



**Senator Feinstein Seeks Ban of .50-Caliber Rifles
to Prevent Sale to Terrorists**
March 8, 2005

Washington, DC – In light of a new report indicating that terror suspects were allowed to buy firearms in the U.S. legally in the last year, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today announced plans to ban the possession, sale, and manufacture of .50-caliber rifles, preventing terrorists and criminals from obtaining these deadly weapons.

Senator Feinstein also announced that she would cosponsor legislation that Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) has proposed to require federal officials to keep records of gun purchases by terror suspects for a minimum of 10 years. Records of these purchases are currently required to be destroyed within 24 hours.

“The Government Accountability Office issued a report today that indicated that terror suspects on federal watch lists are not automatically prohibited from purchasing firearms. When you combine this with the fact that military-style assault weapons and .50-caliber rifles are readily available for purchase you create a recipe for disaster.

This is a major reason why I’ve been working to reestablish the ban on military-style assault weapons. Last year, unfortunately, the ban expired and the most dangerous assault weapons are once again allowed to be manufactured and imported into this country.

We’ve long known that assault weapons are the weapons of choice for those seeking to do the most damage in the least amount of time. It should be clear that they are valuable for terrorists as well.

At the same time, .50-caliber rifles represent a significant national security threat. These rifles are designed solely for armed combat with wartime enemies. The guns enable a single shooter to destroy enemy aircraft, jeeps, tanks, personnel carriers, bunkers, fuel stations, and even communication centers. Despite their deadly power, these weapons are widely available to civilians and subject to less regulation than shotguns, machine guns, and handguns. Today’s report makes it crystal clear that these weapons represent a terrorist threat and should be off the streets of America once and for all.

I’ve written to FBI Director Robert Mueller, Director of Central Intelligence Porter Goss, and Homeland Security Deputy Secretary James Loy asking them for a comprehensive assessment of the terrorist threat posed by military-style assault weapons and .50 caliber rifles. It is my hope that this analysis will be completed quickly so that we can determine our nation’s vulnerability from these weapons.”

Earlier this month, Senator Feinstein announced plans to introduce legislation to renew the ban on military-style assault weapons.

Copies of Senator Feinstein's letters to Director Mueller, Director Goss, and Secretary Loy are available upon request.

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