

1961

**Cold War:** East Germany closes the border between the eastern and western sectors of Berlin.

1964

**Peter Allen and Gwynne Evans** are hanged for the Murder of John Alan West.

1967

**Two young women** became the first fatal victims of grizzly bear attacks.



1968

**Alexandros Panagoulis** attempts to assassinate **Georgios Papadopoulos**.



Americans are looking to leadership for answers on how to keep our country safe. Yet those answers are in short supply. The president has called on government agencies to work together and identify individuals who might commit violent acts. He has also called for legisla-

**Gun violence dates back to the Civil War; one of the founding fathers of the nation, Alexander Hamilton, was himself killed in a duel to the death with his political rival Aaron Burr in 1804.**

tion allowing law enforcement to take weapons from individuals thought to be a threat to themselves or others. Some might argue that should start with law enforcement officers themselves disarming.

Most would agree that anyone with a mental illness or a record of hatred, racism or bigotry should not be in possession of a firearm. However, as the shooting of unarmed black men such as Oscar Grant, Stephon Clark, Botham Jean, Jamar Clark and Emantic Bradford Junior, among others, shows, many law enforcement officers are themselves guilty of racial bias – yet the criminal justice system leans towards protecting them rather than their victims, even in cases of extreme violations with video evidence. Giving more authority to police

officers would only serve to intensify those elements of racism and corruption among the ranks of officials and further empower the white nationalist agenda.

And as the statistics show, those who are feared most are rarely those who pose the greatest threat. Last month, FBI director Christopher Wray revealed the majority of investigations into domestic terrorism – by home-grown, radicalised extremists – involved some form of white supremacy. Earlier this year, FBI officials said they were looking into about 850 cases of domestic terrorism posing a “serious and persistent threat”.

Presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg recently challenged Americans to think critically and to acknowledge that “this is terrorism and it needs to be named as such”. Mr Obama also urged Americans to reject language from any leaders that feeds hatred or normalises racism.

What is most tragic about the events that have been unfolding over the last few years is that it appears the right of a people to bear arms is more important than the right to live in peace. We might not be able to eliminate hatred and racism completely from society but we can show good moral character, strong leadership and treat all people with the same level of honour, dignity and respect that we expect for ourselves.

## ance in Syria

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responsibility for their citizens and bring them to trial in their home countries – which is how the US is dealing with captured American fighters – the Europeans are refusing to cooperate, effectively abandoning the fighters to a judicial no-man’s land.

American officials are seriously concerned that, if the issue is not resolved soon, it could result in many of the fighters being freed and returning to ISIS’s ranks. Such a possibility cannot be overlooked as the SDF have said they do not have the resources to keep the ISIS detainees indefinitely, and security officials have warned that ISIS is already in the process of regrouping in Syria and has an estimated \$300 million to spend on launching a new wave of terror attacks.

Allowing ISIS to reform would be similar to what happened in Iraq a decade ago when, after the US-led coalition succeeded in defeating the Al Qaeda-led insurgency. It subsequently allowed Islamist militants to regroup, which ultimately resulted with the creation of the caliphate.

“We made this mistake in Iraq, and we must not make the same mistake again in Syria,” a senior US official told me recently.

The US administration is certainly losing patience with the Europeans’ disinclination to accept responsibility for dealing with the captured fighters, with President Donald Trump threatening last week to forcibly repatriate them to Europe unless there was a change of policy. All of which suggests that, while the war against the caliphate has been won, the struggle for post-conflict Syria is set to continue for some time to come.

of Turkish military bases to continue prosecuting the campaign against ISIS remnants.

Add to this complicated picture the interests of countries like Iran, which aims to use its presence in Syria to increase its ability to confront Israel, and it is clear that post-caliphate Syria remains every bit as challenging as it was when ISIS was administering its barbaric regime.

The wrangling between Washington and Ankara over the administration of a Kurdish buffer zone also risks overshadowing another vital issue that needs urgent attention, namely what is to be done with the hundreds of foreign fighters that have been captured during the final assault on ISIS, the majority of whom are still being held in Kurdish-run detention camps.

An estimated 800 foreign fighters from countries like Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands are currently being held by Kurdish forces. But despite urgent appeals from Washington for European governments to take

### CIVILIAN’S TRIBUNE

## A practical approach needed to tackle gun violence



**I** believe that to make any progress on gun control, we must concede that guns aren’t going to disappear from this country or its culture at any time in the foreseeable future, and that we must take little steps before we can take big ones.

The shooter in South Florida is reported to have used an AR-15 style rifle. For those like me who know very little about military-grade weaponry, an AR-15 is a high-powered, semi-automatic rifle that supports magazine sizes ranging from 5 to 30 rounds. In my opinion, weapons like the AR-15, especially those with high-capacity magazines, are primarily designed to take human life as quickly and

efficiently as possible.

I don’t believe that either of the two major motivations for individual gun ownership – self-defence and hunting/recreation – merit owning such a weapon. You may argue that not being able to acquire this kind of rifle would not have deterred the gunman, that he would have used a pistol or hunting rifle instead.

Maybe yes, and maybe no, but I would argue that in any case many fewer lives would have been lost given the less aggressive capabilities of his chosen weapon. If this seems a bit pedantic – “If there’s still going to be a mass shooting, do numbers really matter?” – consider the victims and their families.

Every victim has a story, hopes and dreams, a family and friends; I often wonder how many of those opposed to this kind of gun control have a personal connection to someone victimised by a mass shooting (my guess would be not many).

If even one life is saved or shooting prevented by curbing the availability of weapons like the AR-15 that seem to have no purpose outside of ending multiple lives at once, legislative steps should be taken.

Simple steps include limiting available magazine sizes, more closely regulating the sale and ownership of particularly dangerous weapons and built-in biometric security mechanisms.

**J Thomas**



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



Seeing how negative emotions lead to negative consequences can help us overcome them. Just as we can learn how helpful love and compassion can be, we can come to understand that anger, pride, jealousy and arrogance can be detrimental. We need to use reason and human intelligence.

@DalaiLama

02



I spent a lot of time hanging out with, parenting or just listening to teen boys over the past week and it was pretty great. They were thoughtful, self-aware, kind, intelligent and exactly the kind of people we’re going to need the world to be full of in the coming decades.

@mims

03



Relieved to learn that for a third day in a row, my university contemporary & friend @arunjaitley’s health condition is reported by AIIMS to be stable. I wish him a speedy & complete recovery & look forward to crossing political swords with him again!

@ShashiTharoor

04



Many incredible things are happening right now for our Country. After years of being ripped off by other nations on both Trade Deals and the Military, things are changing fast. Big progress is being made. America is respected again. KEEP AMERICA GREAT!

@realDonaldTrump

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