

Book Challenges International Claim

## Does Gun Control Work in Japan and England? Would It Work in U.S.?

A new Cato book tests the seductive argument that since countries with strict gun control have less gun crime, the United States would have less crime if it had stronger gun control. *The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy: Should America Adopt the Gun Controls of Other Democracies?* by Denver attorney David B. Kopel offers a thorough investigation of both the gun laws and the cultures of Japan, Canada, Great Britain, and other democracies. He concludes that the lower crime rates

of those countries reflect their less violent cultures far more than their strict gun laws.

Kopel finds that gun control in other countries is often unrelated to crime. The British Commonwealth enacted gun laws in the 1919–20 panic over the “foreign-born anarchists” who were trying to lead a labor revolution. Most of the nations that have strict gun control also have much more powerful—albeit often benign—governments and much less respect for civil liberties than we do in the United States. In any case, Kopel finds that the key explanation of a nation’s crime rate is the self-control of its citizens.

Kopel offers the most comprehensive analysis ever published in the United States of the gun control laws of several foreign countries. He also explains America’s unique gun culture in the context of the American traditions of civil liberties and individualism.

*The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy*, published by the Cato Institute and Prometheus Books, is available from Cato for \$28.95. ■



David B. Kopel

## Book Calls for Health Care Reform

Decades of government intervention in the medical marketplace have brought us to the current crisis in medical care, and deregulation will lead us out. So concludes Terree P. Wasley in the forthcoming Cato Institute book



Terree P. Wasley

*What Has Government Done to Our Health Care?* In this concise and readable book, Wasley shows how the problems in our current system stem directly from a long history of government meddling. From the licensing of doctors, to state accreditation of medical schools, to restrictions on the building of hospitals, government has systematically limited the supply of medical care and stifled innovation.

Moreover, through the tax laws, regulation of the insurance industry, and Medicare and Medicaid, the federal and state governments have overstimulated demand for medical services by distorting the prices of those services. When government constricts supply and stimulates demand, Wasley writes, the result is what we have in the medical care industry today: skyrocketing prices, which take their greatest toll on the poor and the uninsured.

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Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) discusses America’s role in the post–Cold War world at Cato’s March 30 conference, “The New World Order and Its Alternatives.”

they believe that in the post–Cold War era economic influence will be more important than military power.

In the final panel, “Alternative Security Strategies,” two scholars advocated two different types of an activist foreign policy. Jenonne Walker of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace called for a system of collective security under which the United States would share power and nations would give up some sovereignty. Owen Harries, editor of *National Interest*, said that although the end of the Cold War means that the United States can substantially reduce its foreign military involvement, it still has a world role—containing the military power of Germany and Japan, for example.

Doug Bandow, Cato senior fellow, criticized collective security through either the United Nations or regional alliances. He said that the United Nations cannot be trusted with military force and that the interests of the United States would not always coincide with those of its putative allies. Eric Nordlinger of Brown University said that “isolationism” would bring maximum benefits both because the United States is largely immune from foreign threats and because that policy would avoid dangerous provocations.

Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa), in his luncheon address, said that while the United States should maintain its leadership in the world, it could not be a global policeman. ■