

What's Causing the Epidemic of Gun Violence?

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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Might Makes Right Based Violence By the Military Promotes Violence At Home

Gun control advocates point to all of the recent shootings as evidence that we should ban guns ... or at least assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

On the other hand, gun rights advocates point to the surge in anti-depressants - and the fact that they [cause violent symptoms](#) in some percentage of users.

Prominent institutions, economists and politicians have warned for years that bad economic policy would lead to unrest. See [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#).

But [other countries](#) with high gun ownership are [much less violent](#) than the U.S. ... so there must be something unique about modern America.

What is it?

Charles Derber, Professor of Sociology at Boston College and Yale Magrass, Chancellor Professor of Sociology at University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth provide an explanation at liberal website [Truth Out](#):

In the flood of commentary about the Newtown massacre and broader US gun violence, liberals tend to blame failures of gun control while conservatives blame the mentally ill and Hollywood. But they are both missing one important and overlooked explanation: the domestic consequences of a militarized superpower engaged in chronic wars around the world.

The US spends more money on the military than the next ten countries together. It also has the highest level of domestic gun violence in the developed world. Highly militarized societies cannot compartmentalize foreign from domestic violence. They cannot prevent wars - and guns - from coming home.

Europe provides a clear contrast to the United States. Since World War II, as the United States became the sole superpower, Europe largely renounced militarism and war. Demilitarization is one of the reasons why many European countries, such as Sweden, have high levels of gun ownership for hunting and sports, but have one-tenth the US level of gun violence. Demilitarization weakens the cultural foundation of violence in civil society - If violence is not acceptable abroad, it can hardly be seen as honorable at home.

Even without a draft ... ideas, values and profits emerging from the war sector

flood civilian society, a torrent that a draft would only increase.

A militarized society develops a culture and institutions which program civilians for violence at home as well as abroad.

Mass killers often obsess over the military, even if they are not soldiers or veterans. At several school rampages, the killers were fixated on military equipment, war stories and the military bases near their schools. This was demonstrated by Michael Moore in his film on Columbine. One of the Columbine shooters lived on an Air Force base, which displays a plane with a plaque, proclaiming that it killed people in Vietnamese villages on Christmas Eve. Moore asks, "Don't you think the kids say to themselves, 'Dad goes to work everyday. He builds weapons of mass destruction. What is the difference between that mass destruction and the mass destruction over at Columbine High School?'"

New war technologies and policies may inspire even more violence. Drone warfare, as carried out by the Obama administration, targets and kills "enemy combatants, whether or foreign or American," without judicial oversight. Each week, John Brennan, Obama's nominee for head of the CIA brings Obama a "kill list," with the names of people to be "eliminated." As President Nixon declared, "When the president does it, that means that it is not illegal." If the president can kill Americans in the name of honor and security, with nobody empowered to question his judgment, other Americans may decide they too can shoot to kill based on their own morals and view of the threat.

The military has been directly involved in shaping cultural attitudes for centuries.

A militarist state must raise boys ready and able to commit violence enthusiastically, providing it is directed against peoples whom their rulers deem enemies.

In his Farewell Address, President Eisenhower warned of the dangers of the penetration of the values and economic interests of the military-industrial complex into the heart of civil society.

As Martin Luther King lamented at the height of the war in Vietnam, "I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today - my own government."

We've repeatedly noted that [corruption at the top leads to lawlessness among the people](#).

America is so [blatantly waging illegal wars](#) of aggression (and see [Update II](#)) on a [perennial and global](#) basis - and [so obviously](#) and [disgustingly](#) using [illegal techniques](#) to fight them - that the message Americans receive is that the law of the jungle controls, might makes right and killing to get your way is a-okay.

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