

Why let facts interfere when a gun tragedy beckons?

Michael Costello/Lewiston Tribune

Barack Obama is never one to let a tragedy go to waste. And how he chooses to exploit a convenient tragedy depends upon what best serves his cause of the day.

In February of this year, three Muslim students were killed in Chapel Hill, N.C. Obama leaped at the opportunity to advance his pro-Muslim agenda. Without bothering to await information, he condemned the killings as a religious hate crime.

"No one in the United States of America should ever be targeted because of who they are, what they look like, or how they worship," he said.

He adhered to this narrative even after it was learned that the shootings resulted from a conflict over a parking space.

Does anyone remember Obama defending Christians' right to worship as they choose after nine were selected for execution for their faith at Umpqua Community College in southwestern Oregon?

I don't.

When Dylan Roof murdered nine Christians in a predominately African-American church in Charleston, S.C., their right to worship never came up. Instead, Obama transformed it into pointless, symbolic attack on the Confederate battle flag.

In this latest killing, Obama didn't even wait for the notification of next of kin before exploiting the tragedy for his cause du jour. Even though the victims were clearly selected for "how they worship," Obama decided that this was his opportunity to push his gun control agenda.

He claimed, inaccurately, that the United States was unique in the civilized world, both for its liberal gun ownership laws and the occurrence of mass killings. Naturally, the two were linked, and anyone who failed to get on board with his gun confiscation agenda shared responsibility for such killings.

The Democrats' claim that gun ownership rates are the root cause of violence is not borne out by facts.

A Harvard study compared gun ownership rates with murder rates in European countries and found no correlation.

For example, Luxembourg, where private gun ownership is absolutely forbidden, has a murder rate nine times as high as Germany, which has a gun ownership rate not much lower than ours.

Russia, which has a gun ownership rate a full order of magnitude lower than Germany, has the continent's highest murder rate.

That same study also verified what the National Rifle Association has been saying for years - that in the United States, "where firearms are most dense, violent crime rates are lowest, and where guns are least dense, violent crime rates are highest."

They found a similar pattern in Great Britain.

The authors also note that European violent crime rates were already very low before gun control laws were imposed and that the gun bans had no measurable effect.

As Al Gore would say, the science is settled.

Israel's schools were once a favorite target for Palestinian terrorists for the same reason that they appeal to our domestic mass killers. If you want to attack a soft target with a high concentration of easy targets, that's where you go. But about 40 years ago, Israel adopted a policy of training and arming teachers. They also post armed sentries at their schools.

Since the adoption of that policy, Israel has not experienced an attack on its school children.

In spite of this data, liberals in this country insist upon imposing gun-free zones, which have the effect of disarming the law-abiding and providing the lawless with free-fire zones.

At Umpqua Community College, even its single security officer was unarmed. When a bad guy opens fire in a gun-free zone, all that unarmed, potential victims can do is wait for the arrival of a good guy with a gun, and hope he gets there before it's their turn to die.

Obama cited Australia as his example of "common- sense gun control." Here's a summary of what he was talking about:

After a 28-year-old man killed 35 in Port Arthur, Tasmania, Australia overreacted and passed a draconian gun confiscation law.

Pursuing a similarly coercive gun confiscation policy in this country would entail sending tens of thousands of armed federal agents door to door and would prove the darkest fantasies of the conspiracy theorists true.

In addition, the Australian law had no measurable effect on violence. Australia's already low violent crime rate stayed where it was. Australia's suicide rate was low and declining, and that trend continued. Australia trampled on its citizens' rights for no good reason.

But Obama and his designated successor don't let facts cloud their judgment.

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