



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 13, 2014

Obama Looks to Australia for Civilian Disarmament Plan

President Obama is determined to push for the confiscation of civilian weapons at every opportunity.

Remarks made by the president during [a question and answer session](#) with the CEO of the blogging site Tumblr reveal that he is looking to Australia as an example of how disarmament can work here at home. Speaking of his legacy as president, Obama said:



My biggest frustration so far is the fact that this society has not been willing to take some basic steps to keep guns out of the hands of people who can do just unbelievable damage.

We're the only developed country on Earth where this happens. And it happens now once a week. And it's a one-day story. There's no place else like this. A couple of decades ago, Australia had a mass shooting similar to Columbine or Newtown. And Australia just said, well, that's it — we're not seeing that again. And basically imposed very severe, tough gun laws. And they haven't had a mass shooting since.

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We're also the only developed country on earth with an article of the Constitution that explicitly and unqualifiedly forbids the federal government from infringing on the right to keep and bear arms, Mr. President.

Of course, President Obama has never been one to let the facts stand in the way of a good justification for violating the Bill of Rights, so the story from Down Under deserves a closer look.

In 1996, an Australian man named Martin Bryant killed 35 people and wounded 21 others during an armed rampage at a tourist site in Tasmania. Bryant used two semiautomatic weapons in the attack.

Australian gun laws were already very strict when Bryant committed the Port Arthur massacre. The laws in effect at the time required applicants asking for permission to buy a gun provide a "genuine reason and need for owning, possessing or using a firearm."

The list of government-approved "genuine reasons" included police and security work, hunting, controlling feral animals, collecting, and target shooting.

Noticeably missing from the Australian statute: personal protection. This omission brings up the question of whether the number of victims of the Bryant shooting spree might have been a bit lower had one of those caught in the crosshairs had a means to end the slaughter.

After the election of Prime Minister John Howard in March 1996, the Australian parliament passed the National Firearms Agreement (NFA) which banned all semiautomatic rifles, all semiautomatic shotguns, all pump-action shotguns, and imposed severe limits on the possession of all other weapons.

As part of the systematic disarmament of Australians, the government initiated a forced buyback program aimed at eradicating private ownership of firearms.



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Between October 1, 1996 and September 30, 1997, the Australian government paid over \$230 million to “buy” (confiscate) and destroy more than 643,000 of the newly illegal weapons. Of particular interest to Americans would be the way the Australian government collected the money it spent buying back guns. To raise the funds necessary to purchase the guns targeted by the new law, Parliament raised the national healthcare tax by .2 percent.

Would it be beyond the pale of presidential madness to increase the ObamaCare tax by an amount sufficient to secure the purchase of guns in our own country?

Finally, another section of the NFA provided for “rolling amnesties” for those gun owners that failed to surrender their weapons during the first phase of disarmament. During these announced amnesties, citizens can hand over guns that are either prohibited or not registered, without being charged with breaking the law.

That hardly sounds like a policy aimed at eradicating armed violence. That sounds more like a policy aimed at eradicating an armed civilian population.

Keeping in mind that President Obama wants to model the forcible disarmament of Americans on the Australian model he finds so praiseworthy, it is important to analyze the effectiveness of the Australian effort.

Before examining the figures related to the Australian law, it is critically important that readers remember that the right to keep and bear arms is not dependent on the number of lives that can be saved by its eradication. There is no provision in the Second Amendment that provides for the infringement by the government on that right if there is a spate of killings by psychopaths.

That said, the following information is provided not to prove that disarmament would not reduce armed violence and therefore should not be attempted. The information is provided only to point out that even these “common sense” approaches to gun control are nonsensical and nothing more than despotism dressed in humanitarian robes.

In 2003, the Brookings Institution [published a study](#) of homicides in Australia after the passage of the National Firearms Agreement and the enforcement of its remarkably strict prohibitions on civilian gun ownership.

The Brookings study found that the “total homicide rate has been slowly declining throughout the 1990s.” And what about after the enforcement of the gun grab? “In the five years post-NFA there has been no pronounced acceleration of that decline,” the report concluded.

Speaking specifically of armed homicide, the study found that there was “a 3.2 percent decline in the daily rate of firearm homicide.” That reduction “continued a long-term trend rather than the effect of the Port Arthur incident.”

Also noteworthy, the Brookings study found that the number of homicides involving the “assault rifles” targeted by the NFA dropped, while the number of homicides involving handguns “did increase sharply after the NFA.”

With those facts in mind, it would seem that President Obama and the rest of the disarmament lobby are less interested in reducing violent crime and more interested in getting powerful weapons (the kind that could be used effectively in armed combat) out of the hands of private citizens.

Just how does the president plan on accomplishing his unconstitutional and unconscionable goal of outlawing private gun ownership? Looks like he’ll be using that pen and phone he bragged about.



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“The President is going to continue to look for opportunities to act administratively, unilaterally, using his executive authority to try to make our community safer. We’re always looking for those kinds of opportunities,” said Deputy Press Secretary Josh Earnest during [a press briefing on June 10](#).

As if that weren’t a clear enough explanation of how the president intends to proceed with the seizure, Earnest added:

But the question I think really facing lawmakers right now is, what commonsense steps can Democrats and Republicans take to reduce the likelihood of gun violence? And there are some, and they have unfortunately been bottled up in Congress. And that is a disappointment to the President. But that is not going to stop the President from continuing to push for administrative steps that we could take that could reduce incidents of gun violence.

Surely, however, despite his rhetoric, President Obama knows that there is no law, regulation, or executive order that could ever dissuade someone from committing murder in cold blood. The very premise is laughable. Such acts are the result of mental instability and are the product of a perversion of purpose inscrutable to most regular folk.

There is no constitutional authority given to the federal government to restrict purchase of firearms, ammunition, or component parts. In fact, the Second Amendment explicitly proscribes any attempt by the federal government to infringe on the people’s right to keep and bear arms.

Besides, reasonable people understand that the ready availability of guns is no more responsible for any armed massacre than an all-you-can-eat buffet is responsible for obesity.

As the president prepares to unilaterally import Australian disarmament, we should remind ourselves of the words of our founding generation who looked upon the right to be armed as the best check against tyranny.

In commenting on the Constitution in 1833, Joseph Story wrote:

The right of the citizens to keep and bear arms has justly been considered, as the palladium of the liberties of a republic; since it offers a strong moral check against the usurpation and arbitrary power of rulers; and will generally, even if these are successful in the first instance, enable the people to resist and triumph over them.

In his own commentary on the works of the influential jurist Blackstone, Founding-era legal scholar St. George Tucker wrote:

This may be considered as the true palladium of liberty.... The right of self defence is the first law of nature: in most governments it has been the study of rulers to confine this right within the narrowest limits possible. Wherever standing armies are kept up, and the right of the people to keep and bear arms is, under any colour or pretext whatsoever, prohibited, liberty, if not already annihilated, is on the brink of destruction.

Writing in *The Federalist*, Alexander Hamilton explained:

If the representatives of the people betray their constituents, there is then no resource left but in the exertion of that original right of self-defense which is paramount to all positive forms of government, and which against the usurpations of the national rulers, may be exerted with infinitely better prospect of success than against those of the rulers of an individual state.

Photo of President Barack Obama speaking at the Tumblr forum at the White House: AP Images



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