

How The NRA Controls The National Gun Control Debate

WASHINGTON – A new turn in the media narrative of the recent mass killing at a Florida High School may actually provide support to the National Rifle Association (NRA) argument. The NRA maintains that every law-abiding citizen has a constitutional right (deriving from the Second Amendment) to own a weapon. The killings that occur in America are all about bad people who get guns, while they should not be able to get them. In many instances, the NRA claims, the bad people are enabled by incompetent law enforcement agencies. Those who are supposed to enforce the existing law and protect us are negligent. And this is how tragedies happen.

CNN: how the police failed

Well, the outcome of a recent CNN interview with the Sheriff in charge of police operations in that Florida town seems to reinforce the NRA's main argument. It turns out that the police department, in agreement with the High School that was later on attacked, decided to be more lenient in enforcing the law when students commit some types of infractions, including threats.

This being the case, it is quite possible that the young Florida shooter, well known for his erratic behavior, fell through the cracks created by this softer approach to law enforcement. And there is more. What about all the calls made by different people over a period of time alerting the police that this young man was probably up to no good? Why is it that nobody in the Sheriff's office followed up? And, finally, the truly stinging indictment. The police officer assigned to protect the school, carefully avoided getting into the school premises when the tragedy occurred and the shooting began. It seems that he cared for his life a lot more than for the lives

of the kids he was supposed to protect.

Blame the police

So, there you have it. What viewers get from the CNN story is that if the local police had been proactive and if everybody had done their duty, this deranged young man would not have had the opportunity to get a gun and eventually execute his crazy plan.

CNN has a point, here. However, please note that this is exactly the NRA's point. The NRA claims that If only good people get guns and the bad guys are caught before they can act, then nothing bad can possibly happen.

NRA solution

However, if the authorities whose job is to protect us sleep on the job and allow bad people to have access to weapons, then we have a system breakdown and tragedies like this one unfortunately may occur. The NRA "solution"? Very simple. Enforce the law, follow establish protocols, and nothing this bad will happen again.

Of course we know this is a compete self-serving fantasy. In a country –America– in which tens of millions of legally owned guns freely circulate it is almost a miracle that these tragedies do not occur more frequently.

Police negligence in the Florida shooting case

In this particular Florida case, let as readily admit that many officials repeatedly dropped the ball. Tips were ignored. Dangerous behavior exhibited by this young man was either ignored or explained away. Proper protocols were not followed. The police did not act when it had to, and so on. All this is true.

Therefore, we can stipulate that in this particular case the tragedy might have been avoided. Human error, at multiple

stages, was a factor, may be the key factor, in this mass murder episode.

The true issue: too many guns in America

That said, if we look at the larger picture, it is almost impossible to police a country of 320 million people in which tens of millions citizens own guns, while untold numbers of weapons are readily available through illegal channels to those who cannot purchase one legally.

Furthermore, how do we screen everybody for mental issues, in order to make sure that all or most mentally disturbed people will not be allowed to buy or keep a gun? Of course, better screening may help at least in some cases. It is probably true that some future tragedies may be avoided.

But the real and carefully ignored larger issue is the bizarre interpretation now given by the Courts to the meaning of the Second Amendment. In essence, here it is:

“Anybody in America can get as many guns as they wish, because gun ownership is an individual right protected by the U.S. Constitution. End of story”.

No other developed country has a regime of unrestricted gun ownership

America is the only rich, developed democracy in which there are only minimal barriers to gun ownership. This is not an element of distinction which makes this country better. This is a bizarre anomaly. Until we recognize this fact, do not expect much real, as opposed to cosmetic, progress on “gun control”.

And the NRA controls the narrative.