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Ignore the NRA distraction

by Thomas C. Fox

NCR Today

My brother called from Australia last night, hours after Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president of the National Rifle Association, held a press conference to call for armed guards in every school in America. Jim suggested the NRA program immediately begin with mandatory gun use training for all kindergarten teachers. After that the next step would require all first grade teachers to train in the use of firearms.

It would take a while, he went on, to make it through to the high school level, but eventually all U.S. teachers would be competent in the use of firearms. And, who knows, that might thwart an attack on school children somewhere.

Yes, he was being facetious. He's lived in Australia as a teacher himself for many years. He noted Australia has had its own shootings, leading to a ban on assault weapons and a program to buy back all such weapons.

Jim's views of life in the U.S. do make a point. They make me wonder aloud how the rest of the world views the madness that consumes us here around limits ? that is, no limits ? on guns.

I have to admit I was among those until yesterday that had hoped the NRA just might budge a bit after the Sandy Hook slaughter. I was naïve. I had thought it might accede to public opinion and separate their work as puppets for the weapons manufacturing industry from their claims to represent the thinking of 4 million ordinary gun toting hunters and alike. After children had been slaughtered in such unimaginable circumstances I had hoped that the NRA just might go along with some kind of limitation on assault weapons and those 30 round clips whose only purpose is to kill as many people as possible in the shortest period of time.

I was wrong. The NRA has doubled down. The men who run it support insane, even neo fascistic

military policies. Watching the angry and fearful LaPierre was a surreal experience. His press conference seemed like the type I would expect during a right wing coup as the new government established itself and its initial policies, backed by urgent, strong new laws good for all of us.

Armed guards in all schools? I thought of some of the retired firemen and police I've seen sometimes carrying pistols in local banks. How would one of these men, or a teacher, God forbid, stand up to someone armed with military-style assault weapons intent on making his way into a school? I also wondered if the NRA plan would extend to preschoolers. If not, that would be, given NRA logic, the likely place for the next attack.

Stop here. Let's keep in mind that the NRA is run by men who have played the U.S. political system successfully, even brilliantly, for decades. No other lobby in America has distorted the Second Amendment more or has had a firmer grip on congress over the years. And no other lobby has been as destructive to the fabric of our nation and citizens wanting reasonable gun control laws.

What's going on? I believe our nation has reached a new moment in which it is possible that serious gun control legislation can occur, legislation that would the ban of assault weapons and legislation that would contain serious gun ownership checks. The NRA knows this and fears this mightily. If assault weapons get a black eye in America this would not be good for assault weapon imagery and sales overseas. So the NRA has deliberately come up with a plan designed to distract attention from efforts to pass serious gun control legislation in the comings.

If the NRA can distract the national conversation for, say, one or two months it senses, given past history, the window will begin to close. And life - with unrestricted guns - can go on. At least until the next gun slaughter.

So the best response isn't to fight back against the NRA 'proposal' for armed classrooms. The best response is to ignore the NRA proposal altogether.

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Keep the focus on assault weapons, on serious gun legislation. The NRA proposal is crazy, but the men who run the organization are very clever. They are not part of the solution. They had a chance. They are the problem.

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