

# U.S. Exports More and More Bullets

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Global Research, February 25, 2019

[World Beyond War](#)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

*When I was a kid there was a local basketball team called the Washington Bullets. The team changed its name when “bullets” became offensive due to the high rate of gun murders in Washington, D.C. This is the same city that to this day has a football team called the Washington Redskins. What offends is not, perhaps, violence, but violence directed at people who matter. (Compare: tens of thousands of Yemenis vs. one Washington Post reporter.)*

The government headquartered in Washington D.C. is to this day, and increasingly so, the top supplier of bullets to the world, as well as of the guns with which to fire them, as well as of military training in how to use them “successfully.” The U.S. government is an equal opportunity bullet dealer, providing them to dictatorships and democracies alike, [just as with](#) other weapons and training.

Most of the most violent areas on the planet, the places we think of as being somehow inherently violent, manufacture few if any weapons. The weapons dealing is overwhelmingly a north-to-south, rich-to-poor, and in good part west-to-east enterprise. And the United States is “number one.”

In writing a book called *Curing Exceptionalism*, I tried to identify something in which the United States truly was tops in the world. While I didn’t find anything admirable for that list, I did find some shameful things, prominent among them: weapons dealing.

According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the U.S. bullet business is booming, the country having exported a record \$474.8 million worth of bullets between January and November 2018.

Here are some of the places those bullets went:

Measures: Total Value (\$US)						
Commodity	930630 Cartridges And Parts Thereof, Nesoi					
Time	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 through November	
All States	World Total	331,560,676	414,690,157	422,133,485	388,858,334	474,835,331
	Afghanistan	61,537	376,237	3,250,222	14,830,004	123,229,992
	Canada	69,802,250	97,421,504	80,547,700	75,917,702	74,501,552
	Australia	25,779,125	33,276,667	36,701,314	29,805,269	27,813,551
	Kuwait	2,662,085	3,153,508	22,703,277	16,519,039	26,632,224
	Israel	21,156,724	35,360,903	39,263,735	19,447,311	25,740,769
	Morocco	420,574	73,949	1,068,144	209,111	17,009,877
	Germany	14,294,467	19,161,603	19,531,027	16,431,934	14,801,695
	United Kingdom	14,200,623	9,575,408	14,675,518	13,276,370	14,480,917
	Philippines	3,692,494	3,420,542	11,771,320	4,859,769	14,209,195
	France	12,346,118	4,503,586	8,479,847	7,232,195	8,528,146
	Norway	3,308,852	5,569,443	6,206,728	5,795,383	8,307,058
	Denmark	7,014,027	7,738,831	6,227,966	6,976,940	8,274,300
	Saudi Arabia	48,614,738	16,819,905	54,327,797	28,904,843	7,831,183
	Jordan	2,248,300	1,397,348	7,234,007	31,792,352	7,735,197
	Belgium	7,042,387	9,150,284	9,594,563	7,505,920	6,971,546
	Mexico	7,881,120	8,630,545	7,358,101	10,396,029	6,760,760
	New Zealand	3,882,775	3,566,398	2,328,708	3,256,382	6,367,360
	South Africa	5,841,606	8,402,077	5,205,183	5,153,232	5,486,508
	Japan	4,334,720	5,048,692	2,599,984	4,737,668	5,183,495
	Italy	5,049,155	6,945,034	4,038,140	4,882,022	3,461,260
	United Arab Emirates	6,624,158	15,820,407	14,904,731	9,631,250	3,377,721
	Sweden	4,680,729	4,315,398	6,254,239	14,713,173	3,334,714
	Lebanon	1,674,444	42,490,143	11,763,602	1,978,238	2,911,497
	Spain	5,293,525	3,428,719	3,259,564	2,536,062	2,809,265
	Costa Rica	352,439	1,645,423	775,306	1,751,454	2,806,644
	Netherlands	389,236	636,407	425,327	1,696,602	2,754,833
	Ukraine	1,232,413	1,402,024	3,370,117	1,988,264	2,619,850
	Hong Kong	947,010	2,164,255	1,645,215	1,128,873	2,324,084
	Kenya	238,839		198,913	149,732	2,164,201
	Poland	723,025	1,164,231	1,286,884	1,894,489	2,078,394
	Turkey	654,184	2,209,017	532,078	175,080	2,011,833

When a U.S.-made missile blows up a family or a school bus or a wedding, there's sometimes a made-in-the-USA identification visible at the scene. When U.S.-made tear gas suppresses resistance to a U.S.-backed dictator, the same can often be said. Not so with bullets. But when a bullet takes a life anywhere on earth, there is a decent chance the bullet was made in the United States. Wars are often fought with U.S. weapons on both sides, including the side fighting against the United States. Examples include U.S. wars in [Syria](#), [Iraq](#), [Libya](#), the [Iran-Iraq war](#), the [Mexican drug war](#), [World War II](#) and many others.

So the bullet-dealing "jobs program" that in reality [eliminates](#), rather than adds to, jobs, may be dealing plenty of bullets destined to end the lives of, or severely injure, the very people who are generally advertised as mattering.

Domestically, U.S. culture has been infiltrated by the idea that black lives matter. But the majority of the dark-skinned human beings who will die from U.S.-made and/or U.S.-fired bullets live far from the United States. To my mind, their lives matter too. Yet I'm well aware that the most relevant difference between Venezuela and Norway, as oil-rich nations being, respectively, threatened with a coup and invasion and not threatened with anything of the sort, is the color of the skin of the inhabitants.

The least we can do, I think, is to be aware of what is happening. Renaming the basketball team the Bullets would be an honest educational step.

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