



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on August 11, 2011

## Terrorists vs. The State

Others advocated a crackdown on so-called right-wing extremists and “hate speech,” which is already considered criminal in much of Europe. In the U.K., activists wanted to ban an anti-immigration rally, as police urged citizens to report individuals with anti-government views to authorities.

Across the continent, big-government opportunists and fearful citizens were also advocating more state spying and surveillance of people’s online activities. More than a few national governments have already announced their plans to increase the warrantless snooping.



As in the aftermath of Jared Loughner’s Arizona rampage, the rush to collectivize the blame was almost immediate. Media pundits and “experts” were trying to pin responsibility for the murders on their political opponents — and to use the power of the state to stifle dissent.

Setting aside the initial fear and hysteria, however, there are important considerations to take into account before stripping away more freedom and handing the state more power. Yes, the attack in Norway was horrific and evil. But, the murderous actions of unrestrained governments around the world and throughout history should cause far more alarm.

Just in the last century, hundreds of millions have perished at the hands of the state. And this can occur irrespective of the justification used by governments to seize power — whether it be to promote the “common good” or provide “security” against real or imagined threats.

Simply consider Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and any other blood-soaked despots. They were able to murder millions of innocent human beings through the all-powerful states they led. All of them used deceptive justifications to seize more power, and once they had it, terror of unimaginable proportions was unleashed.

And of course, if it happened before, it can happen again. Historically, increasingly strict gun control and increasingly large and all-encompassing state “security” bureaucracies have tended to produce disaster.

So rather than further solidify a government monopoly on power — which can, and, due to the nature of man, *will* eventually be turned against citizens — activists should work to promote freedom and individual rights. While it may never be possible to stop every lunatic, the proper way to help prevent more tragedies such as Norway’s is to guarantee the right of individuals to protect themselves.

And it isn’t *just* about principle. Academic research on the effect of gun laws actually shows that overbearing restrictions, like those found in Norway, are among the worst strategies for preventing such tragedies.



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Researcher John Lott, Ph.D., widely considered the world's premier expert on gun control, examined every multiple-victim public shooting in America over a 50-year period. And his findings run contrary to the theories advanced by anti-gun zealots in just about every way.



After the attack in Norway, Lott explained the facts during an interview with the Sun News Network. “We found probably the biggest single factor for determining how many people get killed or injured at one of these scenes when an attack occurs is the amount of time that elapses between when the attack starts and someone is able to arrive there on the scene with a gun.”

On the island of Utoya, where the massacre took place, the killer was able to shoot his unarmed victims unmolested for more than an hour. He even had time to re-visit his victims and shoot them again to make sure they were dead. When armed police finally arrived, they called his name and he surrendered without a struggle.

Lott explained that the only gun-related law that has any effect on such attacks is the passage of “right to carry” laws. According to his research, allowing citizens to be armed was associated with a 60-percent decline in mass shooting sprees and an 80-percent drop in the rate at which people were killed or injured in such attacks.

On top of that, when shooting rampages did occur in jurisdictions where citizens could be legally armed, they were “virtually all in the tiny areas within the state where permitted concealed handguns weren’t allowed,” Lott explained. In America, those places are known as “gun-free zones.” That’s what killers look for.

As Benjamin Franklin famously wrote: “They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.” Not only that, those who are willing to sacrifice freedom for security will have neither in the end.



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