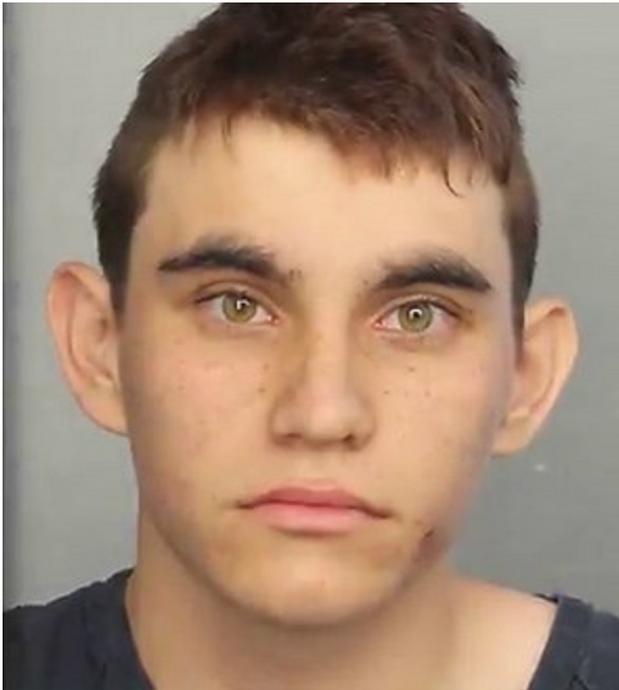


FARS interview: Florida's Disney World violence

Written by Eric Walberg Эрик Вальберг/ Уолберг □□□□ □□□□

Saturday, 10 March 2018 14:59



<http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13961213001943> (Persian)

1/ Mass shooting have become almost routine in the United States like what happened recently in Florida. Who is Nikolas Cruz and where was he trained to become a fanatical racist?

This latest tragedy -- the murder of 17 school children in Parkland, Florida -- is no surprise. Almost every day in the US there is an attempted mass murder. Most murderers are killed or commit suicide before they kill more than a few people, but the litany of massacres continues to mount.

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Cruz's Valentine's Day present to the nation recalls the Saint Valentine Day massacre in 1929 in Chicago over mafia control of alcohol during prohibition. America was founded on violence and has always existed with violence just below the surface.

A law enforcement official admitted that the teen had bought his AR-15 legally. A photograph showed Cruz at the moment of his arrest wearing a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) t-shirt. Cruz was a member of the US Army junior ROTC group. His background is sad, and clearly the main reason for his unstable behaviour.

The Orlando Sentinel quoted family members as saying Cruz had been adopted at birth along with his brother by Lynda and Roger Cruz. His adopted father died 10 years ago, and his mother, last year, after which the boys were left in the care of a family friend. He was expelled last year from the school where he carried out the massacre. Senior staff at the school had warned that Cruz not be allowed on school grounds with a backpack, as he had repeatedly threatened to kill other students.

2/ Why has violence has become an inseparable part of American society?

The media incites violence through the saturation of TV programming with police and risqué sexual dramas. Violence and illicit sex has long been central to US culture. It is worth remembering that Orlando, another small city on Florida's Atlantic coast, was the scene of another horrific mass murder, in 2016. Not by a white Christian American like Cruz (and most other mass murderers), but by the son of an Afghan immigrant who came to the US in in the 1980s.

Omar Matin was born in New York and also grew up as a product of American culture, though his father was an avowed supporter of the Taleban. Matin's anger was homegrown, American through and through, shared by millions of (white) Christian Americans. The dissonance in Omar's mind between his Muslim heritage and the sexual promiscuity he was surrounded by, as epitomized by Pulse, the flashy Orlando gay nightclub, became unbearable and in a haze of drugs and disgust, he did the unthinkable, killing 49 Pulse revelers.

The problem in both these tragedies is, of course, lack of strict gun control, but even where gun control is introduced, there's neither the will nor the money to enforce it. The US constitution's second amendment, in 1791, was 'the right to bear arms', though in the 'wild west' 18th century, that meant only crude rifles and pistols, not the slick killing machines of the 19th century onwards, when the need for colonizers to bear arms to kill natives was coming to an end.

The underlying problem is poverty, corruption and desperation. About 1.6 million people use emergency shelters each year in the US, and 500,000 are permanently homeless. Almost half are working but don't earn enough to pay for a roof over their heads. These social statistics show how dysfunctional American society is.

3) Who benefits more from trading weapons and sees mass killing as serving their interests?

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The capitalist system does not pass judgment on the morality of what is produced and who can buy goods. Where money is the only deciding factor in social life, making profit from guns is no different than, say baking bread.

There is no conspiracy to promote massacres, at least in this case or the case of Martin in Orlando, though US government plots to kill 'enemies' abound. When a society is so sick, it is not necessary to perpetrate violence as part of a conspiracy. It is merely a symptom of the pact with the devil.

Nonetheless, Florida has become a kind of lightning rod for US imperialism. Drone bombings are regulated killing thousands (80% 'collateral damage') far from the US. They are increasingly being fought from computer control panels in such unassuming suburban locations as MacDill Air Force Base Florida, home of the US Central Command, rather than by ground troops in the Middle East's hostile deserts and mountains. Every day, massive military jets take off from MacDill across the Pacific to threaten North Korea.

This puts Florida at ground zero for the violence perpetrated around the world to shore up US imperialism. That this black cloud looms over what was once a paradise, now home to a false Disney paradise, and can incite local massacres by alienated youth, is a fitting reflexion of what other youth are forced to do to defend the empire, only to return and find they are abandoned. 60,000 veterans live on the streets in the world's wealthiest nation. It is a kind of divine retribution.

4) Some experts suggest that racists have grown in power after Trump took office. How do you assess this belief?

Trump's victory was due to a disgust with traditional politics, which is ruled by corporations, backed by powerful lobbies, leaving no room for genuine democracy. Of course, the Trump 'revolution' was one in name only, as the same forces still rule in the US.

Trump's one genuine difference was to advocate working with Russia. This was fought ruthlessly by the media and political establishment, though developments in Syria and nondevelopments in Ukraine and Crimea show that some of Trump's logic holds, despite the Cold Warriors. A Clinton victory would probably have resulted in near war with Russia.

As for racism, there is definitely increased hostility to immigrants and even visitors, who are now banned and turned back in large numbers, especially Muslims. This is pathetic, as it just creates greater hostility to the US abroad, but it is an easy thing for otherwise rudderless politicians to do without facing the underlying problems.

That would require a brave and principled leadership. The only hope is for Americans to rely on their grassroots organizations to push for change, and work to promote sanity at least in the Democratic party.