch, Nov. 4, 1995).
- On March 1, 1994, terrorist Rashid Baz opened fire on a van of Hasidic students crossing the Brooklyn Bridge, killing one student and wounding another. Baz used a Cobray M-11 assault pistol in the crime that he assembled from a mail-order kit. (Halberstam v. S.W. Daniel, Inc., Second Amended Complaint, Nov. 19, 1997, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York).
- On January 25, 1993, Mir Aimal Kasi killed two CIA employees and wounded three others using an AK-47 clone and 150 rounds of ammunition. After fleeing the country, he was arrested in Pakistan in 1997. His gun was acquired legally from a Virginia firearms dealer. (Robert O’Harrow, Jr. “Kasi’s Shadowy Stay in U.S. Leaves a Hazy Portrait,” Washington Post, March 3, 1993).

## PART THREE

### The Gun Show Loophole, Terrorism and Assault Weapons

Legalizing assault weapons becomes an even more ominous prospect in light of the loophole in federal gun laws that lets guns be sold at gun shows without background checks. There are roughly 4,500 gun shows held every year, each one providing an opportunity for guns to easily fall into the hands of criminals and terrorists. [Wired News, Oct. 5, 2001]

In most states, at gun shows, unlicensed gun salesmen can legally sell weapons without mandatory background checks. Federal law does not prohibit this practice. As of September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2004 the sale of assault weapons and large capacity clips will be legal and unregulated at gun shows. Senator John McCain has recognized the danger that this threat poses to the national security of the United States:

“Foreign terrorists have exploited a loophole to buy weapons at gun shows,” McCain said. *“Clearly, alleged members of terrorist organizations have been able to secure guns and weapons using the gun-show loophole.”* [Source: Seattle Post-Intelligencer; emphasis added]

Senator McCain was joined in his concern by Senator Charles Schumer of New York, who argued that “Gun shows, simply put, have become a paradise for illegal firearms sales because felons frequent gun shows to avoid having to go through a background check.” [Source: CNN]

In 1999, before concerns over terrorism had reached the levels seen after September 11, Newsweek reported that gun shows had become a haven for people with extremist views to exchange “ideas” and weaponry. “Gun shows used to be fun, full of real good hunting rifles,” said an executive at a major hunting organization. “Now you go in and they're selling pamphlets that tell you how to make pipe bombs and how to make your semiautomatic gun into an automatic. These people aren't concerned with hunting pheasants. They're concerned that the government is going to get them.” [Newsweek, August 2, 1999, p.39]

In a recent New York Times column, Nicholas Kristof wrote that a Michigan gun show he attended “was the place to buy any kind of pistol and lots more: huge .50-caliber semiautomatic rifles, fuse wire, Confederate flags and 75-round clips for an AK-47 ... plus instruction manuals for converting semiautomatic rifles into machine guns and, for \$10, ‘How to Build Your Own Bazooka.’” [“Gun Show Fantasies,” New York Times, June 4, 2003.]

**Weak laws regarding gun shows have helped to enable criminal activity with disastrous consequences in cases including these:**

--In the deadliest school shooting in United States history, two 17-year-old boys in Littleton, Colorado, procured two shotguns, an assault rifle and a TEC-9 assault pistol and shot 26 students, killing 13 of them before turning the guns on themselves. Subsequent investigation by the ATF found that all four of the weapons had been purchased by private sellers at gun shows. Some of the guns were purchased for the killers by their friend Robyn Anderson. Later, Ms. Anderson would publicly state that, had she been required to undergo a background check at the gun show, she would not have purchased the guns for the teens.

[Source: Denver Rocky Mountain News, January 27, 2000]

--The "poster boy" of Florida gun shows, Hank Earl Carr had a rap-sheet as long as his arm and a penchant for guns. Buying from private sellers under assumed names, Carr did not have to undergo a background check. Carr was only caught when he gunned down his own stepson and three law enforcement officers in Tampa before turning his guns on himself in 1998. [Source: Associated Press]

--Branch Davidian cult leader David Koresh used Texas gun shows to make large gun purchases. According to an ATF arrest warrant, Koresh and his cult made "regular purchases of weapons and ammunition [from] flea markets and gun shows." In the end, authorities estimated that Koresh had at least 200 automatic and semi-automatic assault rifles stockpiled, plus thousands of rounds of ammunition.

--In 1993, Gian Luigi Ferri entered the law offices of Pettit & Martin in San Francisco and opened fire with two semi-automatic TEC-9 assault pistols. By the time the shooting had ended, eight people lay dead, while six more were wounded. According to affidavits of gun-show dealer Danny Peterson, Ferri used a fake Nevada driver's license to purchase one of the TEC-9s at a Las Vegas gun show.

--Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, and his alleged sidekicks Michael Fortier and Terry Nichols, admitted to stealing \$60,000 worth of shotguns, rifles and handguns from an Arkansas gun collector's ranch. Fortier admitted that he sold many of the stolen weapons at gun shows. [Source: ABC News]

--A November 1993 U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation into the availability of stolen military parts at gun shows found that they were sold at 13 of the 15 gun shows they visited in six different states. At gun shows in five states, GAO personnel could buy bombs, booby traps, and all the necessary parts to convert a semiautomatic AR-15 assault rifle into a fully automatic M-16 machine gun.

## **PART FOUR:**

### **Political Dynamics: Statements by Key Players on the Assault Weapons Ban and a List of Congressional Supporters on Homeland Security Oversight Committees**

Many of the nation's key players on the homeland security issue – Tom Ridge, Rudy Giuliani, and Tom Kean – have all made statements strongly supporting the Assault Weapons Ban.

#### **Tom Ridge:**

As a Congressman, Tom Ridge voted for the federal assault weapons ban in 1994, and he wrote an article for the Philadelphia Inquirer at the time to explain that as governor of Pennsylvania he would support a similar statewide ban.

“We must change our strategy in the war against crime because we are losing. As governor ... I will enact a tough, comprehensive crime bill. ... The comprehensive package will include the ban of assault weapons identified by police, sheriffs, and district attorneys.” --Philadelphia Inquirer, March 8, 1994

#### **Rudy Giuliani:**

"There should be very, very few litmus tests, but someone who now voted to roll back the assault-weapons ban would really be demonstrating that special interest politics mean more to them than life-or-death issues." --December 12, 1995, NY Daily News

#### **Tom Kean:**

“The people of New Jersey - and I consider myself one of those people now - do not want assault weapons in the hands of the public. It's not right. ... There is nobody in the state of New Jersey, other than law enforcement officers, who should have an assault weapon. I don't know what possible use someone can have for a workable assault weapon. I don't understand what they are for except to kill people, and I want them out of the hands of the public. So does the majority of the people and the citizens of New Jersey." -- March 2, 1993. (Bergen Record)

## **CONFLICTING AND CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS OF REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP**

On the other hand, the statements of key Republicans in Congress have been riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies as they seek to find a way to justify blocking legislation supported by over two-thirds of voters.

### **Dennis Hastert:**

On May 12, 2004, The Hill newspaper wrote "an aide to House Speaker J.Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) has said privately that if Bush pushes for it, the ban will probably be reauthorized. But if he doesn't, the chances of legislation's passing this year are remote."

On Aug. 4, 2004 on NPR's morning edition, Hastert was asked about the renewal of the assault weapons Ban, and whether it should be brought up for a vote:

"It might have a chance on the floor .... But if we pass it on the floor, there's no promise that we can get it out of the Senate, because the Senate has defeated it already, so it can't become law unless it's going to be passed in the Senate."

### **Bill Frist:**

On September 9, 2004, Bill Frist said of the effort to renew the ban: "I think the will of the people is consistent with letting it expire. So it will expire."

(This statement is completely contradicted by all polling data. See below.)

### **President Bush:**

On Wednesday, September 8, reporters asked President Bush's spokesman, Scott McClellan, what the White House was doing to renew the Assault Weapons Ban. Here's the text of the discussion:

**Q:** The assault weapons ban expires in just a few days. Can you list for us the many things the President might be doing to encourage Congress to send him the bill that he said he would sign?

**MR. McCLELLAN:** The President's views have been made very clear, and the best way we can reduce crimes committed with guns is to strictly enforce our laws. And prosecutions under this administration are up. I think it's -- well, it's more than 60 percent -- I think 68 percent over the previous administration. That's the best way to crack down on crimes committed with guns. That's an important issue here in terms of the assault weapons ban. He's made his views very well-known.

**Q:** And his view is he'll sign it if --

**MR. McCLELLAN:** He's made his views known as recently as this week.

**Q:** His view is he'll sign it if it comes to him. Is he doing anything to make sure he --

**MR. McCLELLAN:** The President supports the reauthorization of current law.

**Q:** What is he doing to actively make sure is he doing anything to make sure he --

**MR. McCLELLAN:** The President doesn't set the congressional timetable.

**Q:** No, but he can lobby for it.

**MR. McCLELLAN:** Congress sets the timetable. And the President's views are very clear.

**Q:** Has he made any calls or anything to encourage this to happen?

**MR. McCLELLAN:** What we've continued to do -- because this issue does go to the issue of crimes committed with guns, as well -- and what we've continued to do is step up our efforts to prosecute crimes committed with guns and strictly enforce our laws. And that's the best way we can deter violence committed with guns.

**Q:** But he did something this week?

**Q:** But he's not doing anything to make sure this doesn't lapse on the 13th?

**MR. McCLELLAN:** We'll continue to make our views known.

**Q:** You said he had done something this week.

**MR. McCLELLAN:** No, I said we've continued to make our views known. This week, as well.

**Q:** To who?

**MR. McCLELLAN:** Publicly.

**Q:** Did he speak about it publicly?

**MR. McCLELLAN:** We have, the White House has.

## **Republican Senators and Congressmen Who Support Renewal and Serve on Oversight Committees:**

### Senate Intelligence Committee:

Sen. Mike DeWine (R-Ohio)  
Sen. Olympia J. Snowe (R- Maine)  
Sen. John W. Warner (R-Virginia)

### Senate Committee on Governmental Oversight:

Sen. Susan M. Collins (R-Maine)  
Sen. George V. Voinovich (R-Ohio)  
Sen. Peter G. Fitzgerald (R-Illinois)

### House Intelligence Committee:

Rep. Doug Bereuter (R-Nebraska)  
Rep. Sherwood L. Boehlert (R-New York)

### House Intelligence Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security (THS):

Rep. Doug Bereuter (R-Nebraska), Vice Chair

### House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism:

Rep. C.W. Bill Young (R-Florida)  
Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Connecticut)  
Rep. Peter King (R-New York)

### House Government Reform Committee, National Security and Emerging Threats Subcommittee:

Chairman, Rep. Christopher Shays, (R-Connecticut)



## **PART FIVE:**

### **Polling Data from Swing States Shows that the Assault Weapons Ban Could be a Critical Factor in the Presidential Race**

*The following is an executive summary provided on September 1 by Penn, Schoen, Berland and Associates following their polling in three major swing states on the issue of the Assault Weapons Ban.*

#### **Overview:**

We have completed our three polls of likely general election voters in Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Our poll demonstrates that the issue of the assault weapons can be used to help Kerry immeasurably in these three states.

#### **I. The candidates' positions on assault weapons alters the race in the following way.**

- **Florida** - - Assault weapons turn a Bush lead into a Kerry lead
- **Ohio** - - Assault weapons turn a deadheat into a narrow Kerry margin
- **Pennsylvania** - - Assault weapons turn a 3 point Kerry lead into an 11 point Kerry lead.

#### **II. Bush loses significant ground on his signature issues of being best equipped to handle terrorism after voters are told his position on the assault weapons ban.**

Bush is running his campaign centered around the premise that he is best equipped to handle terrorism.

- **Florida** - - Bush's lead on this issue drops from 15 points to 5 points after voters are told that Bush wants to let these guns back on the streets.
- **Ohio** - - Bush's lead on this issue is cut in half; 14% to 7%.
- **Pennsylvania** - - Bush's lead goes from + 8 on the issue to -2.

#### **III. Support for renewing the ban is very high.**

The reason that the issue of assault weapons works so well, is that a large number of voters support renewing the ban.

The numbers for renewing the ban are slightly higher nationally than at the state level, but there is very significant support in each of these three states.

- **Nationally** - - 74% support renewing the ban
- **Florida** - - 64% support renewing the ban
- **Ohio** - - 56% support renewing the ban
- **Pennsylvania** - - 61% support renewing the ban

**IV. Voters make a clear distinction between generic gun control issues and renewing the ban on assault weapons.**

- **Nationally** - - 72% make a distinction between gun control and the assault weapons ban
- **Florida** - - 66% make a distinction
- **Ohio** - - 70% make a distinction
- **Pennsylvania** - - 67% make a distinction

**Impact on the Trial Heats:**

We began our survey by asking whether voters would support Kerry or Bush. Then we read a description of their positions on this issue.

Getting the message out that Bush is ducking this issue, influences the race the following way:

1. Kerry trails in Florida by 4 points. Following the Bush and Kerry position statements, Kerry leads by 4 points.
2. The candidates are tied in Ohio. Following the Bush and Kerry position statements, Kerry takes a narrow lead.
3. Kerry's lead in Pennsylvania grows from 3 points to 11 points over Bush after the position statements.

Here is the description that we read:

*Question: If the election for President were being held today, for whom would you vote? Democrat John Kerry, who is a hunter and a sportsman. Kerry believes that Congress*

*and the White House must renew the ban on military style assault weapons when it expires in several weeks. Four years ago, Republican George W. Bush, as a candidate for President, pledged to support the renewal of the assault weapons ban. Yet, as President, Bush has broken his promise and has not asked Congressional leaders to extend the ban. The ban is now soon set to expire.*

When voters are presented with Kerry's position and Bush's position, there is 8 points of movement and Kerry goes from being in the lead in Florida to trailing Kerry.

Florida	Initial	Post
Democrat John Kerry	46%	48%
Republican George W. Bush	50%	44%
Undecided	4%	8%

Our initial read in Ohio shows that Kerry and Bush are tied.

The assault weapons stance of both candidates allows Kerry to narrowly edge ahead of Bush.

Ohio	Initial	Post
Democrat John Kerry	47%	48%
Republican George W. Bush	47%	45%
Undecided	6%	7%

In Pennsylvania, Kerry goes from leading Bush by 3 to leading Bush by 11.

Pennsylvania	Initial	Post
Democrat John Kerry	48%	50%
Republican George W. Bush	45%	39%
Undecided	7%	11%

## **Terrorism**

Bush is running his campaign saying that he is the candidate best equipped to fight terrorism.

The national polls demonstrate that Bush has a significant lead on this issue.

However, Bush's stand on allowing the assault weapons ban to expire costs him a significant number of points on this front.

In Florida, Bush's lead on this issue drops from 15 points to 5 points after voters are told that Bush wants to let these guns back on the streets.

<b>Florida</b>		
Who has the best plan to protect the country from terrorism?	Initial	Post Bush Position
George W. Bush	48%	45%
John Kerry	33%	40%
Bush Lead	15%	5%

In Ohio, Bush's lead on this issue is cut in half.

<b>Ohio</b>		
Who has the best plan to protect the country from terrorism?	Initial	Post Bush Position
George W. Bush	47%	46%
John Kerry	33%	39%
Bush Lead	14%	7%

In Pennsylvania, Bush goes from + 8 on the issue to -2.

<b>Pennsylvania</b>		
Who has the best plan to protect the country from terrorism?	Initial	Post Bush Position
George W. Bush	42%	40%
John Kerry	34%	42%
Bush Lead	8%	-2%

The reason that this issue works so well, is that a large number of voters support renewing the ban.

The numbers for renewing the ban are slightly higher nationally than at the state level, but there is significant support in each of these three states.

	Nationally	Florida	Ohio	Pennsylvania
Renew the ban	74%	64%	56%	61%
Let it expire	20%	22%	20%	20%
Undecided	6%	14%	24%	19%

The main reason for this is that voters make a clear distinction between gun control issues in general and specifically the assault weapons ban. Voters understand there is a clear difference.

	Nationally	Florida	Ohio	Pennsylvania
Assault weapons should be not singled out because banning them is just one step closer to Washington's plan to outlaw all types of guns	23%	26%	20%	22%
Assault weapons are completely different from other types of guns and a different issue entirely	72%	66%	70%	67%
Don't know	5%	8%	11%	11%

**Methodology:**

Penn, Schoen, and Berland conducted 500 interviews with likely voters in each of the three states, Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The overall margin of error is +/-4.38% and larger for subgroups.

## CONCLUSION

In 1994, the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms called assault weapons “mass-produced mayhem.” (ATF, *Assault Weapons Profile*). Ten years later, as our Nation is engaged in an unprecedented war on terrorism, we are on the brink of allowing a flood of that “mass-produced mayhem” to be available to our terrorist enemies who seek the tools of violence. This cannot be allowed to happen.