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“Money, Guns, and Drugs: Are U.S. Inputs Fueling Violence  
on the U.S./Mexico Border?”

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, for inviting me to present the views of the Violence Policy Center on this important topic. Founded in 1988, the Violence Policy Center is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt educational organization working to reduce violence in America.

### **The U.S. Civilian Gun Market – An Ideal System for Smuggling**

It is beyond question that firearms from the U.S. civilian gun market are fueling violence not only on both sides of the U.S./Mexico Border, but in Mexico itself. If one set out to design a “legal” market conducive to the business of funneling guns to criminals, one would be hard-pressed to come up with a “better” system than the U.S. civilian gun market – short of simply and openly selling guns directly to criminals from manufacturer and importer inventories.

The U.S. gun market not only makes gun trafficking in military-style weapons easy. It practically compels that traffic because of the gun market’s loose regulation and the gun industry’s ruthless design choices over the last several decades.

### **Military-Style Weapons – The Drug Cartels’ Weapons of Choice**

Military-style weapons heavily marketed by the U.S. civilian gun industry are the drug cartels’ weapons of choice.

One need look no further than the testimony of William J. Hoover, Assistant Director, Office of Field Operations, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), before the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs in February 2008 to find confirmation of that fact:

Mexican drug trafficking organizations have aggressively turned to the U.S. as a source of firearms. These weapons are used against other DTOs [Drug Trafficking Organizations], the Mexican military, Mexican and U.S. law enforcement officials, as well as innocent civilians on both sides of the border. Our comprehensive analysis of firearms trace data over the past three years shows that Texas, Arizona, and California are the three primary source states respectively for U.S.-sourced firearms illegally trafficked into Mexico. *Recently, the weapons sought by drug trafficking organizations have become increasingly higher quality and more powerful. These include the Barrett .50-caliber rifle, the Colt AR-15 .223-caliber assault rifle, the AK-47 7.62-caliber assault rifle and its variants, and the FN 5.57-caliber pistols better known in Mexico as the cop killer.*<sup>1</sup> [Italics added.]



*Semiautomatic Assault Rifles Seized in Gun-Smuggling Case*

It is no coincidence that the military-style firearms identified by Mr. Hoover as favored by Mexican drug cartels – and cop-killing criminals in the United States – are *precisely* the makes and models of firearms that have been carefully designed, manufactured or imported, and heavily marketed over the last 20 years by the U.S. civilian gun industry. These types of military-style firearms today dominate the U.S. civilian market.

### **The Analytical Gap in U.S. Policy**

Much U.S. policy attention in response to public safety concerns has been directed at changing *internal* factors in Mexico and other key Latin American states to achieve transparency and effective policing within the rule of law. Less attention has been given to examining and correcting *external* influences from the United States that are driving much of the violence in Mexico and elsewhere in the

Western Hemisphere. This gap in analytical thinking has sometimes contributed to myopic, piecemeal, and ultimately ineffective policies.

One of the major drivers in Mexico's violence that has been ignored until recently is the illicit flow of weapons to criminal organizations from the U.S. civilian firearms market.

Moreover, to the extent that the problem of gun trafficking has been addressed, the focus has been exclusively on law enforcement measures – investigating, identifying, and prosecuting gun smugglers. Although aggressive law enforcement measures are an essential part of any effective overall program, an exclusive focus on law enforcement measures overlooks a rich and ultimately more fruitful range of prophylactic measures that can be implemented upstream of the transfers that move firearms from legal to illegal commerce.

### **The Role of the U.S. Gun Industry: Weak Regulation, Deadly Design and Marketing**

"There is a war going on on the border between two cartels," William Newell, Special Agent in Charge of ATF's Phoenix Field Division, was reported to have said in 2007. "What do they need to fight that war? Guns. Where do they get them? From here."<sup>2</sup> This statement of fact is not surprising. The VPC has reported in detail previously that it is entirely possible to outfit an army through the *civilian* commerce in firearms and related accessories in the United States.<sup>3</sup> That is what the Mexican DTOs are doing today. According to ATF Special Agent Tom Mangan, "The cartels are outfitting an army."<sup>4</sup>



*ATF Reports Barrett 50 Caliber Anti-Armor Rifles to be Among Drug Lords' "Weapons of Choice"*

Smugglers reportedly move guns into Mexico in a variety of ways, but according to the *Associated Press* “most are driven through ports of entry, stuffed inside spare tires, fastened to undercarriages with zip ties, kept in hidden compartments, or bubble-wrapped and tucked in vehicle panels.”<sup>5</sup> Arizona’s Attorney General described this traffic recently as “a ‘parade of ants’ – it’s not any one big dealer, it’s lots of individuals.”<sup>6</sup> The dimensions of that traffic are not known, but it appears to be growing. U.S. and Mexican officials report that, based on ATF tracing data, the cartels get between 90 percent and 95 percent of their firearms from the United States. Traces by ATF of firearms from Mexico have reportedly increased from 2,100 in 2006 to 3,300 in 2007 and 7,700 in 2008.<sup>7</sup>

Such information illustrates graphically that if one set out to design a system for easily moving military-style firearms from legal civilian commerce to illegal trade through gun smuggling, one could not do better than the existing U.S. civilian firearms market. The hallmarks of that trade not only make gun-running of the cartels’ military-style weapons of choice easy, but very nearly compel this illicit commerce. Those hallmarks are:

1. Lax laws and regulations governing the firearms industry at the local, state, and federal levels, compounded by weak or ineffective enforcement.
2. The deliberate choice of military-style firearms design – assault weapons, 50 caliber anti-armor sniper rifles, and “vest-busting” handguns – by gun manufacturers and importers. Heavy industry marketing of these designs has made them the defining products in the U.S. civilian gun market today.

### **Lax Law and Regulation, Weak Enforcement**

Although the gun lobby often maintains that the firearms industry is heavily regulated, in fact the industry is lightly regulated. The most important regulatory burdens on the gun industry are largely exercises in paper oversight – pro forma licensing and rare inspections by federal authorities. Most states do not regulate dealers, and the few that do rarely conduct regular inspections. Firearms and tobacco products are the only consumer products in the United States that are not subject to federal health and safety regulation. The sale (transfer) of firearms is subject only to a cursory federal background check under the federal Brady Law – when the sale is made through a federally licensed gun dealer.

One of the most important problems in preventing domestic and foreign gun smuggling alike is that – unlike illegal drugs, for example – firearms are not inherently contraband. Guns enter into commerce legally and may be legally transferred in a wide variety of ways in a multitude of venues. The act of transferring a semiautomatic assault rifle – or a dozen – in entirely legal commerce between two law-abiding individuals is almost always indistinguishable from

weapons transfers in which one or both of the parties intend to put the gun into the smuggling stream.



*50 Caliber Anti-Armor Sniper Rifles are Widely Available at Gun Shows*

Oversight of firearm transfers quickly dissipates the further down the distribution chain one goes. Many of the ways that guns legally change hands in the United States are wholly unregulated and invisible from public view. These include, for example, sales by non-dealers at gun shows and sales between individuals.



*Individual Sales at Gun Shows are Generally Unregulated*

The structure of the gun industry is relatively simple. Domestic and foreign manufacturers make the firearms. Domestically manufactured or assembled firearms are distributed by the manufacturers, either through wholesalers (known in the industry as “distributors”) or directly to retail gun dealers. Foreign-made firearms are brought into the country through importers and then enter the same channels of commerce. In theory, imported firearms are required to have a “sporting purpose” under 18 USC §925(d)(3) (a provision of the 1968 Gun Control Act). In practice, however, the “sporting purposes” test is subject to administrative interpretation as to its definition and its application in specific cases. Under the George W. Bush administration, the sporting purposes test was substantially weakened, allowing the importation of a large number of cheap assault weapons and such “cop-killing” handguns as the FN Five-seveN, known in Mexico as the *mata policia*, or “cop-killer.”

Domestic firearm manufacturers, importers, dealers, and ammunition manufacturers are required to obtain a Federal Firearms License (FFL).<sup>8</sup> This licensing regimen effects the central purpose of the Gun Control Act of 1968, the core federal gun law, of supporting state control of firearms by basically forbidding interstate commerce in guns except through federally licensed dealers. However, FFLs are issued on a virtually pro forma basis — anyone who is at least 21 years old, has a clean arrest record, nominal business premises, and agrees to follow all applicable laws can get a license good for three years upon paying a fee and submitting a set of fingerprints with an application form.<sup>9</sup>

New and imported firearms thus in theory always move in legal commerce through at least one federally licensed seller through the first retail sale. The federal Brady Law requires a background check as a prerequisite to any retail sale *through a federally licensed dealer*. However, once a gun has been sold at retail, it may be resold in the “secondary market” — that is, not through a federally licensed dealer — any number of times using any one of a variety of channels. Vehicles for these secondary market transfers include classified advertising in newspapers and newsletters, Internet exchanges, and informal sales between individuals at “flea markets” or “gun shows.” None of these secondary market channels require the federal Brady background check, so long as the sale is conducted intrastate and there is no state background check requirement. Most states do not regulate such sales — although a few, like California, do regulate all firearms transfers. About 40 percent of all gun transfers are made through this secondary market, according to a 1994 national survey.<sup>10</sup>

The consequences of this weak system are apparent in the fact that domestic gun trafficking is widespread and resistant to such law enforcement efforts as exist. Street gangs and other criminal organizations have demonstrated conclusively over the last 25 years that weak U.S. gun control laws do not prevent their acquiring as

many of the increasingly lethal products of the gun industry as they desire. In spite of episodic efforts by ATF, organized interstate smuggling pipelines continue to move guns from states with virtually nonexistent gun regulations to the few primarily urban centers that have tried to stem the flow of guns.<sup>11</sup> “States that have high crime gun export rates – i.e., states that are top sources of guns recovered in crimes across state lines – tend to have comparatively weak gun laws.”<sup>12</sup> Local criminals engage in brisk gun traffic in every part of the country, with little effective law enforcement interference.

Some opponents of more effective gun control measures point to the continued trade in illegal firearms as evidence the gun control laws do not work. “A crook could care less how many laws you have,” a border region gun dealer told the *Los Angeles Times* in 2008.<sup>13</sup> Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was reported by *El Universal* newspaper to have made a similar statement at a meeting with Mexico’s Foreign Secretary, Patricia Espinosa. “I follow the traffic in arms throughout the world, and I have never known traffickers in illegal arms to care much about the law,” the paper quoted Rice as saying.<sup>14</sup> Based on the logic that laws do not deter criminals, the newspaper dryly observed, Mexico should repeal its laws against drug-trafficking.

In fact, the major weakness of U.S. efforts against gun trafficking (and firearms violence in general) is its almost total reliance on after-the-fact law enforcement investigation and prosecution. Instead of focusing on prophylactic measures to prevent guns from getting into the hands of traffickers, most attention has been paid to trying to apprehend and prosecute traffickers after the damage has been done and the guns are in criminal hands. If, as noted earlier, traffickers indeed use a “stream of ants” to move guns to Mexico, it would be more effective to focus efforts on making it more difficult for the ants to get the guns in the first place.

Although law enforcement efforts are an important and necessary part of a total package against gun trafficking – and gun violence generally – a more powerful solution would be to complement law enforcement with “upstream” public health and safety measures designed to reduce the opportunity for gun trafficking. Examples of these upstream measures include stopping the production and import of military-style firearms such as semiautomatic assault weapons and 50 caliber anti-armor sniper rifles, and making all transfers of firearms subject to (at a minimum) the current background check to which transfers through federally licensed firearms dealers are subject.

Even if the commerce in firearms in the United States were more tightly regulated along such lines, there remains the major problem of lack of oversight over design – the type of firearms that the gun industry produces and markets.



## Design and Marketing of Military-Style Weapons

The U.S. gun industry has been sagging for decades.<sup>15</sup> Although the industry enjoys brief periods of resurgence, the long-term trend for civilian gun manufacturers continues to be steady decline as fewer Americans choose to own guns and gun ownership becomes more concentrated.<sup>16</sup> As the gun business publication *Shooting Industry* put it, "more and more guns [are] being purchased by fewer and fewer consumers...."<sup>17</sup>

One reason for the gun industry's long-term slump is the steady decline in hunting, a traditional market for rifles and shotguns. "Hunters represent an aging demographic," *The Wall Street Journal* summed up.<sup>18</sup> In addition to demographic stagnation, absorption of rural land by expanding suburbs has decreased the number of places where hunters can hunt. "Now there are Wal-Marts and shopping centers where I used to hunt," said a Florida hunter.<sup>19</sup> Changes in society's values and alternative recreational activities for young people have also hurt hunting. "Instead of waking up at 4 a.m. and going hunting, it's easier for kids to sleep in until 9 and play video games," a California wildlife official observed.<sup>20</sup>

The gun industry's cumulative loss of market ground is reflected in a 2006 study, "Public Attitudes Towards the Regulation of Firearms," released by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago analyzing the prevalence of household firearms. The NORC survey data show that during the period 1972 to 2006, the percentage of American households that reported having any guns in the home dropped nearly 20 percentage points: from a high of 54 percent in 1977 to 34.5 percent in 2006.<sup>21</sup>

The industry's principal avenue of addressing its stagnant markets has been developing innovative gun designs aimed at stimulating repeat purchases of its products. "I think innovation is critical to the industry," Smith & Wesson's marketing chief said in 2005.<sup>22</sup> For the gun industry, innovation has translated into introducing increasingly deadly firearms into the civilian market. The gun industry uses firepower, or lethality, in the same way that the tobacco industry uses nicotine. Firearm lethality is a means to "hook" gun buyers into coming back into the market again and again as more deadly innovations are rolled out. As a consequence, the profile of the civilian gun industry today is defined by military-style weaponry. As the industry publication *The New Firearms Business* put it recently, "the sole bright spot in the industry right now is the tactical end of the market, where AR and AK pattern rifles and high-tech designs, such as FNH USA's PS90 carbine, are in incredibly high demand right now."<sup>23</sup>





*Assault Weapons Like FNH USA's PS-90 are Gun Industry's "Sole Bright Spot"*

The VPC has issued multiple reports on these products, focusing in detail on the industry's introduction of:

- high-capacity semiautomatic pistols, which profoundly increased levels of street violence and lethality beginning in the 1980s;
- semiautomatic assault weapons (such as the Kalashnikov-type clones of the AK-47, and AR-15 assault rifles) which play an ongoing role in organized criminal violence;
- 50 caliber armor-piercing sniper rifles capable of piercing armor plate at a distance of a mile and a half; and, most recently,
- handguns with rifle striking power, capable of piercing all but the heaviest police body armor (such weapons are reportedly known as *mata policias* or *asesino de policia*, cop-killers, in Latin America).

The consequences of these several decades of design and marketing are now being seen not only on the streets of Mexico, but on the streets of Miami, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and in cities and towns all over the United States.

As the testimony of ATF Assistant Director Hoover quoted earlier underscores, it is precisely these highly lethal, military-style models which have become staples in the illicit traffic in firearms between the United States and Latin America.<sup>24</sup> Observations of ATF agents in the field confirm Hoover's testimony. According to ATF Special Agent Tom Mangan, for example, the Barrett 50 caliber anti-armor sniper rifle has become one of the "guns of choice" of the Mexican drug organizations. Says Mangan, "There's nothing that's going to stop this round."<sup>25</sup> The weapon has been used to assassinate Mexican police and other government

officials traveling in armored cars.<sup>26</sup> Other favored firearms include the FN Five-seveN, a 5.7mm pistol manufactured by the Belgian company FN Herstal, the ammunition for which is capable of piercing body armor.<sup>27</sup>



*FN's Five-seveN Pistol, Developed from the PS-90 Assault Rifle and Designed for Counterterrorism Teams, is Known as the "Cop-Killer" in Mexico*

A large number of the firearms smuggled from the United States into Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America come from the Southwest, the states of which are notoriously lax in gun control laws and law enforcement regulation. It has been reported that there are more than 6,700 U.S. gun dealers within a short drive of the southern border — more than three dealers for each of the approximately 2,000 miles of the border.<sup>28</sup>

Although officials of the United States and Mexico regularly make public proclamations of alleged progress in stemming this traffic, few informed observers believe that more than a dent has been — or under the present regimen of laws and enforcement can be — made in the violent trade. It is probably the case, in fact, that ATF's self-interested spoon-feeding of information to the news media is on balance counter-productive, since it conveys the erroneous impression that U.S. federal and state law enforcement officials have the tools to do the job. In fact, they do not.

It is time for change. The question is, what can be done?

## **Immediate Steps the U.S. Government Can Take**

### **Measures that Can Be Implemented Without Legislation**

**The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) could immediately begin to strictly enforce the existing ban on the importation of semiautomatic assault weapons.** ATF can fully exercise its existing statutory authority to exclude from importation all semiautomatic assault rifles as “non-sporting” weapons pursuant to 18 USC §925(d)(3) (a provision of the 1968 Gun Control Act) and also exclude the importation of assault weapon kits and parts sets. This policy was first implemented in 1989 by the George H.W. Bush administration in response to drug wars and mass shootings in the U.S. The Clinton administration strengthened the import rules in 1998 in response to efforts by the gun industry to evade the ban, but the policy was essentially abandoned by the George W. Bush administration. A strict import policy would capture the vast majority of AK-type rifles.

**Expand import restrictions to include other dangerous “non-sporting” firearms.** The same provisions of existing law could be used by ATF to restrict other “non-sporting” firearms that are currently being imported into the U.S. and trafficked to Mexico including the FN Five-seveN handgun and new AK-type pistols.

**ATF could be more aggressive in identifying and sanctioning Federal Firearms License holders who are the sources of high volumes of guns trafficked to Mexico. For example:**

- **Target border-state dealers for yearly compliance inspections.** ATF is allowed to conduct one warrantless compliance inspection of each dealer once a year. It should ensure that dealers found to supply a significant number of guns seized in Mexico are inspected annually.
- **Be more aggressive in revoking the licenses of dealers found to be knowingly supplying Mexican traffickers.** Although federal law allows a license to be revoked for a single violation – provided ATF can show it was “willful” – ATF usually does not seek revocation unless a dealer has had numerous problems over years of inspections.
- **Require licensees who conduct business at gun shows to notify the Attorney General of such activity.** ATF has acknowledged that gun shows in border states are a significant source of guns trafficked to Mexico. The law allows the Attorney General to prescribe the rules for dealers operating at gun shows. ATF could focus targeted oversight and regulation on FFLs who sell

at gun shows in border states and sanction dealers identified as actively supplying those trafficking firearms to drug gangs in Mexico.

### **Measures That Would Require Legislation**

**Repeal the current restrictions on release of ATF crime gun trace data (“Tiahrt amendment”).** For several years the legislation making appropriations for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has included severe restrictions on the public release of data contained in the crime gun trace database. Previously, the data was publicly available under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Access to this database is critical to a full understanding of the gun trafficking problem, e.g. most problematic makes/models, source states and dealers, etc. It is imperative that Congress be convinced to repeal these restrictions in ATF’s fiscal year 2010 appropriations.

**Implement an effective federal assault weapons ban.** The federal ban that expired in 2004 was ineffective in that manufacturers continued to sell assault weapons throughout the term of the ban by making minor cosmetic changes in gun design. For example, the domestically manufactured AR-type rifles that are currently a huge part of the problem in Mexico were sold by manufacturers Bushmaster, Colt, DPMS, and others in “post-ban” configurations that complied with the letter of the 1994 law. To be effective, a new federal law should be modeled on California’s existing comprehensive ban. Such a bill was introduced last Congress by Representative Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) as H.R. 1022. The bill also includes a ban on high-capacity ammunition magazines that would help reduce the lethality of the standard high-capacity pistols that are also a problem in Mexico.

**Implement restrictions on 50 caliber sniper rifles.** A bill to regulate 50 caliber sniper rifles under the strict licensing, background check, and taxation system of the National Firearms Act was introduced last Congress by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) (S. 1331).

**Extend the Brady background check system to the “secondary market.”** A long-term policy goal should be to ensure that all firearms transfers are subject to a background check. Currently, up to 40 percent of firearms transfers occur at gun shows, through classified advertising, or in other private sales. A first step in this process would be to close the “gun show loophole” that allows private sellers to transfer firearms at gun shows and flea markets without a background check.

<sup>1</sup> Testimony of William J. Hoover, Assistant Director, Office of Field Operations, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, U.S. Department of Justice, Hearing of Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on "U.S. Obligations Under The Mérida Initiative," February 7, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> "Arizona Guns Are Finding Way to Mexico Drug Lords," *The Arizona Republic*, May 25, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Violence Policy Center, *Credit Card Armies*, 2002, <http://www.vpc.org/graphics/creditcardarmies.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> "Guns from U.S. equip drug cartels," *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> "Cartels in Mexico's drug war get guns from US," *The Associated Press*, January 27, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> "U.S. Is a Vast Arms Bazaar for Mexican Cartels," *The New York Times*, February 26, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> "Cartels in Mexico's drug war get guns from US," *The Associated Press*, January 27, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> There are nine types of federal firearms licenses: Type 01, DEALER in firearms other than destructive devices; Type 02, PAWNBROKER in firearms other than destructive devices; Type 03, COLLECTOR OF CURIOS AND RELICS; Type 06, MANUFACTURER OF AMMUNITION FOR FIREARMS other than ammunition for destructive devices or armor piercing ammunition; Type 07, MANUFACTURER OF FIREARMS other than destructive devices; Type 08, IMPORTER OF FIREARMS other than destructive devices or AMMUNITION FOR FIREARMS other than destructive devices, or ammunition other than armor piercing ammunition; Type 09, DEALER IN DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES; Type 10, MANUFACTURER OF DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES, AMMUNITION FOR DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES OR ARMOR PIERCING AMMUNITION; and Type 11, IMPORTER OF DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES, AMMUNITION FOR DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES OR ARMOR PIERCING AMMUNITION." Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. "Types of Federal Firearms License." [http://atf.gov/firearms/fflc/ffl/ffl\\_types.htm](http://atf.gov/firearms/fflc/ffl/ffl_types.htm).

<sup>9</sup> Department of the Treasury. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. "General Questions (A2), Who can get a license?" in *ATF Federal Firearms Regulations Reference Guide*. [http://www.atf.gov/pub/fire-explo\\_pub/2005/p53004/q\\_and\\_a.pfd](http://www.atf.gov/pub/fire-explo_pub/2005/p53004/q_and_a.pfd).

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. National Institute of Justice. *Guns in America: National Survey on Private Ownership and Use of Firearms* (1997), 6-7.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of gun trafficking within the United States, see Mayors Against Illegal Guns, *The Movement of Illegal Guns in America: The Link between Gun Laws and Interstate Gun Trafficking*, December 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Mayors Against Illegal Guns, *The Movement of Illegal Guns in America: The Link between Gun Laws and Interstate Gun Trafficking*, December 2008, 9.

<sup>13</sup> "Guns from U.S. equip drug cartels," *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> "Quítenle los rifles al narco," *El Universal* editorial, February 5, 2009, <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/editorials/42828.html>. This quote is translated by the author from the following text: Hace dos meses la entonces secretaria de Estado del país vecino, Condoleezza Rice, dijo frente a la secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores mexicana, Patricia Espinosa: "Yo sigo el tráfico de armas en todo el mundo, y nunca he sabido que a los traficantes de armas ilegales les

importe mucho la ley. Así es que simplemente no acepto la noción de que el levantamiento de la prohibición (a la venta de armas de alto calibre en tiendas estadounidenses) haya conducido a los traficantes de armas a incrementar sus actividades." Haberlo dicho antes. Bajo esa lógica, levantemos también la prohibición al tráfico de drogas.

<sup>15</sup> This section is based on research on the gun industry, its products, and their impact on public health and safety, published by the Violence Policy Center over several decades. For examples, see [www.vpc.org](http://www.vpc.org). An additional source is Tom Diaz, *Making a Killing: The Business of Guns in America* (New York: The New Press, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Violence Policy Center, *A Shrinking Minority: The Continuing Decline of Gun Ownership in America*, <http://www.vpc.org/studies/gunownership.pdf>, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> "Doing Business in the Golden Age of the Consumer," *Shooting Industry*, (February 1997), p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> "Selling Guns to the Gun-Shy," *The Wall Street Journal Online*, July 28, 2005, downloaded on July 29, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> "Summit aims to boost Florida hunting," *Orlando Sentinel*, July 31, 2005, p. C15.

<sup>20</sup> "Growth curbing Inland hunting," *Press Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), September 1, 2005, p. A1.

<sup>21</sup> "Public Attitudes Towards the Regulation of Firearms," Tom W. Smith, NORC/University of Chicago, March 2007.

<sup>22</sup> "Selling Guns to the Gun-Shy," *The Wall Street Journal Online*, July 28, 2005, downloaded on July 29, 2005.

<sup>23</sup> *The New Firearms Business*, November 15, 2008, p.1

<sup>24</sup> For two recent journalistic accounts of this traffic, see "Guns from U.S. equip drug cartels," *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 2008; James Verini, "Arming the Drug Wars," *Conde Nast Portfolio.com*, July 2008.

<sup>25</sup> "Smugglers' deadly cargo: Cop-killing guns," *CNN.com*, March 26, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> "Mexican Drug Gangs' Weapons of Choice," *ABCnews.com*.

<sup>27</sup> "U.S. Guns Arming Mexican Drug Gangs; Second Amendment to Blame?" *ABCnews.com*, April 22, 2008.

<sup>28</sup> "Guns from U.S. equip drug cartels," *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 2008.