

Canada's Prime Minister should kill gun control

By Vernon Beck - January 12, 2004

Recently, the issue of the gun control registry has re-emerged in the national newspapers. I have never owned a gun nor am I a supporter of the firearm lobby. I am what many would consider to be an everyday, middle-aged, middle-class Canadian taxpayer with a family who wishes to see my country spend its limited financial resources wisely and for the good of the Canadian people.

Recently, Canadians have witnessed the Chretien Liberal government make the terrible miscalculation of bringing gun control legislation into Law. Needless to say, this has turned into a national disgrace. While schools, hospitals, the military, health research and programs designed to help the elderly, disabled, children, and families of this nation suffer because of government financial cutbacks, a billion dollars of hard earned Canadian taxpayer's money has been squandered on a useless gun control registry.

It has become abundantly clear to the average Canadian, that the decision by the Chretien Liberals relating to gun control was one of the most irresponsible acts of the government and one of the worst fiascos in recent Canadian history. I have personally spoken to many police officers who say off the record that the registry is a joke and that it is the criminals who possess most unregistered firearms, not law-abiding Canadians.

Most people will admit that it is only human for people to make mistakes (even politicians). Most will also say that the most certain way for one who has made a mistake to regain the respect of others afterwards is to accept responsibility for his/her actions and to move ahead on a course of action that will repair or minimize any damage. Most honest, hard working people disdain those who refuse to admit to their mistakes and instead, become further entrenched in their position.

It is clear to Canadians that Prime Minister Chretien and his party made a huge blunder. It is clear that the gun registry is not doing what it was supposed to do, likely never will. Many Canadians understand

that there are many bureaucrats in Ottawa who have a vested personal interest in the registry and are pushing to keep it alive for other reasons other than the good of the Canadian people. But as we say, that's politics.

As Canada's new Prime Minister, if Mr. Martin is to have any chance of continuing on as the leader of this nation after the next election, then he should start showing strong leadership by boldly stepping forward as our leader and to take responsibility for his party's past blunder with gun control. But even more importantly, the Prime Minister should show us how he is prepared to immediately eliminate this national disgrace. Canadians cannot feel anything but sympathy and show support for a leader who is willing to accept responsibility and to move forward to correct a problem. It would be political suicide for the Prime Minister to go into the next election with the Liberal Party being seen by Canadians as the culprits for this gun control mess.

If the Prime Minister is wise, he will kill the gun control registry now and stop the further waste of tax dollars on this issue. Prime Minister Martin should show Canadians that he possess the leadership to make the needed decisions for this nation. He should show Canadians that he is a leader who is in control and not a servant to "political correctness" or to the bureaucrats and special interest groups in Ottawa.

When front page headlines in Canada's major newspapers read, "**Prime Minister kills gun control legislation,**" there will be renewed confidence in the Prime Minister's Office and the Liberal Party of Canada.

It's time for action in this issue. I, as are many other Canadians, waiting to see if Prime Minister Martin is the kind of leader that Canada needs. Does he have the right stuff? Is he able to act boldly and decisively on this most important national issue? Canadians will soon see.

Vernon Beck, a writer on social issues, may be contacted by e mail at: vernonbeck@cogeco.ca