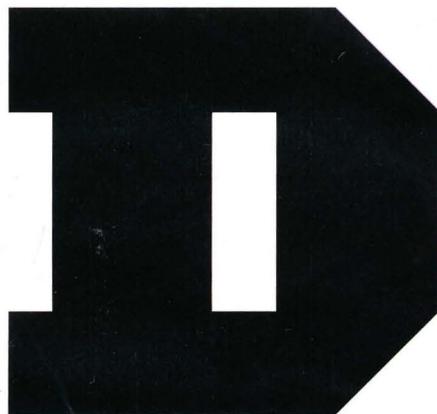




Areas where law-abiding citizens are disarmed and criminals are emboldened provide a recipe for disaster.

by MARSHALL LEWIN



DO YOU EVER see the 1978 Vietnam movie “The Deer Hunter” where, in a prisoner-of-war camp,

Viet Cong captors forced American soldiers to play Russian Roulette?

In a very real way, that’s exactly what President Barack Obama is forcing our servicemen and servicewomen to do every time they set foot on the “gun-free zone” of a military facility. He’s forcing them to surrender their safety—and too often, their lives—to a suicidal policy based on anti-gun ideology.

In fact, it’s what *all of us* are forced to do, every time we go into a movie theater, a mall, a college campus or anywhere else where so-called “gun-free zones” deny us our God-given, constitutionally guaranteed right to

◀ Bullet holes mock the sign prohibiting firearms at the entry to the Chattanooga, Tenn., recruitment center where a deranged terrorist opened fire on servicemen on July 16. The Marine recruiters there were barred by military policy from carrying firearms for protection.

protect ourselves—a right that we practice in our homes, in our cars, on the streets and nearly everywhere else.

“Gun-free zones” don’t protect *anyone* except the evil. How? By disarming law-abiding, peaceable people. By giving the lawless and the merciless a monopoly on force. And by guaranteeing that suicidal mass murderers will have zero resistance and 100-percent success against disarmed and defenseless victims.

Everybody knows it. History proves it. And it’s time the American people demanded their leaders *do* something about it. Because too many in our political class are happy to have 24-hour armed security for themselves, while forcing the rest of us to play a form of Russian Roulette with our lives.

Despite the media’s obsessive attention to mass shootings, and contrary to politicians who bluster about an “epidemic” of mass shootings, the non-partisan Congressional Research Service recently released a report finding that such crimes are increasing only slightly—and if the outlier year of 2012 is excluded, the number of these events is declining, and the average number of victims is decreasing.

But that’s not the point. The point is that when such a vicious attack does occur—and the only one who can save you is you—“gun-free zones” take away both the fire extinguisher and the fire-insurance policy *you* need to protect yourself and your family.

“Gun-free zones” have a double effect: On one hand, they embolden criminals to strike where they know resistance will be weakest. And on the other hand, they take away good people’s only way to fight back. That’s like putting lightning rods on the roof of a house, but not following through and connecting them to the ground. It both increases the likelihood of a life-threatening emergency and decreases the likelihood of that event ending without tragedy.



END GUN-FREE ZONES

Think about it: How many of the politicians who push “gun-free zones” have signs outside *their* homes proclaiming, “There are no guns in this household!”?

Gun-Free Zones At Military Facilities This summer’s attacks on two military facilities in Chattanooga, Tenn.—in which Muhammad Youssef Abdulazez murdered four Marines and a Navy sailor at a recruiting office and Navy reserve center—are far from unique.

From the 2009 Fort Hood shootings, where an Islamic jihadist killed 13 people and wounded 32 more while screaming “Allahu Akbar!” ... to the 2013 Washington Navy Yard shootings, where a lone gunman shot 15 people, 12 of them fatally ... to the 2014 Fort Hood shootings (again) in which four people were killed and a dozen more were shot—every one of these crimes was committed at military facilities where our own soldiers and sailors were rendered helpless by “gun-free zones.”

With the u.s. intensifying efforts to hunt down and destroy ISIS terrorist strongholds, you can bet these attacks on our servicemen and servicewomen will continue, if not increase.

At this writing, the Navy has announced its intention to post armed sentries at reserve centers. But too many politicians are willing to let this needless slaughter of our best and bravest continue as a sacrifice to their own stubborn anti-gun ideology.

Obama loves to issue anti-gun executive orders. Yet when he could end the senseless tragedy of “gun-free zones” on military facilities with a simple stroke of his pen—he refuses.

So here are some questions for our commander-in-chief. If we can’t trust the most highly trained firearm users in society—our brave servicemen and servicewomen—with the right to keep and bear arms to protect themselves, then who can be trusted? What, exactly,

changes the moment they set foot on a military base that suddenly makes them unfit to exercise the same Second Amendment-protected rights they enjoy in their homes, in their cars, on the street or anywhere else? And if “gun-free zones” supposedly make us safer, why doesn’t Obama get his Secret Service bodyguards to give up *their* guns?

Magnets For Mass Murder In 2012, after the Aurora, Colo., theater shooting—another mass murder in another “gun-free zone”—award-winning criminologist and gun-rights scholar John Lott wrote, “With just one single exception, the attack on congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson in 2011, every public shooting since at least 1950 in the u.s. in which more than three people have been killed has taken place where citizens are not allowed to carry guns.”

Consequently, it’s clear that many mass murderers choose their targets *precisely* because they’re soft and unprotected. Look at history: The first mass shootings that captured media attention were at post offices—which not surprisingly were “gun-free zones.” The next preferred targets for teenage mass murderers to “go postal” were schools—not surprisingly, soon after the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1994 was passed.

Since then, as signs showing a gun with a red slash through it have popped up like bull’s-eye targets—at movie theaters, restaurants, college campuses and shopping malls—mass killers have followed. *This isn’t mere coincidence.*

Want proof? Consider the case of the Aurora movie theater shooter. As Lott wrote for Fox News, “There were seven movie theaters showing ‘The Dark Knight Rises’ within 20 minutes of the killer’s apartment.” Yet he didn’t choose the theater closest to home. And he didn’t choose “Colorado’s largest auditorium,” which was only 10 minutes away and surely must

have been tempting for someone who wanted to kill as many people as possible. Why not? Because, as Lott wrote, “all of those theaters allowed permitted concealed handguns.” Instead, the killer chose “the only one with a sign posted at the theater’s entrance prohibiting guns.”

It’s no surprise why every predator—whether it’s a wolf, a tuna or a would-be mass murderer—chooses the weakest, least-prepared prey. It’s not just because the weakest prey requires the least expenditure of energy to capture, and thus afford the greatest “profit” in economic terms—but also for the predator’s own safety.

After the 2013 Westgate Mall massacre in Kenya, where—thanks to the mall’s “gun-free zone”—four al-Shabaab terrorists were free to spend *four days* killing 63 people, even the head of the global law enforcement agency Interpol agreed. “Ask yourself: If that was Denver, Colo., if that was Texas, would those guys have been able to spend hours, days, shooting people randomly?” said Ronald Noble, Interpol secretary general. “You have to ask yourself, ‘Is an armed citizenry more necessary now than it was in the past with an evolving threat of terrorism?’ This is something that has to be discussed.”

Armed Citizens Save Lives Every Day The media try to downplay or deny it, but the truth is that armed, law-abiding people stop criminal attacks countless times every day—including attempted mass shootings.

Internationally renowned self-defense firearms instructor Massad Ayoob, who refers to “gun-free zones” as “hunting preserves for psychopathic murderers,” has analyzed many such events. Here are just a few examples:

Pearl, Miss., 1997: A 16-year-old stabs his mother to death, then takes a 30-30 rifle to his school, where he murders two young women. As he tries to drive away to continue his shooting spree at a nearby junior high school, Vice Principal Joel Myrick retrieves a Colt .45 from his truck, intercepts the killer and holds him for police.

Edinboro, Pa., 1998: A 14-year-old brings a gun to an

off-campus school dance at a banquet facility and opens fire, killing a science teacher and wounding three others. Restaurant owner James Strand retrieves a shotgun and, as the killer is reloading, points it at him, forcing him to surrender.

Santa Clara, Calif., 1999: A 21-year-old man rents a 9 mm handgun at a gun range, then takes it into the adjoining store, fires it into the ceiling, and herds three store employees into an alley, where he tells them he's going to kill them. One of those employees is secretly armed with a pistol, however, and uses it to end the attack.

Grundy, Va., 2002: After a 43-year-old former student shoots two faculty members to death, two students, Mikael Gross, 34, and Tracy Bridges, 25, immediately and independently run to their cars, retrieve their firearms, return to the scene, disarm the gunman and hold him for police.

Tyler, Texas, 2005: A man enraged over his divorce proceedings and wearing body armor opens fire on the courthouse steps, killing his ex-wife and wounding his son. Police fire upon the killer with handguns, but he drives them back with his rifle. Hearing gunfire, Mark Allan Wilson rushes to the scene with his Colt .45 and shoots the gunman, who flees without inflicting additional casualties. The gunman is later killed in a shootout with police.

Colorado Springs, Colo., 2007: After killing two and wounding two more at a nearby religious center, a gunman opens fire at New Life Church, killing two and injuring three more. Jeanne Assam, working volunteer security at the church, rushes the killer, shooting him with her Beretta 9 mm before he kills himself.

Moore, Okla., 2014: An Islamic jihadist who has pictures of Taliban fighters on his Facebook page returns to Vaughan Foods, where his employment had recently been suspended, and beheads a 54-year-old grandmother. He then slashes the throat of a 43-year-old female employee, but before he can behead her, company CEO Mark Vaughan, an Oklahoma County reserve deputy, retrieves a rifle from his car and shoots the assailant.

Chances are, you haven't heard about most of these cases—or if you have, you haven't heard about the armed citizens who stopped the attacks. And the reason is because that truth doesn't fit into the media's anti-gun narrative.

But the truth is on our side. Although it's now almost 20 years old, the most exhaustive research study ever conducted on the Right to Carry and its effects on violent crime—in all 3,054 counties of the United States, both before and after the adoption of Right-to-Carry laws—concluded: "If those states which did not have Right-to-Carry concealed gun provisions had adopted them in 1992, approximately 1,570 murders; 4,177 rapes; and over 60,000 aggravated assaults would have been avoided yearly. ... [W]hen state concealed handgun laws went into effect in a county, murders fell by 8.5 percent, and rapes and

"gun-free zone" makes us any safer than an equally silly sign proclaiming it a "crime-free zone"?

Does anyone really believe that a suicidal mass murderer who is willing to break every law known to man or God by committing such an atrocity—and willing to die in the process—is going to be deterred by the risk of being prosecuted for the misdemeanor of violating a so-called "gun-free zone"?

It's absurd. It's suicidal. And it's a policy that *must end*—at our military facilities first, and everywhere else, for that matter.

As presidential candidate and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee wrote in July, "When our soldiers are safer at Wal-Marts and Bass Pro Shops than American military bases, we have a serious problem. ... American military bases should be the cornerstone of safety

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aggravated assaults fell by 5 and 7 percent."

History bears out these conclusions solidly. Over the past 25 years, while the number of Right-to-Carry states has grown from just a few to 42, violent crime rates have fallen to the lowest levels in decades—in fact, almost to the lowest levels ever recorded.

Here's the truth: "Gun-free zones" don't protect anyone except those with evil intent. And lawful armed citizens don't endanger anyone except the bad guys.

Does anyone really believe that a silly little sign with a picture of a gun with a red slash through it proclaiming

and security, not the crosshairs of senseless insanity?"

Or, as Thomas Jefferson wrote more than 200 years ago, quoting Cesare Beccaria: "Laws that forbid the carrying of arms ... disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes. ...

Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for the assailants; they serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man."

For the sake of our survival, our safety and our peace of mind, it's time to end "gun-free zones" now. ☪