

Gun Control Research-Small Arms Survey-2007
No clear relationship between more guns and high levels of violence

Many people do not regard the Small Arms Survey (SAS), conducted out of Geneva, Switzerland as an advocate of civilian firearms' ownership. The Survey is probably best known for its August 2007 report (1), which indicated that there are an estimated nine guns for every ten people in the United States. This finding managed to find its way into many newspapers and to gain airtime on major networks.

A lesser-known conclusion of this report is the finding that "There's no clear relationship between more guns and higher levels of violence." For instance, many countries in Latin America have low levels of legal gun ownership and high rates of violence.

(Mexico is a prime example. A recent report in *The Denver Post* on 01-19-09 quotes the U.S. Joint Forces Command as describing the country south of our border as being in danger of "rapid and sudden collapse." This risk is caused by "criminal gangs and drug cartels" apparently unaffected by Mexico's draconian gun control laws. Carl, Traci, "Lawlessness earns Mexico a spot on security-risk list," *The Associated Press, The Denver Post*, 01-19-09, page 10A.)

Keith Krause, Director of the Small Arms Survey, indicated that research seems to show that "gun violence often occurred in places undergoing rapid urban growth, and when lawless areas are created by extreme poverty and the absence of effective policing." Krause also decried the black market sale of guns and ammunition to criminals and gangs by military or police officials. (This involvement of government agency personnel is reminiscent of the corruption of American civil authorities by Prohibition and The War on Drugs.) Krause also said that European Union countries are experiencing increasing small arms smuggling activity.

The SAS findings are mirrored by a study done by the National Academy of the Sciences (2) and an international study done by researchers Kates and Mauser (3) (4), which find no credible causative relationships between gun ownership and violence.

- (1) Associated Press, "Study: There Are 9 Guns for Every 10 Americans," August, 29th, 2007, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,294976,00.html>
- (2) National Academy of Sciences, Committee on Law and Justice, "Firearms and Violence, a Critical Review," 2004, nasonline.org
- (3) Kates, Don, Mauser, Gary, "Would Banning Firearms Reduce Murder and Suicide? A Review of International and Some Domestic Evidence," *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, 2007.
- (4) Lewin, Marshall, "Would Banning Firearms Reduce Murder and Suicide?" *America's 1st Freedom*, National Rifle Association, Palm Coast, FL, August 2007, page 32.

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