

A Muslim Writer Tells America: Drop Your Guns and Give Up

By the JPFO Liberty Crew

A JPFO supporter sent us a link to the article, “In the Fight Against Terrorism, Some Rights Must Be Repealed,” by Junaid Afeef. In this response, we take the article paragraph by paragraph to examine the merits and methods of the writer’s arguments. Our observations or counterarguments are identified as Points. At the end of the paragraph analysis, we summarize the main observations and offer some observations.

<http://www.ispu.us/pages/articles/2914/articleDetailPB.html>

¶ 1 The newly appointed CIA Director Porter Goss, believes that terrorists may bring urban warfare techniques learned in Iraq to our homeland. If he is right, we could have a whole new war on our hands. The prospect is indeed scary.

Point 1: The writer begins by suggesting that terrorists from Iraq may well be coming to the United States to wage urban warfare.

¶ 2 The idea of terrorist cells operating clandestinely in the United States, quietly amassing handguns and assault rifles, and planning suicide shooting rampages in our malls, is right out of Tom Clancy’s most recent novel. If not for the fact that the 9/11 attacks were also foreshadowed in a Clancy novel, I would have given the idea no further thought.

Point 2: The writer takes urban terrorist attacks as a serious possibility because the novelist Tom Clancy wrote fictional scenarios about such attacks. If not for Tom Clancy, the writer would never have even considered such a possibility.

¶ 3 However, rather than facing this potential threat publicly, the Bush administration is only focused on terrorist attacks involving missiles, nuclear devices and biological weapons. Stopping terrorists with WMDs is a good thing, but what about the more immediate threat posed by terrorists with guns? The potential threat of terrorist attacks using guns is far more likely than any of these other scenarios.

Point 3: The writer considers terror attacks by clandestine attacks to be a likelihood. The writer asserts that the Bush Administration is

entirely ignoring these potential sorts of attacks. The writer offers no evidence to back this assertion.

Point 4: The writer fails to mention that the FBI operates a domestic counterterrorist program nationwide. The FBI falls under the Department of Justice which is considered part of the Bush Administration.

¶ 4 This leads to a bigger policy issue. In the post 9/11 world where supposedly “everything has changed,” perhaps it is time for Americans to reconsider the value of public gun ownership.

Point 5: The writer uses the phrase “everything has changed” referring to the post 9/11 world. That phrase is just a rhetorical device. The phrase is not factually true – not “everything” has changed. The phrase is just an expression used to justify changes of ideas or policies or attitudes without having to actually explain the risks, reasons, costs and benefits of such changes.

Point 6: The writer has changed the subject with a non-sequitur. There is no logical connection between the writer’s earlier concern about Iraq-sourced terrorists coming to American, and the “value of public gun ownership” by Americans.

¶ 5 The idea of public gun ownership simply does not make sense anymore. The right to bear arms, as enumerated in the Second Amendment, was meant for the maintenance of a “well-regulated militia.” At the time the amendment was adopted, standing armies were viewed with a great deal of suspicion, and therefore, gun-owning individuals were seen as a protection mechanism for the public. These gun owners were also seen as guardians of the republic against the tyranny of the rulers. The framers of the Constitution saw the right to bear and use arms as a check against an unruly government. That state of affairs no longer exists.

Point 7: The writer concedes that the “right to bear arms” in the Second Amendment refers to the right of the people to own, bear and use firearms as a protection against standing armies and to rein in an “unruly government.”

Point 8: The writer concedes that the “framers of the Constitution” agreed with that purpose of the Second Amendment.

- Point 9: The final sentence says “that state of affairs no longer exists.” Which state of affairs?
- ¶ 6 Today, only a handful of citizens outside of neo-nazi and white supremacist groups view gun ownership as a means of keeping the government in check. Even those citizens who continue to maintain such antiquated views must face the reality that the United States’ armed forces are too large and too powerful for the citizenry to make much difference. Quite frankly, the idea of the citizenry rising up against the U.S. government with their handguns and assault rifles, and facing the military with these personal arms is absurd. The Branch Davidian tragedy at Waco, Texas, was one such futile attempt.
- Point 10: The writer refers to “only a handful of citizens.” No data supports that the number of citizens is 5 or less; more seriously, no data is offered to support any numerical value of people to whom the writer refers.
- Point 11: The writer refers to “citizens outside of neo-nazi and white supremacist groups.” Note first that there is no cited evidence to support this assertion.
- Point 12: Note also that the writer is engaging in *smear by association*. He suggests that the last remaining groups that support the viewpoint of the “framers of the Constitution” (Point 8 above) are neo-nazi and white racist.
- Point 13: Note that this Article began by creating fear of terrorists from Iraq coming to America. Now the subject is changed to American neo-nazis and white supremacists. The article has shifted context without any factual or logical reason given.
- Point 14: The writer asserts that widespread ownership of firearms by civilians cannot possibly hold the U.S. government in check because the U.S. military has too much power. The writer asserts this opinion as though it were a fact, without showing any reasons or data to prove it. As it happens, armed civilians in Iraq have so harried the U.S. military presence there that large segments of the U.S. public (according to polls) now believes the war is unwinnable or wrong. Thus the data from Iraq suggest that armed civilians can prove a match for the U.S. military in some circumstances. The facts of current events thus show the writer to be wrong.
- Point 15: The writer thinks it is “absurd” to imagine a civilian population rising up against the U.S. government. The writer offers no reason to draw that conclusion. Inasmuch as a part of the civilian

population rose up against the most powerful nation in the world in 1776, and later several states seceded from the Union in a rebellion that resulted in a long war, history does show that civilians can and do challenge government rulers even in North America.

Point 16: To claim that a popular rebellion would be “absurd” is to discount the numbers of people involved. Do the math: If there were just 10 million armed civilians in this nation of 300 million, a mere 3% of the population, that 10 million would exceed the number of active duty military personnel. The 10 million rebels might or might not ultimately win, but it would not be “absurd” to imagine a successful rebellion even today.

Point 17: The writer asserts that the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, attempted to rise up against the U.S. government. That assertion is a lie. The Branch Davidians resisted a search and arrest, and later resisted a quasi military siege by elements of the U.S. government. The Davidians did not “rise up” against the government. [See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waco_Siege and Carol Moore, *The Davidian Massacre* (1995), full text at www.carolmoore.net/waco/TDM-index.html.]

¶ 7 The more important consideration is public safety. It is no longer safe for the public to carry guns. Gun violence is increasingly widespread in the United States. According to the DOJ/FBI’s Crime In The United States: 2003 report, 45,197 people in the United States were murdered with guns between 1999 and 2003. That averages out to more than 9,000 people murdered per year. Nearly three times the number of lives lost in the tragic 9/11 attacks are murdered annually as a direct result of guns.

Point 18: Another shift in context and change of subject. The writer asserts “it is no longer safe for the public to carry guns.” Until this point, the article had not mentioned carrying firearms. The context shift leads the less careful reader to think that there is some connection between private American citizens carrying guns and the threat of Iraqi terrorists coming to America.

Point 19: The writer says “it is no longer safe” ... which implies that in the past it was safe for the public to carry guns. The writer doesn’t say when that “past” time was. Nevertheless, the writer guessed correctly: decades ago, the murder rates were lower. One possible reason for the lower murder rates may be that perpetrators could expect their intended victims to be armed and fight back. [See John R. Lott, Jr., *More Guns, Less Crime* (Univ. of Chicago, 2d ed. 2000),

[http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0226493644/jewsforthepreser\]](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0226493644/jewsforthepreser)

- Point 20: It is a rhetorical trick to make comparisons between quantities that bear practically no relation to one another. The trick's purpose is to cause the reader to get a mental image and make a connection that the facts otherwise do not support. Here, the writer claims that three times as many people are killed by misuse of firearms than were killed in the 9/11 attacks. He uses this comparison to attempt to say that private firearms ownership in America is somehow akin to the 9/11 attacks.
- Point 21: The writer claims that the annual murder rate is "a direct result of guns." That claim just rehashes what anti-rights people have been saying for decades, i.e., that the guns themselves are the cause of murder (rather than the killers' misuse of guns).
- Point 22: Notice the writer's introductory phrasing to this paragraph: "The more important consideration is public safety." One may ask, "more important than what?" Perhaps the writer believes that an annual murder rate of 9,000 in a nation of 300,000,000 people is more important than the havoc that can be wreaked by a tyrannical government out of control. The history of the 20th Century proves the contrary. As Professor R.J. Rummel has proved, the greatest danger to human life is government gone bad. (See endnote 1.) Prof. Rummel showed that in the 20th Century alone, over 169,000,000 people were killed by governments who intended to murder civilians. If private firearms ownership in America can deter the government from ever becoming genocidal, then such ownership will have saved countless lives.
- Point 23: The writer claims, "Gun violence is increasingly widespread." He cites no factual evidence to support the claim of "increases" or of "widespread." The claim is just an assertion designed to scare the reader. He recites DOJ statistics that are averaged over four years, so the reader gets no hint of any trend up or down, or where geographically any increases occurred.

¶ 8 Examples of wanton violence are all around. One particularly heinous incident of gun violence occurred in 1998 when former Aryan Nation member Buford Furrow shot and wounded three young boys, a teenage girl and a receptionist at the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles and then shot and killed a Filipino-American postal worker.

Point 24: Of all the murders in the last 8 years, the writer carefully selects an instance of violence perpetrated by a white supremacist against Jews and an Asian American. This is a continuation of smear by implication, designed to cause Jews and others to believe that firearms ownership is favored by neo-nazis and white supremacists to enable murderous persecution of minority groups.

¶ 9 Another occurred in July 1999 when white supremacist Benjamin Nathaniel Smith, a member of the World Church of the Creator, went on a weekend shooting spree, targeting Blacks, Jews and Asians. By the time Smith was done he had wounded six Orthodox Jews returning from services, and killed one African-American and one Korean-American.

Point 25: Again, from all of the multiple murders in the last 7 years, the writer selects an instance when a white supremacist killed or injured several Jews, an African American and an Asian American. (See Point 24.)

¶ 10 Just recently, in Ulster, NY, a 24 year old man carrying a Hesse Arms Model 47, an AK-47 clone assault rifle, randomly shot people in a local mall. While the Justice Department did not label this murder a terrorist attack, all the signs were there. The Ulster, New York shooting is an ominous warning of what lies ahead. Terrorism can be a homegrown act committed by anyone with a gun and is not unique to a “Middle Eastern-looking man with a bomb.” As long as the public is allowed to own guns, the threat of similar terrorist attacks remains real.

Point 26: The writer selects an instance in which an attacker, using an “assault rifle,” shot at people in a shopping mall.
[<http://www.columbiatribune.com/2005/Feb/20050214News007.asp>] Two persons were injured, no one was killed. Citing this instance ties into pre-9/11 anti-self defense lobbying to ban “assault weapons” based on fear of multiple murder potentials.

Point 27: The writer neglects to note that the event took place in February 2005 (not “just recently”), and that the firearm was a semi-automatic weapon (not an “assault weapon”).
[http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2006/05/19/new_york_mall_shooter_gets_32_year_maximum/]

Point 28: The writer suggests the mall attack showed “signs” of being a “terrorist attack.” Yet, when the attacker was sentenced to 32 years in prison, there was no report of any terrorist link whatsoever. Rather, the attacker had a strange fascination with the Columbine high school killings.

- Point 29: The writer says the mall attack presents an “ominous warning” of what lies ahead. The writer presents no reasons why anyone should expect anything other than a repeat of the same sort of mass murder by another deranged nut.
- Point 30: The writer treats the mall attack as an example of how “terrorism can be homegrown.” Except – this wasn’t “terrorism.”
- Point 31: The writer treats the mall attack as proof that terrorism is not unique to Middle Eastern-looking men with bombs. Except the mall attack wasn’t terrorism, it was attempted murder by a loony. The fact remains that the vast majority of reported terrorist incidents in or near Israel and in Iraq are perpetrated by Middle Eastern people with bombs.
- Point 32: The writer leaps to the conclusion that as long as “the public is allowed to own guns, the threat of similar terrorist attacks remains real.” Except that the mall attack was not a terrorist attack. Here again, the writer has shifted context and changed the subject. The paragraph starts with the mall shooting, links it in principle to an Iraq-driven terrorist attack, and then blames the risk of mall terrorism on the gun owning public. No logical thread ties all of these subjects together.
- Point 33: The writer failed to mention that more than 70,000,000 Americans own guns, yet only one of them was the mall shooting loony. The writer’s implied goal of disarming the 70,000,000+ non-violent Americans, just to somehow possibly prevent another lone gun loony, is a tremendous example of a wasteful public policy idea. If it cost just \$10 per American to disarm all 70 million, that would amount to \$700 million in spending just to stop one loony.

¶ 11 The idea of curtailing rights in the name of homeland security does not seem implausible given the current state of civil liberties in the United States. The war on terror has already taken an enormous toll on the First, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendments, and thus far, very few Americans have objected. In light of this precedence, it seems reasonable that scaling back or even repealing the right to bear arms would be an easy task.

- Point 34: The thrust of this paragraph is to say that Americans are going along with “curtailing rights” in the name of homeland security, so now is the time to scale back or repeal the Second Amendment. This paragraph suggests that the writer does not object to curtailing

many of the rights in the Bill of Rights, so the writer is at least consistent in calling for even more rights to be cut back.

- Point 35: The writer talks about “repealing the right to bear arms.” Using that phrase is to omit the rights to *own* firearms and to *carry* firearms. Selecting just “to bear arms” is either a sign of the writer’s lack of precision in word choice, or an attempt to characterize all gun ownership as the same as “bearing arms,” which is a term that often refers more to using arms in a police or military context.
- Point 36: The writer uses the phrase “in light of this precedence.” For a lawyer to so misuse the English language is embarrassing. “This precedence” is meaningless here. Perhaps the writer meant “in light of these precedents.” Then the unanswered question is: what “precedents” is he talking about?
- ¶ 12 In fact, it will be a very difficult task. So far the civil liberties curtailment has affected generally disenfranchised groups such as immigrants, people of color and religious minorities. An assault on the Second Amendment will impact a much more powerful constituency.
- Point 37: The writer asserts “the civil liberties curtailment has affected generally disenfranchised groups.” Not one fact or statistic is offered, and not one reference is provided to support this claim.
- Point 38: The writer’s argument harkens back to the “class warfare” worldview, in which political issues are framed as situations where the powerful class oppresses the underclass. Yet, if his class warfare approach is accurate, then the writer has utterly failed to see the point of the Second Amendment. The underclasses – or any group of people – suffer persecution when they are powerless compared to their persecutors. (See Endnote 1.) Revoking the Second Amendment and banning private ownership of firearms would guarantee that only the current powerful class, with its armies and police forces, would have physical power. Disarming the underclass guarantees that they stay the underclass, in the “class warfare” worldview. The writer’s own positions self-contradict.
- ¶ 13 According to the DOJ’s Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2002 41 percent of American households owned at least one gun. According to these same statistics, 50 percent of the owners were male, 43 percent were white and 48 percent were Republican. More than 50 percent of the gun owners were college educated and earned more than \$50,000 per year. Regrettably, these folks are going to marshal their considerable resources to protect their special interest.

- Point 39: The writer indulges in one of the subtler propaganda tricks: gathering together different statistics to present them as though they described one group of people. (See endnote 2.) See how the writer gives the impression that there is a solid bloc of white male Republicans who own half the guns in the country. Looking at the statistics carefully, you see that the 50% of gun owners who are male are not necessarily the very same people who form the 43% white owners or the 48% Republican owners. Hasty readers will miss that key point; the writer preys on that haste.
- Point 40: Using the writer's technique, we can state the same statistics with the opposite bias: "50% of gun owners are female, 57% of gun owners are minorities, and 54% of gun owners are Democrats and independent voters." Put those statistics together in the same fallacious way, and the writer's statistics show that the majority of American gun owners are minority female Democrats. That conclusion – using the writer's own approach – contradicts his attempt to fit all gun owners into a stereotyped mold. (See Point 12.)
- ¶ 14 This is a shame. Instead of laying waste to the civil rights and civil liberties that are at the core of free society, and rather than squandering precious time and money on amending the U.S. Constitution for such things as "preserving marriage between a man and woman," the nation ought to focus its attention on the havoc guns cause in society and debate the merits of gun ownership in this era of terrorism.
- Point 41: The writer complains about the loss of civil rights and liberties "that are at the core of free society," but sidesteps the fact that preserving a free society requires that the people retain the power to rein in government power. The writer's position is that he would abolish the armed citizen militia and thereby concentrate power in the hands of the elites. Such a position runs contrary to the very definition of a free society.
- Point 42: The writer's reference to the gay marriage issue is a total irrelevancy. Injecting the issue here stokes the Left vs. Right conflict over gay marriage. By mentioning that subject here he signals readers that if you're liberal and for gay marriage, then you must necessarily oppose the right to keep and bear arms. That's a false dichotomy: the right to self-defense is for *everyone*.

Point 43: The writer himself fails to examine “the merits of gun ownership in this era of terrorism.” He does not consider the defensive uses of firearms. Although he earlier warned that Iraq-sourced terrorists are coming to America, the writer does not discuss which population would be better able to resist the onslaught: the armed and prepared population? Or the disarmed population that depends upon government agencies to protect it?

¶ 15 So long as guns remain available to the general public, there will always be the threat of terrorists walking into a crowded restaurant, a busy coffee shop or a packed movie theater and opening fire upon unsuspecting civilians.

Point 44: This paragraph summarizes the writer’s poor and fallacious argument. He has failed utterly to show why private ownership of firearms by Americans is a contributing cause of Iraq-sourced terrorist attacks in public places. He has failed likewise to show how private ownership of firearms by decent Americans sets up a favorable environment for terrorists or any other homicidal criminals.

¶ 16 The Second Amendment is not worth such risks.

Point 45: The writer has not explained the value of the Second Amendment and he has not even tried to define or quantify the “risks.” He is thus in no position to draw any conclusions about the risks and benefits of the right of the people to keep and bear arms. (See our discussion of the Second Amendment at www.jpfo.org/sixaboutsecond.htm.)

Final Observations:

In the 45 Points above, we have shown that Mr. Afeef’s article rewarms the old arguments for civilian disarmament while adding a peppery dash of post-9/11 terrorism fears to give them new urgency. The article lacks a coherent logic that leads from premises to conclusions. Interestingly, several of Mr. Afeef’s positions are so muddled that they lead to humorous and fatal self-contradictions.

Mr. Afeef’s article should raise concerns about the political direction of Islamic think tanks in America. Since 1992, JPFO has worked consistently to show the extraordinary dangers of disarming the civilian population. JPFO’s book, “*Gun Control*”: *Gateway to Tyranny*, shows the legal mechanisms used to disarm Jews and non-Nazis in Germany before the genocide there. Another book, *Death by “Gun Control*”: *The Human Cost of Victim Disarmament*, shows how civilian disarmament made possible massive persecution and slaughter of millions of people worldwide. The

video documentary, *Innocents Betrayed*, presents the unforgettable photos and footage to show how powerless innocent people die when the aggressors are armed.

In the face of this overwhelming evidence made public by JPFO, Mr. Afeef and his think tank apparently still want to produce a disarmed American population. Given that today's biggest single threat of murderous attacks on unarmed civilians worldwide comes from Islamic terrorists, it seems rather suspicious that an Islamic think tank in the United States would want to force powerlessness on the American people.

Endnotes

- (1) Data and references concerning disastrous consequences of victim disarmament are provided in *Death by "Gun Control": The Human Cost of Victim Disarmament* (2001). www.jpfo.org/deathgc.htm. Highlights of the same information are delivered by the video documentary, *Innocents Betrayed*. www.innocentsbetrayed.com. R.J. Rummel, *Death by Government* (Transaction Publishers, 1994) conclusively shows that when governments hold the monopoly of power in society and also lack means for citizens to halt abuses of power, then the population is at high risk of massive persecutions and genocide. <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/>
- (2) Excellent discussions of similar sorts of improper use of statistics (by aggregating them or improperly connecting one with another) appear in Thomas Sowell, *The Vision of the Anointed* 31-63 (Basic Books, 1995), and Darrell Huff, *How to Lie with Statistics* 87-121 (W. W. Norton, 1954)(still in print).