



NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

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Stephen Rodhouse, Esq.
Director General, National Crime Agency
Spring Gardens, 1.5 Citadel Place
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18th October 2018

Dear Mr Rodhouse

Offensive Weapons Bill

I write in response to your letter to the Home Secretary dated 11th October 2018.

Your letter appears to be deliberately designed to alarm those with little or any knowledge of civilian target shooting; using words such as “devastating effect” and “enormously powerful cartridges” are cases in point. We agree that .50” calibre is at the higher end of the range of muzzle energy of rifles used in civilian target shooting; however we fundamentally disagree that this should make them prohibited for target shooting. Firearms types used in crime, according to official reports, are those that are readily available (modified shotguns), easily hidden (handguns), or in extremis semi- or fully-automatics. Cumbersome and heavy rifles such as .50” calibre simply do not feature in crime statistics.

I am particularly dismayed by your reference to the theft of “17 rifles and 115 shotguns” since the Parliamentary Committee hearing. You know that no .50” calibre rifle was included in these thefts; furthermore I will be grateful for your confirmation of how many firearms were stolen from premises with security enhanced to Level 3 of the Home Office Security Handbook we have proposed. Your statement “this demonstrates that even where security provisions have been taken, the risks cannot fully be mitigated of one of these devastatingly powerful weapons being stolen” is misleading at best;-we are not aware of any such firearms that have been stolen from the fully secured and alarmed premises as we have proposed. As an aside, any theft of a firearm is one too many but should be set in the context of some 2,250,000 legally held firearms in the UK.

You state that a military .50” calibre round can immobilise a small truck at 1,800 metres; however you fail to highlight that, other than in Hollywood films or in the hands of an expertly trained military sniper, making such a shot at such a range is virtually impossible, particularly in the example you quoted in central London. This would appear to be another example of misleading hyperbole.

Finally you allude to an “emergence of higher powered weapons arriving in the criminal market”; I will be grateful if you could confirm how many illegal .50” calibre rifles have been seized by law enforcement over the past 5 years. I suspect the answer is none.

The law abiding and responsible shooting community recognise and value the work of the NCA in attacking serious crime; however your efforts to penalise 1 million or so regular shooters by promoting fear and alarm does the cause of public safety a disservice.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Mercer
Chief Executive