

U.S. PANEL URGES HANDGUN SEIZURE TO CURB VIOLENCE

Federal Action Is Supported
on Standards Governing
Restrictions by States

PAYMENT IS ADVOCATED

\$500-Million Cost Foreseen
to Compensate Owners
of Unneeded Weapons

Excerpts from violence report
will be found on Page 18.

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 28 —

If the nation is to transcend its history of domestic violence, the Federal Government and the states must act to confiscate 90 per cent of the estimated total of 24 million handguns owned by private citizens, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence declared today.

The commission called for Federal minimum standards under which the states would restrict ownership of handguns to those who could demonstrate reasonable need for the weapons.

Under the proposal, the Government would buy newly illegal weapons from their owners — at a cost that the panel says could amount to \$500-million. Should owners fail to turn in handguns, the Government would seek prosecution for criminal violations of the laws.

Up to the President

The commission recommendation — plus a thick volume of statistical support for it — was released just four days after Nixon Administration spokesmen told a Senate Judiciary subcommittee there was no need for new gun control legislation.

Milton S. Eisenhower, the commission chairman, said in a news conference that Randolph W. Thrower, the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, and Donald E. Santarelli, an associate deputy attorney general, had testified without benefit of the commission report.

"This report will go to the President," said Mr. Eisenhower. "The President will have to decide, on the basis of the evidence presented to him, what his position will be."

Thus it appeared that Mr. Nixon, who personally has

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voiced on position on gun registration since campaigning for and winning the Presidency, would be placed squarely in the center of the latest national skirmish over gun control.

The report on firearms was the seventh issued by the commission since it was established by a June 10, 1968, executive order of President Johnson to investigate and make recommendations on lawless acts of violence in American society. President Nixon signed an executive order May 23 to extend the commission's life to next Dec. 10.

Although samples of public opinion have consistently demonstrated a national willingness to regulate firearms since the 1930's, Federal guns laws have been enacted only after episodes of sensational violence. The most recent example was the Gun Control Act of 1968, adopted after the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

100 Measures Pending

There are some 100 measures before Congress now to further restrict the use of weapons, but nearly as many proposals to backtrack on existing law.

"Our studies have convinced us that the heart of any effective national firearms policy for the United States must be to reduce the availability of the firearm that contributes the most to the violence," the commission said in a nine-page printed statement. "This means restrictive licensing of the handgun."

The commission also urged a Federal set of standards under which the states would require identification of the owners of the estimated total of 35 million rifles and 31 million shotguns in the United States.

But the thrust of the commission's concern was directed at handguns, annual sales of which have quadrupled in five years to a 1968 total of 2.5 million. The commission appeared to be seeking support

of such groups as the National Rifle Association by concentrating its recommendations on control of hand weapons, fewer of which are used for sporting purposes.

As the commission stated it: "The challenge for this commission—and for the nation was a whole—is to find ways to cope with illegitimate uses of guns without at the same time placing undue restrictions on legitimate uses. We believe this is possible if both the advocates and the opponents of gun control legislation will put aside their suspicions and preconceptions, accept the fact of a common danger without exaggerating its dimensions and act for the common good."

4 Members Dissent

The policy statement was adopted by nine of the 13 commission members and released by its chairman, Milton S. Eisenhower.

Mr. Eisenhower said the policy statement was adopted "enthusiastically" by nine of the 13 commission members with a "mild" dissent from the four others. If Congress reacted along the same lines, said Mr. Eisenhower, such a proposal would have an excellent chance of being enacted.

The four dissenting members—Senator Roman L. Hruska, Republican of Nebraska; Representative Hale Boggs, Democrat of Louisiana; Judge Ernest W. McFarland, presiding member of the Arizona Supreme Court, and Leon Jaworski, the Houston lawyer—agreed with much of the report but found the plan for Federal restrictions on the states distasteful.

The majority members concluded, however, that national standards were needed to overcome the lack of uniformity among more than 20,000 separate state and local laws on firearms.

A 268-page staff report prepared for the commission and released without comment says that "serious efforts at state and local regulation have consistently been frustrated by the flow of firearms from one state to another."

All but five states (Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi and

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Tennessee) place some restriction on ownership of handguns, but only 21 states supplement their laws by screening persons owning hand weapons. New York and Massachusetts are the only two states with restrictive licensing of handguns such as the commission proposes for the nation as a whole.

The commission's handgun proposal would leave to the states the right to determine what is reasonable need to own such a weapon. The commission's staff had recommended Federal minimum standards and suggested that "normal household protection would not constitute sufficient need."

The commission declared that the individual who keeps a hand weapon in his home for self-defense purposes — a reason that has greatly spurred sales of guns amid the urban unrest of the 1960's—may actually be placing himself in greater danger.

"In only a relatively small number of instances do home robberies or burglaries result in the death of the victims. Examination shows that in the great majority of cases, the householder had no warning and thus no chance to arm himself with a gun," the commission found.

Commuters Use Checks To Protest Conditions

Special to The New York Times

CROTON - ON - HUDSON, N. Y., July 27 — To embarrass the Penn Central and confuse its bookkeeping department, a commuter group, the Transportation Action Committee, intends to mail checks for monthly tickets to the Public Service Commission.

The tactic, called Operation Chuk-It, is an answer to Chek-It, the railroad's practice of mailing monthly tickets to regular commuters in advance with a request for payment. The commuters are supporting a P.S.C. directive to the Penn-Central to add more equipment and improve safety.

But the presence of a weapon in the home was said to contribute to the greater risk of becoming a statistic in 23,000 annual firearms accidents occurring in homes or the 8,000 annual firearms homicides.

'Dangerous Investment'

"From the standpoint of the individual householder, then, the self-defense firearm appears to be a dangerous investment," the report said.

Though the commission said it could not determine the "net usefulness" of businessmen's keeping firearms handy for self-defense, it noted there was less chance of accident—and greatly diminished risk—that the weapons would be used in an argument between family members or friends — if no weapon was handy.

Under the commission proposal the states would have four years in which to adopt acceptable handgun licensing systems and procedures for identifying owners of rifles and shotguns. Should the states fail to act the Federal standards would apply.

Besides its two key recommendations for new law, the commission urged broadening of the Gun Control Act of 1968, which seeks to curtail the import of firearms unsuitable for sporting purposes, to include also cheap and perhaps dangerous weapons produced in the United States and classed as "junk guns" by the commission.

The commission also called for a public education crusade, to be aided by groups such as the National Rifle Association, to stress duties and responsibilities of firearms ownership.

It urged continued research on the use of firearms and on methods by which law enforcement officials might detect concealed weapons. It advocated a joint study by government and industry to find an "effective nonlethal weapon" that could be used for self-defense.

Guard Leaves York, Pa.

YORK, Pa., July 28 (AP)—State police and National Guard units pulled out of York today, ending nearly a week's occupation of streets terrorized by snipers.