

ISIS And U.S. Weaponry: At Home And Abroad

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The same politicians who claim they'd like to restrict U.S. gun sales have flooded the world markets with the weaponry of mass slaughter.



ISIS militants hold up their flag as they patrol in a commandeered American Humvee in Fallujah, 40 miles (65 kilometers) west of Baghdad, Iraq. (AP Photo)

When someone commits mass murder in the United States and is tied, however significantly, to a foreign terrorist group, there remains a section of the U.S. population willing to recognize and point out that no ideology, fit of hatred, or mental derangement can do the same damage without high-tech weaponry that it does with it. Why does this understanding vanish into the ether of ignorance and apathy at the water's edge?

ISIS videos display U.S. guns, U.S. Humvees, U.S. weaponry of all sorts. The profits and political corruption that bring those weapons into existence are the same as those that litter the United States with guns. Shouldn't we be bothered by both?

The same politicians who claim they'd like to restrict U.S. gun sales have flooded the world markets with the weaponry of mass slaughter. President Obama's administration has approved more weapons sales abroad than any other administration since World War II. Over 60 percent of those weapons have been sold to the Middle East. Add to that total huge quantities of U.S. weapons in the hands of the United States or its proxies in the Middle East — or formerly in their hands but seized by ISIS.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton waived restrictions at the State Department on selling weapons to Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Qatar, all states that had donated to the Clinton Foundation. Saudi Arabia had chipped in at least \$10 million, and Boeing added another \$900,000 as Secretary Clinton made it her mission to get Saudi Arabia the planes with which it would attack Yemen.

In the past five years, the United States has sold weapons to at least 96 countries. As of 2011 the United States accounted for 79% of the value of transfer agreements to ship weapons to governments in the Middle East, 79% also to poor nations around the world, and 77% of the value of total agreements to ship weapons to other countries, according to the [Congressional Research Service](#). By 2014, those percentages had dropped a bit but [remained](#) over 50%.

In 2013, the big war profiteers spent \$65 million lobbying Congress. There's a big [headline](#) when the National Rifle Association spends \$3 million. We ask if black lives matter. In addition, do foreign lives matter?

Toddlers with guns kill more people in the United States than do foreign terrorists — even adding in domestic terrorists somehow tied to foreign ideas. But we don't hate toddlers. We don't bomb toddlers and whoever's near them. We don't think of toddlers as inherently evil or backward or belonging to the wrong religion. We forgive them instantly, without struggle. It's not their fault the guns were left lying around.

But is it the fault of ISIS that Iraq was destroyed? That Libya was thrown into chaos? That the region was flooded with U.S.-made weapons? That future ISIS leaders were tortured in U.S. camps? That life was made into a nightmare? Maybe not, but it is their fault they murder people. They are adults. They know what they are doing.

True enough. But could they do it without the weapons?

On the domestic scene, we are able to recognize that other nations have conflict, hatred, and crime, but that — in the absence of all the guns — the crimes do less damage. Australia got rid of its guns following a killing less deadly than Orlando. Now a gun in Australia costs more than anyone would be likely to get out of an armed robbery. Now Australia has no mass killings, apart from its participation in U.S. wars.

On the foreign scene, can we recognize that regions armed to the teeth with U.S. weapons, wars with U.S. weapons on both sides, and CIA and Pentagon proxies fighting each other in Syria are not the inevitable result of backwardness in Arab culture, but rather the result of giving free rein to merchants of death?

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