



Where War Is Never Far Away
In Aleppo, Syria, a rebel fighter carried his son after Friday's prayer. Fighting was intensifying near the Damascus airport. Page A6.

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Senator Richard Blumenthal
702 Hart Senate Office Building 702
Washington, DC 20510

Reflections on Newtown - I

Dear Dick

A mad man steals her guns and kills his mom.
And then a score of Newtown children.
Maybe Freedom is next.
In God we Trust.

He may watch, but I don't expect Him to save us.

Keeping guns out of the wrong hands is absolutely essential.

The horror of Newtown is absolutely unacceptable.

A Newtown man thought, "It couldn't happen here."

Unfortunately politicians must do *something* to stop the 1% prone to mass murder and guarantee it cannot happen again. Appease the moral outrage or lose your job, your self-respect and privileged status in the next election.

While "Black Swan" events are rare, thank you Prof. Taleb, they will continue to occur precisely where and when they are least expected. Most in Congress trained as lawyers; many like yourself spent a career as prosecutors looking for and using laws to lock up criminals. The result is that in Planet Washington, DC few care to recognize, much less rely upon, the nation's citizens as the ultimate protectors of both Safety and Liberty.

The best choice for self-protection and defense is the semi-auto AR-15 rifle:

In Los Angeles on one April 29th, the verdict on a police beating of Rodney King triggers riots. Chaos lasts 6 days. The police desert the city on day 1. A shop keeper refuses to abandon his store, and when a gang of looters approach, armed with his assault rifle he stands his ground. And. They leave. He lives, but 53 die, over 2,000 are injured.

In New Orleans on August 29th, the Eye of Katrina passes over the city. By the next day looting is rampant, gangs of gunmen are on a rampage. The day after that 80% of the city is flooded and the Governor finally calls in the military, troops armed with combat weapons. The looting, burning buildings and mayhem continues. One man declines to evacuate and abandon his home. Later as a gang approaches, he stands on the front porch of his house holding an assault rifle, his ultimate protection. Not a shot is fired, but the gang does back away from the house and leaves, looking for easier targets.

T E K T O N P R E U X

On the front page of The New York Times on December 8th there is a photograph: a man carries his child, his assault rifle slung over his shoulder in the Syrian struggle for freedom. It's the image on the previous page.

Before you decide to ban anything, ask him about military-style weapons.

Some maintain neither the drafters of the Second Amendment, nor those who ratified it, could have anticipated a civilian assault rifle. They did not anticipate fully automatic machine guns in the hands of the police either. They did not have to: the balance of a simple close parity in weaponry in the hands of the one and the other is enough to preserve Freedom.

The beast on two legs is much the same now as then, so here are a few words in the spirit of Jefferson: The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government. The beauty of the Second Amendment is that it will not be needed until they try to take it. When people fear government there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty.

Dick, since you believe in gun control, this quote of Caesar Beccaria was meant for you, "Laws that forbid the carrying of arms...disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes...Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for the assailants; they serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man."

*The average number of people shot in a mass shooting event when the shooter is stopped by law enforcement is 14. The average number of people shot in a mass shooting event when the shooter is stopped by civilians: 2.5. The reason is simple, the armed civilians are there when it started. The man that attacked the midnight showing of Batman didn't attack just any theater. There were ten to choose from. He didn't attack the closest. It wasn't the biggest or smallest. He attacked the one that posted NO GUNS ALLOWED.

In one week there were four mass killing attempts. Only one made the news because it helped the politically agreed upon narrative:

1. Oregon. NOT a gun free zone. Shooter confronted by permit holder. Shooter commits suicide. Only a few casualties.
2. Texas. NOT a gun free zone. Shooter killed by off duty cop. Only a few casualties.
3. Connecticut. GUN FREE ZONE. Shooter kills until the police arrive. Suicide. 26 dead.
4. China. GUN FREE COUNTRY. A guy with a KNIFE stabs 22 children. *On Gun Control, L. Correia

Gun free zones have been a disaster. The President has ridiculed "bitter people who cling to guns and religion." Media and politicians parrot his strident anti-gun attitude. None of this makes any of us, the children or their future children, any safer. At least admit there should be serious dialogue to explore all aspects of these issues fully.

Thanks for your time, Dick; let the Quest continue...

Thomas Patch

5 January 2013

Senator Richard Blumenthal
Hart Senate Office Building 702
Washington, DC 20510

**Reflections on Newtown - II
Service Rifle Competition**

Dear Dick

From your actions as Attorney General in Connecticut and your immediate embrace of the Feinstein Bill to ban military-style weapons, my wild guess is that you don't care for guns, don't own one, and don't spend your time shooting with friends. Once that was an accurate description of myself too.

Then while at Harvard Business School I was walking past the Window Shop Restaurant on Brattle Street, jumped by 3 and beaten unconscious. The attack was totally unprovoked. I did not go out and buy a gun, but did become street aware and accept the responsibility for my own safety. Years later after I got a pistol permit I also became a firearm safety instructor.

As to long guns, during Vietnam my work at Digital Equipment Corp. included a system for the Navy for which I was deferred. So when David Lyman, my coach at the Blue Trail Range, suggested I compete in service rifle matches, as a good citizen it felt patriotic to finally become proficient with the civilian version of the rifle carried by our country's infantry.

To compete in the first Colt Cup Match at Blue Trail, I bought a 1986 Colt AR-15A2 Delta HBAR rifle, Cat. #R 6600 DH: 20" heavy barrel, 1:7" twist, range selected for accuracy. For the match I was assigned to a squad with the Colt executive who had developed the Delta for competition, along with another gentleman from Hartford and a mountain man from Appalachia who sported a forbidding appearance and a politely quiet, friendly nature. With several hundred marksmen there, each capable of covering a 10-round group on a windy day with a silver dollar, it was a very safe place to be.

Attending these matches, one is struck by the character of the participants: most but not all ex-military, salt of the earth, knowledgeable, helpful and friendly. At the National Matches at Camp Perry their participation has transformed the standards of military marksmanship. Despite their military or military-style rifles, these men are serious in their efforts to improve performance and they, and the companies that supply them with innovations of every description, are not the enemy of Safety or Liberty.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective to abuses of constitutional power." Thomas Jefferson to Wm. C. Jarvis 1820

T E K T O N P R E U X

6 January 2013

Senator Richard Blumenthal
Hart Senate Office Building 702
Washington, DC 20510

**Reflections on Newtown - III
Supreme Court Decision**

Dear Dick

According to Daniel Grossman*, the culture which celebrates violence as entertainment, as ours does at the time of the Heller decision, inflicts a kind of viral disease on us all, especially children, which has three symptoms: 1) increasing aggression, 2) a desensitization to violence and callousness to brutality and 3) increased fear in our society. "A constant diet of violent portrayals can make people more distrusting and exaggerate the threats of violence." * Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill, Chapter 2, Grossman and DeGaetano

Confronted with the Supreme Court affirming the Second Amendment as an individual right, many are very uncomfortable and afraid of its implications. Just hearing shots being fired in an adjacent target range is disconcerting for Ariel Kaminer, a newspaper reporter to The Times. Holding a shotgun, perhaps for the first time, intimidates someone who is repelled by the thought of killing even for supper, let alone to save a life or much less take one. For those unfamiliar with guns this anxiety is a normal reaction.

Many, especially in urban areas like New York or Chicago, have never held a gun in their life. Ever. All they know is what they see in the movies or on TV: shootouts where someone dies, or what they read in the papers: reports of murders, but never stories of a Dad teaching his son the rules of firearm safety, or stories of a mugger's attack thwarted or a holdup ended just because the intended victim brandished a gun. Especially in the Northeast, stories of lives saved by guns are virtually never publicized.

An acquaintance, we'll call him Sam, was parked in East Rock Park eating his lunch on a sunny day. Sitting in his Corvette with the top down, looking out over New Haven, two young men walked up the road. One came up to the driver's side of the car, brandished a knife, and demanded money. "OK, ok. Hey, no problem. Let me get my wallet." With his left hand up to signal his acquiescence, Sam leaned toward the robber and reached for his wallet in his right rear pocket. The next thing you know, had we been there to see it, was the cowering thug backing away from the car with both hands raised, asking the victim "Please don't shoot me, man, don't shoot."

The attack was over: no shots fired. The New York Times would never print the story, it would never be on the evening news, the police... well, it's over. The car's owner had and still has a carry permit. Some time ago he was looking for an AR-type rifle for further insurance against the unthinkable. I have taught the course you must take to get your permit in Connecticut: decent people, more women than men, looking for the ultimate insurance.

T E K T O N P R E U X

Evil is out there. It can happen anywhere, at any time. Be prepared. But, from my perspective while the Connecticut permit process is adequate in screening, the training required is not.

When I bought a helicopter in 1991, getting the private pilot license did not give me the confidence I wanted, so I became a commercial and instrument pilot, and then an FAA certificated flight instructor. And made over 600 landings without an engine. For recurrency training, my instructor is the test pilot who originally certified the helicopter's airworthiness for the FAA.

At the young age of 55 I decided to learn to ride a motorcycle. After taking the Connecticut Rider Education course together with my wife, I went out to a racetrack near Edwards Air Force Base to learn how to ride at highway speeds with the California Superbike School. It was excellent instruction, but then I was still not the master of the machine. I've been to 18 racetracks across the country riding with and learning from the very best of the best.

With guns, in my opinion, a higher standard applies: if you don't know enough to teach, you don't know enough. So for recurrency training I rely on Chuck Taylor in Arizona at the American Small Arms Academy. Where firearms are concerned, there is no such thing as knowing too much, being too skilled and doing everything you can to avoid having to use it. The list of essential books on guns I sent to President Obama is enclosed.

So we arrive at the point of how to solve the problem of gun violence, and the barrier to success is called "Confirmation Bias," which "occurs when an individual seeks information that confirms a prior belief or view and disregards, or disconfirms, evidence that counters it." According to Robert Cialdini* at Arizona State, this consistency offers you two benefits: "First, it permits you to stop thinking about an issue. Second, consistency frees you from the consequence of reason - namely, changing your behavior. The first allows one to avoid thinking; the second to avoid acting." I might add a third benefit: it allows you to avoid learning. *THINK TWICE, M. Mauboussin

A list of distinguished individuals, including our good Senator Blumenthal, have already announced that the answer is a ban of all illegal and evil guns, particularly those that look especially nasty. Registration and gun tracking are the proposed first step but, with Australia as the most recent example, confiscation follows registration swiftly, and without exception. In both Britain and Australia, violent crime and home invasions have increased substantially since their gun bans. An internet search offers detailed accounts of fatal attacks on school children with cars, knives, guns, clubs and bare hands as the weapon of choice.

It appears that, for Democratic party, guns are the target today. The same was true in Orlando, FL* in 1966: the Chief of Police and the *Orlando Sentinel* were both anti-gun advocates. However, in response to attacks of a serial rapist, the women Orlando bought their own guns for protection.

The Chief was alarmed and the paper supported him in launching a firearms training course for women in the city. Between October 1966 and March 1967 the Orlando Police Department trained more than 2,500 women to use guns. As a result, although the rape rate in Florida and the country remained the same as before, rape in Orlando decreased by 88% in 1967 compared to 1966. Burglary also showed a substantial drop. *POINT BLANK, G. Kleck

If we cannot all agree on an ultimate goal, balancing Safety with Freedom, there are at least 5 considerations to resist the idea of a gun ban:

- 1) As Jefferson observed, the most important reason is as the last resort to resist tyranny. "That sort of thing can't happen here," is just another Black Swan. If you provide the conditions that make an armed takeover possible, then the question is only a matter of how long it will take to happen. A disarmed populace is the first objective of every dictator. Period.
- 2) Removing military-style weapons from the sportsman's gun safe removes the necessary support of a market to fund research and development by hundreds of small innovators and enthusiasts. With a market limited to Government, and testing new ideas eliminated from competition by individual enthusiasts, the barrier to entry for innovation becomes overwhelming. Please see part V - **Innovation**.
- 3) Magazines of more than 10 rounds have a roll in civilian life that, while limited to simultaneous assaults, is necessary under those conditions, particularly when there is a breakdown in social order such as occurred in Los Angeles and New Orleans; although tragic, events like these will most likely be repeated in our own lifetimes.
- 4) Competition centered on marksmanship using the standard infantry rifle of the day strengthens the country's true last line of defense. The Civilian Marksmanship Program has the objective "That Every Youth in America Has the Opportunity to Participate in Firearm Safety and Marksmanship Programs." The idea that the foot soldier will not remain essential US Defense in the future is uninformed as to the reality of combat, past and future. Superior marksmanship is fundamentally a product of three things: i) innate talent plays a part, but not as important as, ii) years of practice combined with, iii) the superior rifle including all the parts ancillary to it use: action, barrel assembly with modifications, optics, propellant and projectile.
- 5) A ban contravenes both the language and the spirit of the Second Amendment that established and relies upon simple parity between the arms in the hands of the State and those in the hands of the People as essential to the establishment of the Republic and the preservation of the Freedom and Liberty of its People.

The fundamental problem of Government is that those who occupy positions of power and responsibility always feel the need more power than they have at the moment in order to accomplish what they know must be done. The worst result become inevitable: rather than take the time required to inspire and to lead, confident of their superior right, government decides the time has come to rule. This is always, without exception, the wrong choice.

The cost of righting that wrong choice of the newly minted dictator is not limited to just hundreds or thousands of lives, it can run to tens of millions and over decades of suffering for those who survive.

The Second Amendment is therefore a form of insurance. It is not without cost. But the alternative outcome is beyond the unthinkable.

Some argue that this insurance, the armed citizenry, cannot deliver on its promise, that a military coup would be unstoppable. That would depend on the nature of the corps. A military which is professional, insular to itself, and isolated from the general population might be persuaded by a charismatic leader to act in some dire threat to run the country under Marshall Law. By itself, this is reason enough to return to the draft of the citizen soldier who returns to civilian life after limited tour of military service.

An infantry corps of conscripts is far less likely to fire on civilians in the streets, although it happened at Kent State, and during the depression in 1932 McArthur did the same to the Bonus Marchers who had come to Washington, DC seeking promised payment of WWI benefits.

There is an added side benefit to a draft: with more families of every economic situation across the country having someone of their own at risk in war, the penchant for military adventures declared solely by "Hail-to-the-Chief" himself aboard Air Force One becomes far more difficult and politically risky.

Declaring war should be difficult.

Declaring war on the people of the United States should be impossible.

But this President has promised to use the full power of his office, with the full cooperation of a sufficiently compliant media, to disarm the country. If the semi-automatic rifle is banned, he has won half the battle to becoming a ruler rather than a leader. The bankrupting of the nation with debt foments a severe financial crisis. Ensuing stress demands the economy be managed to save the day. A majority becomes either public employees, or dependent on the public dole. A repeal of the 22nd Amendment is the final step to the end of these United States as a democratic republic.

The scenario is not a prediction: "It could never happen here."

But, while it is just another imaginary Black Swan it is also a reminder the stakes are very high in the current debate on guns and their role in America. We have been warned by Washington, Jefferson, and other founders of this Nation to hold on to those inalienable rights they fought to protect, to hold them dear and protect them at all cost – forever.

Thankfully, it is illegal for the government to disarm the American people.

Or even try.

12 January 2013

Senator Richard Blumenthal
Hart Senate Office Building 702
Washington, DC 20510

**Reflections on Newtown - IV
Supplemental Reading List**

Dear Dick:

I have read many books on guns, violence, and crime. The following short list is excellent, but others, such as **Training at the Speed of Light** by K.R. Murray, would be required for law enforcement officers. The first two are also the shortest and best, and the best place to begin – especially for an expert.

T E K T O N P R E U X

Keeping Your Family Safe by Timothy Wheeler, MD & John Wipfler, MD
The Second Amendment: Protecting the Inalienable Right by David Barton
The Truth About Self-Protection by Massad Ayoob
In the Gravest Extreme: The Role of the Firearm... by Massad Ayoob
Gun-Proof Your Children! by Massad Ayoob
The Concealed Handgun Manual, How to... by Chris Bird
Armed Response: A Comprehensive Guide... by David Kenik
More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding...Gun Control by John Lott, Jr.
The Bias Against Guns: Why ... Gun Control is Wrong by John Lott, Jr.
To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origin... by Joyce Lee Malcolm
Guns and Violence: The English Experience by Joyce Lee Malcolm
Point Blank: Guns and Violence in America by Gary Kleck
Targeting Guns: Firearms and Their Control by Gary Kleck
Armed: New Perspectives on Gun Control by Gary Kleck & Don Kates
The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy.... by David Kopel
On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill... Dave Grossman
On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology... Grossman and Christensen
Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill... Grossman & De Gaetano
Street Smarts, Firearms & Personal Security by Jim Grover
Strong on Defense: Survival Rules... by Sanford Strong, SDPD Retired
The Gift of Fear and other survival signals... by Gavin De Becker
Armed & Female: 12 Million Women Own Guns... by Paxton Quigley
Not an Easy Target: Self Protection for Women by Paxton Quigley
America Fights Back: Armed Self-Defense... by Gottlieb & Workman
Lessons from Armed America by Mark Walters & Kathy Jackson

As an architect, helicopter pilot, motorcycle road racer and gun owner, I believe there is no such thing as knowing too much or being too skilled: if you don't know enough to teach, then you don't know enough, and the tougher and more important the problem, the more we must insist on having the very best minds working together to solve it. My impression is that you share a similar thorough dedication to your work. "You don't know what you don't know, until someone who really does can show you."

Thomas Patch

13 January 2013

Senator Richard Blumenthal
Hart Senate Office Building 702
Washington, DC 20510

**Reflections on Newtown - V
Innovation is our Defense**

Dear Dick

Innovation holds the key, both to increased security, and to understanding unintended consequences of a ban. The practice in other countries can offer models to consider. In Germany the regulations for getting a hunting license are strict, detailed and exhaustive. In addition to character screening, the applicant must take and pass a course which takes months, not days to complete. I have the set of five of the required textbooks covering:

- 1) "Revier" – Territory habitat ecology and management 219p
- 2) "Wild" – Wildlife behavior, life cycles, interrelationships 221p
- 3) "Jagerbetrieb" – Operation and procedures of harvesting game 217p
- 4) "Waffen" – Weapons with rifled or smooth bores, and optics 195p
- 5) "Recht" – Right brings considerable responsibility – in detail 279p

The print is fine, and the books are crammed with detailed information. Beyond these 1131 pages, the publisher offers 5 titles for further study.

In China, we were told by our guide, the process to obtain a driver's license then entailed a delay of up to 9 years. Driving is considered an important privilege with commensurate responsibilities. If a driver has an accident, or breaks the law, the license is confiscated, and the 9-year cycle starts all over again. As a consequence, drivers in Beijing are careful and very polite.

In France, circa 1965, if a person offered to pay a bill with a personal check, the offer was accepted because there was always enough money in the bank to cover the check. There was no over-draft protection. Someone writing a bad check would simply be sent to jail - one strike and you're out.

The objective of the German regulations is two-fold: 1) first screen out any individuals who cannot be trusted to have a firearm, and 2) take the time to educate the prospective firearm user in every relevant aspect of its use. The hunter becomes a qualified expert, and the training continues until the firearm owner is equally skilled in the practical use of his gun, including all aspects of safety until good practice a thoroughly ingrained behavior.

In China a formidable set of barriers to casual driving is in place. Arduous training requires commitment to master the mechanical skills required as well as the rules of the road. The inevitable loss of license that results from failing to live up to the universally well understood standard of driver behavior keeps everyone on the same cultural page: be careful and polite. Creating strong cultural mores of trusted behavior with draconian penalties for those who stray is also the basis for the reliability of checks in France.

T E K T O N P R E U X

The problem with guns is not the number or type, it is having them in the wrong hands. To legally purchase a machine gun the buyer must submit an ATF application, pay a \$200 transfer tax, and pass an FBI background check. Only two homicides have been committed with a legally owned machine gun since 1934, and one of those committing the crime was a police officer. Despite these restrictions, no one other than a government agency may possess a machinegun not registered as of May 1986.

Unintended consequences of a ban on assault rifles will mean the transfer of innovation and refinement of the military rifle to foreign countries. The most obvious example of how innovation takes place is Gaston Glock, an obscure Austrian curtain-rod manufacturer. With his exceedingly limited firearms background in 1980 he purchased three pistols to find out how they worked: an Italian Beretta 92F, a Swiss Sig Sauer 220 and a Czech CZ 75.

Glock correctly determined that the common "safety" required on pistols actually made them more hazardous than safe. Thinking outside the box he worked with industrial polymers to develop his new pistol in 6 months, and filed for an Austrian patent in April 30, 1981. Four samples of his design were submitted to the Austrian military for testing on May 19, 1982. The Glock pistol is now the preferred choice for police, military and civilians.

The cyclical process of product innovation is understood. In general terms: 1) a problem recognized, 2) it is analyzed to identify contributing factors, 3) there is a search for ideas to eliminate it, 4) a prototype is fabricated and 5) the prototype is tested. If the result is good, the process continues to industrial tooling, marketing, etc. If unsuccessful, the process begins again.

In the United States, competitors in bench rest rifle competition began a meticulous search for greater accuracy. Experimentation includes projectile caliber, weight, shape (tip, o-give and tail design) and material composition, along with myriad combinations of propellant type and weight, cartridge case modifications and primer selection. Taking bench rest techniques and experimenting with their application to the AR15 continues today and the improvement in accuracy of the AR and M-series rifles is astonishing.

In the US today, dozens of small companies are developing innovations and improvements for the civilian version of our service rifle that migrate to the military assault rifle. One uses barrels with polygonal rifling, instead of cut or button rifling, to deliver improved ballistics and accuracy. Adjustable gas ports accommodate the optimal use of this rifle with or without a suppressor. Another company has developed a multi-ported muzzle device to reduce recoil dramatically, likewise improving effective accuracy.

Another technology, really still in its infancy, is the development of the suppressor to control muzzle blast, reduce recoil and improve accuracy. In Europe the use of suppressors by target shooters is encouraged to both save the hearing of the sportsmen and pacify the neighbors. The ATF restriction on "silencers" for firearms is nonsensical: For target shooter, hunter, police officer and soldier alike, every time someone discharges a firearm without hearing protection, he or she loses some fragment of their hearing: it is gone

forever and cannot be restored. The ATF ban on the firearm muzzle-blast suppressor is a terrible law that continues to harm adults and children alike.

Sometimes innovation, such as that of Gaston Glock and John Browning, is the result of individual genius and perseverance, arriving unexpectedly all at once. Sometime new developments take place in a corporation. The Swiss Sig 550 rifle has innovations not present in the M16, M4 and derivatives, but because of an import ban it is now illegal to import even the civilian version of this sophisticated design. Were the 550 legal in the US it would inspire a rash of innovations to challenge the rifle's most desirable status.

Removing military-style weapons from the sportsman's gun safe removes the market of enthusiasts necessary to support innovators large and small. Even good ideas need testing and benefit from refinement. However well intended a ban may be, the barriers to entry for innovation become overwhelming in a market limited to Government winner take all contracts.

Genius, energy and ingenuity are wherever you find it. And when you do, nourish it, encourage and support it. The old saw, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions," applies to both current laws on the books, and to efforts to impose the blanket bans being proposed in Congress.

The Second Amendment by David Barton corrects the mistaken view of revisionists who attempt to mislead the public as to the meaning of the words and the intent of the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights: is it about sports; hunting, self-defense? Yes, but: it is really about Freedom and Liberty. In these words the framers of the Constitution recognize that only an armed people can defend against the ultimate tyranny of government.

Many in Congress don't like guns, don't own them, or both, but when things get really tough, ordinary people are not fools: when danger lurks they buy a gun to defend themselves. They cite the United Kingdom and Australia as exemplars for banning guns, while ignoring the soaring crime rates which followed in both countries. Where burglars used to avoid occupied houses, now the criminal invades a home with no risk of resistance. American media fails to publish these stories of the unintended consequences of gun control.

Someone like yourself needs to speak truth to power in this so far one-sided debate. Otherwise the power crowd in Washington and elsewhere will really mess up this country's future up: Republicans will deny funds for education, mental health and the disadvantaged; Democrats will ban guns to no good effect and gun-free zones will remain the same undefended killing fields we have now, open for the next slaughter at the hands of a deranged soul consumed by angry voices and abandoned to suicide or suicide by cop.

When the war is over, the warrior is no longer celebrated, and often his weapons are put away. But history cautions those that discard weaponry in the name of safety. For them, servitude, slavery and oppression lie just around the corner. You and I may not be here to see it, but the ban you say you seek will result in an increase in violence over time, and ultimately lead this country down a very wrong and unhappy road.

16 January 2013

Senator Richard Blumenthal
Hart Senate Office Building 702
Washington, DC 20510

Reflections on Newtown - VI
Education and Training

Dear Dick

T E K T O N P R E U X

The Culture of Violence in video games, movies and TV is a contributing factor to violence with guns, but also to violent attacks without any weapons at all: attackers armed with only their bare hands killed more people in the United States in 2010 than were shot with firearms having a military style or appearance. What does a child experience during a Mortal Combat game? What does this teach him to do?

The same Culture of Violence contributes to increased levels of fear and anxiety among the generally peaceful population who, unfamiliar with firearms themselves, rely on movies and the media for information on firearms. What are we to think about guns when **The New York Times** never publishes even a single story crediting a citizen's firearm with aborting an assault, or a homeowner's defense of his house with an assault rifle to deter a gang without firing a shot?

A man takes his concealed handgun, for which he has a permit, into his church. He is the hero who stops a madman bent on wrecking mayhem on an innocent congregation. That story will never see the pages of the Times. Under this media bias, what is the average person, who has never held a gun (much less become comfortable firing one), to think when Heller suddenly means guns may now be anywhere, carried fully loaded by anyone at all?

Truth is the first casualty of war: with the Heller decision, the Supreme Court's affirmation that **the Second Amendment is an Individual Right guaranteed by the Constitution**, causes politicians panic as liberal media becomes hysterical. Governors declare that the AR-15 is not used for hunting (**False**), has no purpose in target shooting (**False**), and has no role in self-defense (**False**). How is the truth to come out when an oligarch of vast wealth can purchase a change in term limits and then turns his enormous financial might to support politicians who promise ignore the Bill of Rights?

How do you change a culture of violence when it comes to firearms?

For children, the most effective way is to immerse them in the opposite culture – teach them that guns are not toys, shooting is not a game. Respect, discipline and safety are the watchwords on the military firing line. Any gun is always loaded. Keep a gun pointed in a safe direction. A finger never goes on a trigger unless the gun is aimed at the target. You must be sure of your target and nothing is behind it that might be harmed. When a child is old enough to be responsible for a pet, he or she is old enough to be introduced to real guns with close supervision.

The effect of learning about guns and gun safety at an early age is transformative: make-believe becomes uninteresting in comparison with the reality of striving to score a 10 in the center of a tiny target with a pellet gun or .22 rifle. The discipline on the range is accepted and respect for the rules of what you do, and do not do, with a firearm become ingrained. The interaction between student and teacher / coach forms a bond, and it is that bond which transfers a basic moral attitude about guns to the child.

A ban on firearms in schools and on school grounds makes no sense. Instead of preparing students for the responsibility of gun ownership, we abandon them to action movies, video games, and law and dis-order dramas on TV.

What about adults? Currently an adult with no history of violent behavior, or mental incapacity, can take a simple safety course and apply for a concealed carry permit in many states. If an FBI background check is passed, the permit will be issued, and the adult may now carry a concealed loaded weapon. While the safety course will most often outline the incumbent responsibility that attaches to the permit, the training has really just been a cursory introduction: the person is ill-prepared to utilize lethal force.

They are not ready to shoot, and they are not ready for the consequences.

Even police in New York are under-trained for their role as armed protectors of the streets of their city. Confronting a gunman near the Empire State Building during rush hour, 9 by-standers are wounded in the ensuing shoot out. Had the officers received the kind of intensive training, and equally important recurrent training, offered by experts at any one of a dozen private shooting academies across the country, only their target need have been hit.

How much training is necessary, and how long does it take?

The course plan for beginning motorcycle riders used to take three days, and the riders never left the parking lot: ready for the street, yes, but not for traffic or the Interstate. To learn to fly, the FAA imposes a minimum of 35 hours of flight time, but most people require 60 to 70 hours. And for both riders and pilots there is the need for on-going practice to build the skills necessary to master the machine to an adequate level. For the pilot, levels of increasing knowledge and skill are clear: Private, Commercial, Instrument and Airline Transport Pilot; with increased skill comes the license to operate the more sophisticated aircraft and carry passengers on scheduled flights.

Were a similar progressive hierarchy of knowledge and skills training offered to gun owners we would all be safer and better off as a society. When citizens in Connecticut doubled applications for carry permits after the Newtown tragedy, Seymour's Chief of Police said, "It's outrageous." Really? It is outrageous that people are anxious, or that they want to protect themselves and their families? What is outrageous is that despite the lack of an obligation, and ability, for police to protect every individual, the politicians want to keep the people from protecting themselves on their own.

When confronted by a home invasion, if there are more than how many attackers high on PCP (armed with how many guns and knives) should I have at least a ten-round magazine to defend my house? When the next time there is a breakdown of social order as the result of a catastrophe, or a pillaging riot by an angry mob in my city, under this terrible assault why am I to be denied the same weapon for self-protection that a police officer would insist upon to defend himself under the very same circumstances?

Right now, the bias against guns in the media is so strong in the Northeast that it is virtually impossible to have discussion with the words **firearms** and **safety** in the same sentence without finding the word BAN (standing in for BAD) somewhere in their too.

The better part of the solution to violence and gun violence lies in education. Educate the children. Educate the adults. Yes. And, educate the politicians. Why go to all the trouble of providing all this education?

Newtown has several lessons. First is a responsibility to keep guns out of the hands of those who cannot be trusted to do no harm. We also have a solemn responsibility to live up to the gift of Liberty, our most precious heritage.

World War I was the war to end all wars. The greatest threat to Freedom is government's need for more power to accomplish some claimed good – invariably the need for greater safety to protect the people. The next Great Surprise was the Great Depression. Out of that turmoil came Hitler's call to disarm German citizens to protect the children, and then World War II.

Few expected a financial collapse brought about by easy money mortgages in 2007, or the shock waves from the failure of Lehman Brothers. No one in Newtown anticipated the Newtown tragedy, but all these events happened.

The Defense Department today is a mislabeled war department run according to a philosophy of, "If you've got an army, what is the point if you don't use it?" The Pentagon then withholds support necessary to win. At the same time, folly piled on folly, politicians spend enough on entitlements to bankrupt the US in much the same way that runaway military spending lead to the collapse of the USSR. Today, that debt is our greatest danger.

None expects the United States to fall under the sway of an invader or, even less likely, to fall victim to a dictator from our own midst. The one thing that makes either of these last two, "It could never happen here!" events so very much more likely is to ban the military style, semi-automatic rifle.

Every man is the militia. The President likes Executive Orders. Here are three: 1) supply the civilian version of the M-16 to our DCM Program to encourage general competence with our service rifle, 2) do away with a volunteer army that increasingly isolates the military from the rest of the nation, 3) institute national service for all with a boot camp of fitness and universal firearms training followed by either military or national service.

17 January 2013

Senator Richard Blumenthal
Hart Senate Office Building 702
Washington, DC 20510

**Reflections on Newtown - VII
Safe Schools, Safe Streets**

T E K T O N P R E U X

Dear Dick

How do we protect our schools? The **Gun Free School Zones Act** is the Federal law intended to protect schools. It had been in place for almost 10 years before Columbine. It did not save even one life there. It did not protect the children and teachers at Sandy Hook Elementary. These innocent children didn't have a chance. The Gun Free Zone is a failed idea. Repeal the law that promises safety but delivers nothing.

What will protect schools and the children they shelter? Some school boards took the news of the shootings on April 20, 1999 in Colorado as a warning. Some allow teachers to arm. Some add a police detail. It takes a different type of peace officer to deal with children while warding off the threat of potential violence, but so far these efforts have been successful. I know of no reported shootings in schools with a police presence in them, do you?

It seemed like Common Sense to these school boards. But the Governor of Connecticut finds the idea of police with guns in schools abhorrent. The anti-gun Mayor of New York denounces the idea of having retired police officers armed in schools: "I think it's a terrible idea. We don't need that... We have random magnetometers." Really. That's terrific.

How is the President protected? And his children? Are they more important than your own? Are they more important than the 26 who died in Newtown? How do we protect a Federal Courthouse? How is any public building in any city in the country protected? How many police in the United States are dedicated to setting up speed traps right now across the country, and which is more important: 10 miles over the limit or the children in school?

There is another question one might ask: what have been the demonstrated threats causing death in schools? The list includes scissors, knives, guns and even a car used to mow down children on a playground.

Keeping schools safe is one thing, and keeping the streets safe is another. We have police cruisers, police on foot patrol, police on bicycles and horses. Policing can be easy or difficult, and they all do the best they can with what they have and the training they get, but they cannot be everywhere at once. When you create a gun-free zone, the only people with a gun will be bad. It is a feel good law doing evil's bidding. Get rid of the gun free school zone.

If Congress is serious about safe schools, take a tip from Nike and **just do it.**

18 January 2013

Senator Richard Blumenthal
Hart Senate Office Building 702
Washington, DC 20510

**Reflections on Newtown I-VII
Letters to my Senator**

Dear Reader

How are we to deal with the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown? I sent seven letters to Dick Blumenthal, our Senator. These are your copies. And so you might well ask, "Who is this Thomas Patch?"

I went to Harvard College and won a few awards for being creative. During Vietnam I worked at Digital Equipment Corporation and was a co-developer of a system in which the Navy was interested; I was deferred from military service. Next I went to Harvard Business School and then into commercial real estate development. Later after ten days in Yosemite with Ansel Adams I applied to the Yale School of Architecture and became an architect.

Along the way I have explored many adventures with great enthusiasm: sailing, mountaineering, skiing, fly-fishing, white water kayaking, helicopters, motorcycle road racing, shooting wild game as well as paper targets and clay pigeons, and finally shooting for personal defense. In each endeavor there has been a common challenge: mastery.

If you don't know enough to teach, you don't know enough.

You don't know what you don't know, until someone who really does can show you.

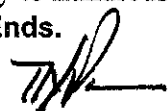
As to mastering helicopters, after becoming a Private Pilot, I crashed and totaled my company's aircraft. The choice was either quit, or become an expert. I chose the latter. My analysis and training to avoid a repeat of the accident convinced the company insuring the helicopter to lower my rate. I sought the best instructors in the country to become certificated by the FAA as Commercial Pilot, Instrument Rated and Helicopter Flight Instructor.

My experience with motorcycles has been similar: I have taught for the State of Connecticut as well as road racing skills on the track at Loudon, NH. But, when it comes to guns, my commitment rises to the highest level:

There is no such thing as knowing too much, or being too skilled.

There is no such thing as being too careful, or doing too much to avoid having to use lethal force in self-defense.

I have read well over 100 books on every aspect of the subject: the use of firearms by military and police as well as civilians, firearm ballistics, the Second Amendment, legal limits on using deadly force, the Politics and the History of guns in America. The training I have received has been by some of the best instructors in the world, and I have taught gun safety to hundreds. I know quite a bit about guns, but... **The Learning Never Ends.**

THANK YOU FOR JOINING THIS QUEST. 

T E K T O N P R E U X