Firearms Violence - an All-American National Trend

Fashion, whatever form it may take, is a key element of human culture, an expression of the unique spirit of an age or nation.

When discussing the fashion industry, we are generally referring to clothes and accessories. We even talk about the “fashion capitals of the world”. The number one fashionable nation, naturally, is France, followed by Italy (especially Milan) - the fashion capital of Europe, with its elite designer boutiques and annual fashion shows that attract the aristocracy of the fashion world. Other fashion capitals include Britain - London’s catwalks display work by world-class designers including Vivian Westwood, John Galliano, Alexander McQueen, Stella McCartney and Hussein Chalayan.

In recent years the US has also joined the ranks of the world’s fashion capitals - although the fashion in question here is something rather different, and far less positive. In a word, we are talking about violence, specifically firearms violence, which has taken the lives of thousands of civilians in the many countries in which the US has mounted military inventions.

Attempts on the part of the international community to rein in Washington’s behavior have brought little fruit. And although the White House has declared that it wishes to cut down its military presence in the Middle East, claiming that it has reduced troop numbers in the region to just 30,000, the lowest figure for the last 20 years, the threat posed by the US military presence has barely changed.
For example we could cite the highly challenging situation caused by the US presence in Syria, which has neither been authorized by the UN or agreed with the Syrian government, and which continues despite repeated requests by Damascus for the UN to recognize the US occupation of the country as illegal.

Moreover it is no secret that even as the official US military presence in this or that country is being scaled down, American private defense contractors are deploying more and more personnel to those same countries. Washington’s claims that it is “withdrawing” troops are little more than fake news, disinformation to keep the public happy.

In fact, it would be naive to expect the US to reduce levels of armed aggression when the right to bear firearms and use them - dispute or no dispute- is at the core of its national ideology.

Firearms violence has become a chronic social problem in the US, and there is little hope for a solution. At least until the US public wake up and put an end to the orgy of bloodletting which their political and military are doing nothing to counter.

According to FBI figures, 17 million firearms were sold to civilians within the country between January and November 2021, the second highest annual figure since 2000. According to a national survey, approximately one third of the US population (i.e. some 81.4 million people) possess one or more firearms. That makes Americans the most heavily armed nation in the world.

Deutsche Wirtschafts Nachrichten reports a dramatic 40% rise in gun crime in the US since 2019! That is the biggest increase in the last 100 years, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. Philadelphia alone, for example, reported unprecedented 500 homicides. According to a report in The Washington Times, the national capital and surrounding region also reported the highest number of violent crimes in a while, with a 14% increase in homicides compared to 2020. The figures for the capital reflect the increase in homicides across the nation, according to criminology expert Ernesto Lopez. According to a recent study of 22 cities by the Council on Criminal Justice, there were 36% more homicides in 2021 than in 2019. And CNN, in a recent study of more than 40 major cities, found that in more than two thirds of the most populous cities reported more homicides in 2021 than in 2020.

In at least nine major cities the annual homicide rate was the highest ever reported. Particularly striking increases were recorded in Los Angeles - 13% up on 2020 (from 338 to 382) and Houston - 14% up on 2020 (from 401 to 467).

This spike in violence has taken a particularly heavy toll on American children. In 2021 alone 308 children under 12 years old were killed and 738 were injured in firearms incidents, notes The Times. And in the same year 4,552 children and teenagers between 12 and 17 were killed or injured, compared with 4,142 in the previous year. In total, last year 20,527 minors were killed in firearms-related incidents (including homicides and accidental killings, but not suicides), the highest figure for two decades. The figure for 2020 was 19,411. Last year there were also 687 mass shootings - defined as incidents in which four or more people were killed or injured - in the US. In 2020 there were 611 such incidents.

Firearms violence has become a national tradition in the US. And it is not just a Republican or Democrat campaign issue. It is a fundamental sickness afflicting American society, which is being thrust ever deeper into a downward spiral of armed violence by a military and political elite which insists that armed force is a solution to all problems and cites the nefarious deeds of this or that enemy to justify its militarist policies. Those perceived enemies may be foreign powers - Russia, China, Iran or North Korea, or countries that have thrown off the Yanqui yoke, such as Cuba, Nicaragua or Venezuela. Or they may be “fifth columnists” - the military political complex is not above inflaming racial hatred in its bid to find scapegoats for problems, whether blaming Chinese- or other Asian-American communities for the coronavirus pandemic or accusing Afro-Americans of involvement in drug trafficking and violent crimes.

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