

Ted Kennedy Hits U.S. Tie to Gun Clubs

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Washington—In a sharply worded letter to Defense Secretary McNamara, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy has questioned the Defense Dept.'s "involvement with and support of the National Rifle Assn."

Kennedy (D-Mass.) called on McNamara to cancel the annual National Rifle Matches held in conjunction with the NRA that cost the Defense Dept. \$2,700,000 in one recent year.

"I have serious doubts about the justification for continuing the entire Civilian Marksmanship Program in this nuclear age, and especially about the privileged position given the NRA under that program," the Senator wrote.

Kennedy referred to reports that riflemen must be members of the NRA in order to qualify for free ammunition and the loan of military weapons under the Civilian Marksmanship Program.

The annual rifle matches at Camp Perry, Ohio, are an additional expenditure.

About 7,000 riflemen compete in the matches each year, about 3,000 of whom are members

of the NRA and the rest servicemen. Participants receive travel expenses to and from Camp Perry and free lodging, meals, ammunition and trophies while they are there.

Kennedy said it was "impossible to justify" an expenditure of nearly \$3,000,000 for a shooting match in light of the budgetary pressures of the Vietnam war.

He also noted the matches tied up Camp Perry during August and September, a period when Rep. Vanik (D-Ohio) has suggested the camp could be used as a recreation facility by children from the slums.

Kennedy said he would support rescheduling or relocation of any activities associated with the matches which are part of the military training of men on active duty.

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