

60 Ooops! They're STILL out to get our guns, c

By Dr Paul Gallant and Dr. Joanne D. Eisen

The U.S. Supreme Court has, for now, sided with American gun-owners, upholding an individual right to keep and bear arms. However, we should not be so complacent as to expect that firearm-prohibitionists will magically give up their true agenda of civilian disarmament.

The purported reason that domestic and international firearm-prohibitionists have given for gun regulation schemes has always been "public safety," and not civilian disarmament. The Court's decision opens the way for as much regulation of the Second Amendment as the gun-banners can convince legislators is necessary for a secure society, and we can expect a strong push for regulations that might tend to make it evermore difficult for average citizens to easily exercise their rights.

Almost invariably, the disarmament community takes great pains to hide their ultimate goal, knowing how unpalatable it would be to tell the truth, and how difficult telling the truth would render accomplishing that goal.

Yet, every now and then, someone slips.

For example, US criminologist Marvin Zimring explained back in 1968 why gun-owners were so suspicious about acknowledging that they owned weapons: "It's because we're coming to get their guns." And Amitai Etzioni, a well respected sociologist, stated in 1991: "There is little sense in gun registration. What we need to significantly enhance public safety is *domestic disarmament*....(emphasis in original)."

Canadian Wendy Cukier provides a better example of the evasive language used by firearm-prohibitionists. She campaigns for the registration of all civilian held firearms, the licensing of all gun-owners, and any increased restrictions she can think of.

After the Canadian Supreme Court upheld its restrictive gun law in 2000, Cukier, careful not to identify her

true goal, stated: "This is certainly an important hurdle, but our work isn't over." In discussing automatic and semi-automatic firearms, she stressed the importance of "allay[ing] the concerns of those who believe that the discussion on civilian possession of military weapons is actually aimed at *all* firearms....[emphasis ours]"

Although admissions of intent to disarm civilians are rarities, they are occasionally publicly stated. El Salvadorian firearm-prohibitionists spoke freely in 2005 of "ending the possession of firearms in civil society." Mali's former president, Alpha Oumar Konaré, openly discussed his desire for a "global movement of general disarmament" at the West African Action Network on Small Arms in 1998.

And Brazil has recently been the target of several disarmament campaigns, collection programs (including "buy-backs"), and sensitization campaigns. The proposed recent law that would virtually ban civilian firearm ownership failed to pass on October 23, 2005; of those who voted, 64 percent rejected the ban. Just before the referendum took place, a disarmament activist, Denis Mizne, lamented that "A victory of the ban would be helpful to accelerate a world agenda on disarmament."

Although we can cite the admission of several firearm-prohibitionists' true ultimate agenda, namely, civilian disarmament, very few drop the pretense of the goal of a safer society. But the Commissioner of Police of Botswana stated unabashedly in 2003: "Undoubtedly you will be aware that firearms pose a serious threat to legitimate governments throughout the world." He even accepted the necessity of dealing with civilian weapons possession "at the expense of more serious problems of disease and starvation." No, it's not civilian safety, at all.

THE IRISH FIREARM CUSTODY ORDER OF AUGUST 1972

By Derek Bernard (DB@TSljersey.com)

I have been collecting information about the firearm laws of the Republic of Ireland, as well as their effects, including associated levels of crime, for many years. It is over 10 years since I first noted the astonishing doubling of the homicide rate following the Firearm Custody Order of 1972. But I have only just realised that, within that disturbing development, was another one, even more startling.

In August 1972, the then Irish Minister of Justice, Mr Desmond O'Malley, used his powers to take into custody all the private, lawfully-owned and registered pistols and centre-fire rifles (other than .22/250 rifles), throughout the Republic. Under the Irish Firearms Act 1964, Clause 4 (1), the Minister was given the power, simply by Order, to demand that any or all firearms be handed in for a maximum of one month.

Since firearms registration had been a requirement for many years, the government already had lists of lawful gun-owners. So the collection was, of course, virtually 100 percent, but only from those law-abiding citizens who had asked the government for permission to possess firearms. As always, those who possessed guns illegally, whether for crime, terrorism, or any other purpose, were unaffected by the Custody Order.

The reasons for his action were given as the need to secure public safety and the escalating violence in Northern Ireland (which is part of the UK), even though the Republic of Ireland is completely independent of the UK.

The Irish government ignored the limitation of a maximum of one month contained in the Law and continued to strictly enforce it for 32 years with respect to pistols and substantially so with respect to rifles. Alongside the confiscation of all the registered firearms falling within the Custody Order, the government also blocked all further purchases by civilians. The inevitable consequences were the destruction of much sport shooting and the closing down of many clubs and gun dealers.

The illegal extension of the Custody Order was only brought to an end in 2004 by a constitutional challenge by a private citizen, Frank Brophy, represented by barrister Gerard Hogan, SC.

Irish Murder Rate, pre- and post- the Firearm Custody Order

Prior to the Custody Order, the overall murder rate in the Republic for many years had been approximately 0.5 per 100,000 (average of 15 p.a. for 1968 -'71), which is an extremely low rate by any standard, reflecting considerable credit on Irish society generally. With the introduction of the Custody Order, the murder rate immediately doubled to approximately one per 100,000 (average of 35 p.a. for 1972 -'75) and stayed at the new level (which is still low by international standards), for the next 20 years, when it started to rise further. Inside that disturbing development is hidden yet another one, even more startling.

Gardaí (Irish Police) Murder Rate, pre- and post- the Firearm Custody Order