

U.S. gun association silent on Newtown massacre

17th December, 2012



America's National Rifle Association (NRA) is still staying silent on the mass shooting at an elementary school in Connecticut, USA in which 27 people died, including 20 children aged six and seven. Two days after the

massacre, the USA's powerful pro-gun organisation has yet to make any kind of statement on the tragedy that has shaken America. The mass murder of 20 innocent children by a gunman seems to have stunned the NRA into silence. The "Huffington Post" writes about the NRA's disappearance from social media sites since the tragedy, saying: "The NRA has disappeared from both Twitter and Facebook since the events that occurred on Friday."

The NRA announced on Facebook the day before the killings that it had accumulated 1.7 million fans. The organization's Facebook page has now completely vanished. Clicking on the link in a Google search sends you to your own timeline. Many Americans are now questioning more than ever whether owning a gun should be a right. Stories of multiple shootings are a regular part of American news, to the extent that many no longer get a headline. In other countries, such tragedies prompt national soul searching. President Obama has promised to take "meaningful action" on gun control, although he has yet to expand on what that means. Americans now expect a battle on the future of gun ownership and the right to bear arms.

Sources: CNN / NBC / Business Insider

Writing

Guns are responsible for hundreds of murders. Gun ownership should be a criminal offence. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

rifles / staying silent / mass shooting / tragedy / innocent children / social media sites / Facebook fans / vanished / the right to own a gun / soul searching / meaningful action

True / False

- a) A powerful gun organization has not commented on the shooting. T / F
- b) The NRA has said it will not comment on the tragedy. T / F
- c) The "Huffington Post" has been stunned into silence by the incident. T / F
- d) The NRA has avoided Twitter and Facebook for two days. T / F
- e) The NRA welcomed its 1.7 millionth fan the day before the shootings. T / F
- f) Many shootings in the USA are no longer headline news. T / F
- g) President Obama has promised strict new gun controls. T / F
- h) Most Americans expect the issue of gun control to go away quietly. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. silent | a. trigger |
| 2. massacre | b. shocked |
| 3. shaken | c. vanished |
| 4. stunned | d. slaughter |
| 5. disappeared | e. carry |
| 6. announced | f. rocked |
| 7. accumulated | g. recurrent |
| 8. regular | h. tight-lipped |
| 9. prompt | i. collected |
| 10. bear | j. declared |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What are the arguments put forward by those against gun ownership?
- b) Does gun ownership help keep a society safer?
- c) What do you think of the regularity of mass shootings in the USA?
- d) What "meaningful action" can President Obama take?
- e) Do you think the issue of gun control will now dominate U.S. politics?
- f) What do you think the NRA will eventually say about Newtown?
- g) Where do you think gun laws will be in the USA 50 years from now?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the head of the NRA?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. staying silent | a. soul searching |
| 2. has yet to make | b. from social media sites |
| 3. the tragedy that has | c. 1.7 million fans |
| 4. stunned the | d. any kind of statement |
| 5. the NRA's disappearance | e. on what that means |
| 6. it had accumulated | f. completely vanished |
| 7. The organization's Facebook page has now | g. on the mass shooting |
| 8. owning a gun | h. NRA into silence |
| 9. such tragedies prompt national | i. shaken America |
| 10. he has yet to expand | j. should be a right |

Discussion – Student B

- What springs to mind when you hear the word 'gun'?
- Why do you think the NRA is staying silent?
- What do you think of gun laws in your country?
- Should guns laws be made tougher?
- What are the arguments put forward by those for owning guns?
- Do you think what happened in Newtown will lead to greater gun control in the USA?
- Would you feel safer if you had a gun?
- What do you think of the phrase, "guns don't kill people; people kill people"?

Spelling

- ryetamelen school
- days after the mrsaasec
- the tedygra that has shaken America
- 20 ionetcnn children
- the NRA's iansapedacpre
- the events that ruercdco on Friday
- it had alctdeumcau 1.7 million fans
- oyelmleptc vanished
- reehthw owning a gun should be a right
- national soul aesghricn
- nuamilefgn action
- the right to brea arms

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. f	4. b	5. c
6. j	7. i	8. g	9. a	10. e

Role Play

Barack Obama - You think the time has come to take guns out of society. Tell the others three reasons why. You will not listen to politicians who say, "people kill people; guns don't kill people". Banning guns is now your biggest aim as President. You think gun crime embarrasses the USA around the world.

NRA chairman - You are tired of the same arguments every time there's a tragedy. Tell the others three reasons why. The problem is society. More money should be spent on mental health issues to stop people going on mass shootings. People in America need guns to protect themselves.

Anti-gun Jo Public - You want all guns removed from American society. Tell the others three reasons why. You don't understand why in America gun ownership is a right but free healthcare is not. You think Obama is weak and cannot get anything done on gun control. The NRA chairman is crazy.

Pro-gun Jo Public - You need your gun. Tell the others three reasons why. Guns are a part of America's tradition. Guns keep society feeling safe. No one will try to burgle your house because people know you have five guns. The police cannot be everywhere to protect you. Guns can.

Speaking

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the worst at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| • guns | • tanks |
| • the Internet | • tear gas |
| • knives | • biological weapons |
| • words | • fists |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.