

Civil Disorder During Argentina's Economic Collapse in 2001

By Anonymous

Editor's note: The amazing and frightening true story below was posted anonymously on the Peak Oil Website, www.peakoil.com, in 2005 as part of a discussion thread on just how fast civil order can evaporate during times of unusual stress. In this case, it takes place in Argentina and was due to a sudden and devastating national financial disaster that took place in 2001 within one of South America's leading nations. I found this story compelling because it shows clearly how thin the line is between civil order and chaos. The lessons learned from this man's experience may well be useful for people interested in adequately preparing for the coming influenza pandemic during which similar conditions are likely to prevail if the emergency is as severe as I think it will be. The editing of this remarkable document has been limited to bringing it up to Standard English usage without and change in the author's original content.

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Part 1: The Story Begins

My brother visited Argentina a few weeks ago. He's been living in Spain for a few years now. Within the first week, he got sick, some kind of strong flu, even though the climate isn't that cold and he took care of himself. Without a doubt he got sick because there are lots of new viruses in my country that aren't found in 1st world countries. The misery and famine lead us to a situation where, even though you have food, shelter and health care, most others don't, and therefore they get sick and spread the diseases all over the region.

What got me started on this post to the Peak Oil Discussion Forum is the fact that I actually saw this coming, and posted on the subject here at Frugal's, months before the new viruses spread over the country and the news started talking about this new, health emergency, which proves that talking, thinking and sharing ideas with like minded people (you guys), does help to see things coming and prepare for them with enough time. So I started thinking about several issues, what I learned (either the hard way or thanks to this forum) after all these years of living in a collapsed country (Argentina) that is trying to get out from under an economical disaster and everything that comes along with it.

Though my English is limited, I hope I'm able to transmit the main ideas and concepts, giving you a better image of what you may have to deal with some day, if the economy collapses in your country.

Here is what I have so far:

Urban Or Country?

Someone once asked me how did those that live in the country fare; were they were better off than city dwellers? As always there are no simple answers. I wish I could say country good, city bad, but I can't, because if I have to be completely honest, and I intend to be so, there are some issues that have to be analyzed, especially security. Of course those that live in the country and have some land and animals were better prepared food-wise. No need to have several acres full of crops. A few fruit trees, some animals, such as chickens, cows and rabbits, and a small orchard was enough to be light years ahead of those in the cities. Chickens, eggs and rabbits would provide the proteins, a cow or two for milk and cheese, some vegetables and fruit plants covered the vegetable diet, and some eggs or a rabbit could be traded for flower to make bread and pasta or sugar and salt.

Of course that there are exceptions, for example, some provinces up in northern Argentina have a desert climate, and it almost never rains. It is almost impossible to live off the land, and animals require food and water you have to buy. Those guys had it bad, no wonder the northern provinces suffered the most in my country during the emergency. Those that live in cities, well they have to manage as well as they can since food prices went up about 200% even 300%. People would cut expenses wherever they could so they could buy food. Some ate whatever they could, they hunted birds or ate street dogs and cats, and others starved.

When it comes to food, cities suck in a crisis. It is usually the lack of food or the impossibility to acquire it that starts the rioting and looting when TSHTF (the shit hits the fan). When it comes to security things get even more complicated. Forget about shooting those that mean you harm from 300 yards away with your MBR rifle. Leave that notion to armchair commandos and 12-year-old kids that pretend to be grown ups on the Internet.

Here are some facts that came as hard learned lessons. The people that want to harm or steal from you don't come with a pirate flag waving over their heads. Neither do they start shooting at you 200 yards away. They won't come riding loud bikes or dressed with their orange convict "just escaped from prison jump suits" on so that you can identify them the better. Nor do they all wear chains around their necks and leather jackets. The most common presentation of the bandit that robbed me was of a normal looking person; some even dressed better than we did. Honestly, there were exceptions, but don't expect them to dress like in the movies.

A man with a wife and two or three kids can't set up a watch. I don't care if you are a Navy SEAL, SWAT team member or John Freaking Rambo, no 6th sense is going to tell you that there is a guy pointing a gun at your back when you are trying to fix the

water pump that just broke, or carrying a big heavy bag of dried beans you bought that morning.

The best intruder alarm anyone can have on the farm are dogs. But dogs can get killed and poisoned. A friend of mine had all four of his dogs poisoned one night; they all died. After all these years I learned that even though a person that lives out in the country is safer when it comes to small time robberies, that same person is more exposed to extremely violent home robberies. Criminals know that they are isolated and take advantage of this. When they assault a country home or farm, they will usually stay there for hours or days torturing the owners. There are many tails of women and children being raped, people tied to the beds and tortured with electricity, beaten and even burned with acetylene torches.

Big cities aren't much safer for the survivalist that decides to stay in the city. He will have to face express kidnappings, robberies, and pretty much risking getting shot for what's in his pockets or even his clothes.

So, where to go? The concrete jungle is dangerous and so is living away from it all, on your own. The solution is to stay away from the cities but in groups, either by living in a small town-community or sub division, or if you have friends or family that think as you do, form your own small community. Some may think that having neighbors within "shouting" distance means losing your privacy and freedom, but it's a price that you have to pay if you want to have someone to help you if you ever need it. To those that believe that they will never need help from anyone because they will always have their rifle at hand, checking the horizon with their scope every five minutes and a first aid kit on their back packs at all times.... Grow up.

Utility Services

Whatever sort of scenario you are dealing with, services are more

than likely to either suffer in quality or disappear all together. Think ahead of time, analyze possible TSHTF scenarios and which service should be affected by it in your area. Think about the most likely scenario but also think outside the box. What's more likely? A tornado? But a terrorist attack isn't as crazy as you thought it would be a few years ago, is it? Also analyze the consequences of those services going down. If there is no electric power then you need to do something about all that meat you have in the fridge, you can dry it or can it. Think about the supplies you would need for these tasks before you actually need them. You have a complete guide on how to prepare the meat on your computer... how will you get to it if there is no power? Print out everything that you consider important and keep it in a safe place.

Water

No one can last too long without water. The urban survivalist may find that the water is of poor quality, in which case he can make good use of a water filter, or he may be faced with the complete lack of water. When this happens, a large city where millions live will run out of bottled water within minutes. In my case, the tap water wasn't very good even before the crisis. There are black little particles and some other stuff that looks like dead algae in the tap water. The taste isn't that bad. Not good but I know that there are parts of the country where it is much worse. To be honest, a high percentage of the country has no potable water at all. If you can build a well, do so; set it as your top of the list priority as a survivalist.

Water comes before firearms, medicines and even food. Save as much water as you can. Use plastic bottles, refill soda bottles and place them in a cool place, preferably inside a black garbage bag to protect it from sunlight. The water will pick some plastic taste after a few months, but water that tastes a little like plastic is far way better than no water at all. Whatever the kind of TSHTF scenario you are dealing with, water will suffer. In my case the

economical crash created problems with the water company. They responded to dramatic increased costs for overseas chemicals they required by reducing their maintenance schedule and the use of chemicals used to purify the water. The water quality suffered.

This also applies to floods or chemical or biological attacks. Water requires delicate care and it will suffer when TSHTF in one-way or another. In this case, when you still have tap water, a quality filter is in order, as well as a pump if you can have one. A manual pump would be ideal if you have a well. You will need at least one gallon of potable water per day for each member of your family. Try to have at least two-four weeks worth of water with a one-month supply being preferable.

Electric Power

I spent WAY too much time without power for my own taste. Power has always been a problem in my country, even before the 2001 crisis. The real problem starts when you spend more than just a few hours without light. Just after the TSHTF in 2001 half the country went without power for 3 days. Buenos Aires was one big dark grave. People got caught on elevators, food rotted, hospitals had only a few hours worth of fuel for their generators and ran out of power. Without power, days get to be a lot shorter. Once the sun sets there is not much you can do. I read under candlelight or used a flashlight. It didn't take long before my head started to hurt. You can work around the house a little bit but only as long as you don't need power tools.

Crime also increases once the lights go out, so whenever you have to go somewhere in a blackout, carry a flashlight on one hand and a handgun on the other. Being in a city alone without light turned out to be depressing after a while. I spent my share of nights alone, listening to the radio, eating canned food and cleaning my guns using my LED headlamp. Then I got married, had a son, and found out that when you have loved ones around, blackouts are not

as bad. The point is that family helps boost morale in these situations.

A note on flashlights; have two or three LED headlamps. They are not expensive and are worth their weight in gold. A powerful flashlight is necessary, something like a big Maglite or better yet a SureFire, especially when you have to check your property for intruders. But for more mundane stuff like preparing food, going to the toilet or doing stuff around the house, the LED headlamp is priceless. Try washing the dishes on the dark while holding a 60-lumen flashlight on one hand and you'll know what I mean. LEDs also have the advantage of being very energy efficient. Their batteries will last for almost an entire week of continuous use and the LED light bulb lasts forever.

Rechargeable batteries are a must as is a high quality solar powered battery charger or else you'll end up broke if lights go out often. Have a healthy amount of spare quality batteries and try to standardize as much as you can. I have 12 Samsung NiMH (Nickel Metal Hydride) 2500mAh AA and 8 AAA 800mAh for the headlamps. I use D cell plastic adaptors in order to use AA batteries on my 3 D cell Maglite. This turned out to work quite well, better than I expected. I also keep about 2 or 3 packs of regular, Duracell batteries just in case. These are supposed to expire around 2012, so I can forget about them until I need them.

Rechargeable NiMH batteries have the disadvantage of losing power after a period of time, so keep regular batteries as well and check the rechargeable ones every once in a while.

After all these years of problems with power, what two items I would love to have? A generator is the most obvious. I carried my fridge food to my parent's house way to many times on the past. Too bad I can't afford one right now. A battery charger that has both solar panel and a small crank would be great. They are not

available here. I saw that they are relatively inexpensive in USA. Do yourself a favor and get one or two of these. Even if they don't charge as well as regular ones, I'm sure it will put out enough power to charge batteries for LED lamps at least.

Natural and LP Gas

NG and LP decreased in quantity and quality during the crisis. Try to have an electric oven in case you have to do without it. If both electricity and gas go down, one of those camping stoves can work as well, if you keep a good supply of gas cans. The ones that work with liquid fuel seem to be better in the long run, since they can use different types of fuel. You can only store a limited amount of compressed gas and once you ran out of it, you are on your own if stores are closed or they sold them out. Anyway, a city that goes without gas and light for more than two weeks is a death trap, get out of there before it's too late.

A Different Mentality

I was watching the People & Art channel with my wife the other night. It was a show where they film a couple for a given period of time and some people vote on who is the one with the worst habits; the one they find more annoying. We were in our bed, and this is when I usually fall asleep but since the guy was a firearms police instructor I was interested and managed to stay awake. At one point the guy's wife said that she found it annoying that her husband spent 500 dollars a month on beauty products for himself. 500 USD on facial cream, special shampoo and conditioner, as well as having his nails polished! If you are that guy and happen to be reading this, or if you know him, I'm sorry, but what an idiot!!

“500 USD, that's a small generator or a gun and a few boxes of ammo” I told my wife. “That's two months worth of food,” she

said. We were thinking of a practical use for that money, the money this guy was practically throwing away.

Once the TSHTF, money is no longer measured in money, but you start seeing it as the necessary goods it can buy. Stuff like food, medicine, gas, or the private medical service bill. To me, spending 500 dollars on beauty products, and to make it worse, on a guy? That's simply not acceptable. The way I see it, someone with that mentality can't survive a week without a credit card, no use in even considering a TSHTF scenario. And this guy is a firearms instructor?... probably the kind of guy that will say that a handgun is only used to fight his way to his rifle... and his facial night cream...

Once you experience the lack of stuff you took for granted, like food, medicines, your set of priorities change all of a sudden. For example, I had two wisdom teeth removed last year. On both occasions I was prescribed antibiotics and strong Ibuprofen for the pain. I took the antibiotics (though I did buy two boxes with the same recipe just to keep one box just in case) but I didn't use the Ibuprofen, I added it to my stockpile of medicines. Why, because medicines are not always available and I'm not sure if they will be available in the future. Sure, it hurt like hell, but pain alone isn't going to kill you, so I sucked it up. Good for building up character if you ask me.

Make sacrifices so as to ensure a better future, that's the mentality you should have if you want to be prepared. There's stuff that is "nice to have" that has to be sacrificed to get the indispensable stuff. There's stuff that is not "basic need stuff" but it's also important in one-way or another. My wife goes to the hairdresser once every month or two. It's not life or death, but it does make her feel better and it boosts her morale.

I buy a game for the Xbox or a movie to watch with my wife every

once in awhile, just to relax. Seven to 10 dollars a month are not going to burn a hole in my pocket. The survivalist should avoid addictions such as alcohol, drugs or even cigarettes. They are bad for your health, cost a lot of money that could be much better spent, and create an addiction to something that may not be available in the future. Who will have to tolerate your grouchy mood when your brand of smokes is no longer imported after TSHTF?

Part II: Gray/Black Market

Once the SHTF the black/gray market will take no time to appear all around you. In my country, gray markets were even accepted in the end. At first it was all about trading skills or craft products for food. Districts and towns would form their own barter markets, and created their own tickets, similar to money, that was used to trade. This didn't last long. Those tickets were easy to make on your home computer, there was no control and eventually people went back to paper money. These markets were usually placed in warehouses or empty land, and were managed by some wise guy and a few thugs or hired security.

Anyone can go rent a kiosk inside these markets for about 50-100 pesos (about 20-30 dollars) a day and sell his goods and services. Peace within these markets is usually respected... lets just say that these managers don't call the police if someone tries anything funny, like stealing, fighting or taking advantage of women. That's not good for their business and anyone that tries to mess with their business finds out how much pain the human body can actually experience or gets a free ticket to meet the Lord. Sometimes even uniformed cops manage security on these markets, for a small fee of course. As always, you still have to be careful. They may still try to pick your pockets or even attack you once you leave the market.

Once you leave the market, you are on your own, as always. These markets evolved and now a lot of different products are available. Today I visited my local market, a warehouse that is fairly well set up and cleanly managed. They had problems for selling stolen merchandise and fake brand name clothes a few days ago. What can be found at local markets? Mostly food and clothing but some have more variety. Others have cheese, canned food, spices, honey, eggs, fruits, vegetables, beer, wine and cured meat are generally available, same as bakery products and pasta. These are less expensive than those found at supermarkets. Fresh fish is sometimes available but not always, people don't trust many products that need refrigeration, and they get those at supermarkets instead.

Clothes are also popular and you can find copies of brand name clothes, imitations, or even original stolen new clothes, the same goes for shoes and sneakers. Children clothes, underwear, socks, sheets and towels are all very popular. Some sell toys, but they are always made in China and mostly of poor quality though there are some few exceptions. Others sell tools again mostly poor quality items from China. Some offer their services and repair stuff or offer work as handyman. You would be amazed of the junk that these guys manage to fix: TVs, CD players, Power tools, etc. They even manage to solder the small integrated circuits boards sometimes. Give one of these guys a screwdriver and a bar of chocolate and he will fix a nuclear submarine.

After food and clothes, the 3rd most popular item has to be CDs and DVDs, movies, music, play station 2 and XBox games, programs, it all ends up there just one or two days after the official release in USA. Seems that they have a guy hidden under Bill Gate's desk or something. Anyway, almost everything can be found there, and if you want, you can ask around, talk to the right guy and buy illegal stuff like drugs or black market guns and

ammo. The quality of the drugs is questionable, of course, and a lot of addicts die from the mixtures these guys sell.

Guns are mostly FM High Powers, Surplus 1911 Colt .45s, Sistemas, and old Colt Detective revolvers, mainly the 38 Special that found their way from police and military armories into the black market. Their condition isn't very good but if you have money you'll be amazed of what you can end up with. Everything that is used by the military and police, including SMGs (submachine gun), Browning 50 BMG Machine guns, and even fragmentation grenades, are available in the black market, if the customer has the amount of money and a little patience, of course. The big guns may take a while, but the handguns and grenades are readily available.

Gold!!

Someone hit me in the head please because I messed up about the gold issue. Everyone wants to buy gold! "I buy gold. Pay cash" signs are everywhere, even on TV! I can't believe I'm that silly! I just didn't relate it to what I read here because they deal with junk gold, like jewelry, either stolen or sold because they needed the money, not the gold coins that you guys talk about. No one pays the true value of the stuff, so big WARNING! Sign on people that are buying gold coins. Since it is impossible to determine the true mineral percentage of gold, small shops and dealers will pay for it as regular jewelry gold.

What I would do if I were you besides gold coins is buying a lot of small gold rings and other jewelry. They should be less expensive than gold coins, and if the SHTF bad, you'll not be losing money by selling premium quality gold coins for the price of junk gold. If I could travel back in time, I'd buy a small bag worth of gold rings. Small time thieves will snatch gold chains right off your neck and sell them at these small dealers found everywhere. This is VERY common at train stations, subways and other crowded

areas. So, my advice, if you are preparing for a small economical crisis, gold coins make sense. You will keep the value of the stuff and be able to sell it for its actual cost to gold dealers or maybe other survivalists that know the true value of the item.

In my case, gold coins would have been an excellent investment, saving me from losing money when the local economy crashed. Even though things are bad, I can go to a bank down town and get paid for what a gold or silver coin is truly worth. But where I live, the local smalltime dealers will only pay you the value of junk gold, no matter what kind of gold you have. So, I'd have to say that if TSHTF bad, gold jewelry is a better trade item than gold coins. Forgive me for not talking about this before, but I didn't realize this until today, when I visited my local market warehouse and saw a "Buy Gold" sign.

Part III: Guns, Ammo And Other Gear

After TSHTF in 2001, only the most narrow minded, brain washed, butterfly IQ level idiots believed that the police would protect them from the crime wave that followed the collapse of our economy. A lot of people that could have been considered antigun before, ran to the gun shops, seeking advise on how to defend themselves and their families. They would buy a 38 revolver, a box of ammo, and leave it in the closet, probably believing that it would magically protect them from intruders.

Oh, maybe you don't think that firearms are really necessary or your beliefs do not allow you to buy a tool designed to kill people. So you probably ask yourself, is a gun really necessary when TSHTF? Will it truly make a difference? Having gone through a SHTF scenario myself, total economical collapse in the year 2001, and still dealing with the consequences, 5 years later, I feel I can answer that question. YES, you need a gun, pepper spray, a machete, a battle-axe, and a club with a rusty nail sticking out of it, or whatever weapons you can get hold of.

A LOT has been written on survival weapons. Everyone that is into armed survival has his or her own idea of the ideal gun battery. Some more oriented to a hunting point of view, others only as self defense means and others consider a little of both, and look for general purpose weapons. Talking about guns, there is one special subject I want to rectify, and it's the point on what's the primary weapon for the survivalist, specially a urban survivalist that has to function in a society, yes, even after the SHTF.

The primary defensive weapon for the survivalist is his HANDGUN. It's the weapon that stays with him when he is doing his business around town of working on the field. The survivalist IS NOT a soldier, even though you are a soldier or you once were the meanest mother on the battle field, your home town is not a battlefield and it wont be, even if the SHTF. A LOT of water has to go under the bridge until the situation gets to a point where you can calmly walk down the street with a rifle on your shoulder. People, if you are interested in real world SHTF situation, and you want to prepare for the real deal, then understand that isn't going to be black or white. You wake up one day and listen on the radio that the economy collapsed and that the stock market closed indefinitely. What do you do? You still have to go to the office/work/whatever. Kiss the wife good bye and walk to the office with your AR across your back, or across your chest, Israeli style, ready to shoot? You wont get far. Someone will shoot you or throw you in jail, or in a mental institution.

What I'm trying to explain, is that its ok to prepare for China invading you country, Germans and UN or Martians. That is the extreme, less likely worst-case scenario. There is an infinity spectrum of gray between the black and white. White being your average normal day and black being total TEOTWAWKI with lizard men invading the planet. Rifles do have a place in the survivalist's arsenal, and a very important one. But you have to

understand that 90% of the time, the handgun will be the weapon you have available when you need one. You can't compare it to a trooper in Iraq that has his weapon with him at all times. I ask you how many soldiers do you know that keep wearing cammo and totting their M4s around town when they return home? What works for war does not work for the survivalist, especially the urban survivalist.

Even if you live in a retreat far from town, you have to work, don't you? Or do you have employees that take care of all your mundane tasks, leaving you all day to keep watch with your rifle ready? A soldier is part of a huge machine; HIS job is to carry that rifle, while others take care of other needs. A survivalist, one that is not part of a large survivalist group, has no one to cover for him. When a new guy looks for advice on what to get for defense, some will recommend a rifle or shotgun as a first defensive weapon. Lets say race riots start in this guy's city. He still has to go to work every day. What is he supposed to do? Shove his pump shotgun in his pocket? A handgun, even though less powerful, can be used for home defense AND go with you wherever you need to go. If the place floods, he can still hop into an evacuation boat without leaving his weapon behind. I'm sure no rescue team will pick you if you are carrying a long arm. They'll ask you to leave it behind for sure.

What if your government, realizing that TSHTF and they have lost control of the events, bans all firearms indefinitely? Don't know about you, but if things are that bad, I'd like to be armed. You can hide a handgun under a jacket. You can't hide a long arm under your clothes. I think it was Clint Smith who said that the handgun is only used to fight his way to his rifle. Man! That sounds "macho". I'd love to see him walking into Wal-Mart with his tactical M4, taking the subway, visiting the doctor or going to the bank. "Over here Mr. Smith, you can hang you M4 right next to my coat" I don't think so. Guys, unless you have your own

shooting school, you do not get to carry your rifle to work. OK, now that I got that out of my chest lets look at some options.

Handguns: Revolver or Pistol?

Pistol; all the way, yes, I saw the video of the guy that accurately emptied his S&W in ½ a second. I also saw the shooting range and the crowd behind him, watching the event. Can he shoot and reload that way if he is in his car, driving with one hand and shooting with the other, while a bunch of scum bags in another car are shooting at him? Hey, maybe he can. I know I can't. Can you? Generally speaking, the revolver is more difficult to master than the pistol. The double action is hard on the hand and it affects speed and accuracy. It can be done, but I found that pistols are easier, as did many shooters.

Also, even though they seem to be simpler, revolvers are not as rugged as service pistols, the mechanisms that cycles the cylinder and cocks the hammer is both complicated and fragile compared to auto pistols. Before anyone starts casting evil voodoo spells at me for insulting their prized S&W or Ruger, I own revolvers and like shooting them, I just don't think they are the best option for self defense, and I see that everyone I talk to in my country who is worried about security as I am also prefer pistols. Quality pistols resist sand, mud and dirt in general better than revolvers, where a small pebble locked in the mechanism may render the revolver inoperable.

I personally had a problem with a new stainless steel Taurus Tracker .357 magnum. After shooting it a couple of times I reloaded it and shot all 7 rounds as fast as I could and when I tried to empty it, I found that the empties were stuck because they expanded because of the heat. I had to wait until the gun cooled a little so I could empty the gun. Stuff like this can get you killed, even more in a 7 round handgun. I once saw a man walk into a gun store wanting to trade his 357-magnum revolver for a 9mm

high capacity pistol. He said he was driving when thugs from another car started shooting at him. He was chased for a few blocks. He said that he pulled his revolver and started shooting at them, and ran out of ammo real fast. He wanted more capacity and fast reloading. I could not agree with him more. Some will consider this “Spray and pray”, thinking that all rounds should hit the target and if some don’t then it means that you need more time at the range. Those same people will tell you that they intend to use bolt action rifles as defensive rifles, making each shot count, without ever missing their target, one shot one kill.

I don’t agree with this. One shot one kill is ok for snipers, but the survivalist should have other alternatives. I don’t see anything wrong with shooting four or five rounds at a chasing car. If those rounds make them think twice about their intentions, they are rounds well spent in my book, even if they don’t kill the attacker. Suppressive fire is possible if you have a high capacity pistol. I would use this tactic if it serves my purposes, or if it buys me time to get out of there. Also keep in mind that criminals are cowards and therefore attack in groups. The survivalist should be able to face more than just one attacker.

Getting into a gunfight with two or three armed men while packing a 6 round revolver is rather hard to deal with. A high capacity pistol can load about 15 or 19 rounds, and that can certainly make a difference in a gunfight where you are outnumbered. A forensic doctor that used to live in my neighborhood got killed last year. He was ambushed when he exited a restaurant by 5 or 6 men. Even though they did kill him he managed to kill 4 of them and severely injure another. He shot regularly and carried a Glock .40. I’m sure he was lucky but I also think that his choice of weapon was also important in the outcome.

If anyone is wondering, people in my country that are serious about self-defense carry Glocks. Those that don’t have the

money for a Glock carry Bersas, FM High Powers or 1911 surplus Colt .45s. At first I wasn't sure about the Bersa, but once I tried them I saw that they are very descent guns. I now own two Bersas and am pleased with they performance. The caliber choice calls for endless debate and it is not my intention here. Lets just say that 9mm, 40 S&W and 45ACP are the obvious choices. The 40 S&W seems to be the most adequate, both in FMJ and HP, while 9mm lacks some stopping power and hollow points should be used if possible. Though the 9mm lacks power compared to the 40 S&W, it is more popular world wide, a factor to consider seriously when choosing a handgun for when TSHTF. Besides, 9mm can also be used in a number of carbines and SMGs, another important fact to be considered. SMGs and carbines chambered for 40 S&W and .45 ACP are also available, but they at not nearly as popular as those chambered for 9mm.

Whatever you choose keep 500 or better yet 1000 rounds of quality ammunition for your handgun at all times. 100 rounds wont last much if the crisis lasts long. Also consider that once the balloon goes up, governments tend to restrict guns and ammo.

Rifles

I previously stated that the urban survivalist would be using his handgun 90% of the time he needs to defend his or her family from attackers. I didn't pull this figure out of thin air; it is quite accurate based on what happens here on daily basis, even a little optimistic. Cold harsh reality has shown us that most attacks occur when entering or exiting your home, when you are more vulnerable. Almost no one is stupid enough to try to enter a barred house with armed occupants. Believe me people, the gene pool will clean itself rather fast once the SHTF. So, is a rifle necessary? Of course it is! There is still that 10%, and that 10% can still ruin your day. And this percentage skyrockets if you intend to use that same rifle for putting meat on the table. If you have to settle with just one rifle, go for a semi auto. Ideally you should have a bolt action one

and a semi auto rifle. A bolt action and a semiautomatic 308 would make a nice combination.

Whatever you choose, try to keep it within military calibers, and military weapons if possible. It may seem that I have something against bolt rifles but I don't. I think they are fantastic weapons, but I think that semi autos are much better fighting weapons. The idea of "picking them out" 300 meters away with your bolt rifle, as they come in a row blowing whistles and firing warning rounds is laughable at best. Bolt rifles do have advantages over semi autos, accuracy not being the most important one. Bolt rifles such as Mausers last forever and are harder than rocks, which is IMPORTANT. They are simple, easy to repair with simple tools that will serve you (within their limitations of course) longer than any other weapon. For example, the coil spring on my Mauser 1891 safety broke into 3 separate parts, after almost 100 years of faithful service. I dug into my toolbox and found a spring left over from a kitchen shelve door. I cut it approximately to the length of the previous spring, replaced it and the rifle was fixed. There are not many weapons that allow this. And it is a very valuable attribute once the SHTF and spare parts are no longer available.

Stick to common calibers like the 223, 7.62x39mm, or 7.62x51 (308). What's better the .223 vs. 308; I'm not going there. If you prefer .223 because it has less recoil, it's lighter, or you favor the AR rifle, go ahead. If you think that .223 is more powerful than 7.62 sign up for Physics I. Just remember what I said before, a survivalist is not a soldier serving in Iraq, and you don't have the entire USMF to back you up. You are on your own. You are not going to pin your attackers down with a questionably effective round and wait until someone hits them with artillery.

About ARs... I wouldn't trust my life to a rifle that has more versions than Rocky sequels... the way I see it, it means that the basic design was the problem and there is no solution. On the AK-

47 ... all has been said. It is the most popular rifle on the planet and not because of politics, but because it works; it also fires an intermediate power, effective round, available worldwide. SKS are also good, but I'd rather have removable magazines.

Again, don't use voodoo on me because I say I wouldn't trust my life to an AR. If you keep your weapon clean, know its limitations and feel comfortable with it, go for it please. A couple of rounds of 223 will kill anyone just as well.

If you want a rifle that can do a little bit of everything relatively well, do yourself a favor and get either a M1A or a FAL in 7.62 (308) with a carbine length barrel. Preferably with a red dot scope and some kind of light mount. Leave full-length barrels to hunters and bench rest shooters. Do your homework on both guns and you'll see what I mean. Choose 308 not because of the added range you can get out of it, but because of its power at all ranges, choose it because it turns cover into concealment. Think about all the possible cover material you can find in a city, like cars, trees, low walls and other structures. The 308 will go right through it, or destroy it after a few rounds. It's a proven cartridge through out the years.

Shotguns

Shotguns are good general-purpose guns. The main advantage I see is the devastating stopping power and the ability to use special ammo, like slugs and less than lethal ammo. I'm not so sure about the role as an "inside house" gun. The muzzle blast is great and quick follow up shots are not easy, especially when adrenalin is pumping through your system or, even worse, when someone is shooting back at you.

Pistol caliber carbines and SMGs

If possible, I'd choose a SMG reduced to semi auto (only if

necessary, of course, full auto selector is better if possible) or other kind of short, small, pistol caliber carbine. The combination of a 9mm handgun and a 9mm carbine or SMG reduced to semi auto or full auto class III has lots of advantages in my book and is a fine combination.

Some think that full auto is a waste of ammo. I don't think so, not if you know how to use your head, and use this feature wisely. If you can get a short barrel and collapsible stock, you'll also have a weapon that can be hidden under a heavy coat. A red dot scope would enhance accuracy a lot. The advantage of having the same ammo for long and small arm is not to be taken lightly. From the logistical, survivalist point of you, this is one big thumbs up! Think about cowboys and Americans that lived in the west, they also knew the value of using the same ammo for rifle and handgun. They had single action handguns and lever action rifles chambered for the same ammo; the modern survivalist can have the same ammo for his auto pistol and his sub-rifle as well.

Some think that a pistol caliber long arm is just one big clumsy pistol or a rifle sized gun that delivers pistol power and accuracy. This is BS. Anyone that ever fired a pistol caliber rifle or SMG knows that they are much more accurate, hitting torso targets at 100 yards is easy, and a little more if you have a red dot scope. Also, SMGs can manage hot ammo specially made for such guns, and is much more powerful than the one for handguns. Even if you use regular handgun ammo, the added barrel length adds a few extra feet per second making it more powerful. Just check the information on body armor. Body armor that is rated to stop 9mm, for example, is not rated to stop the same 9mm ammo out of a SMG or carbine, because the added speed will make that same round penetrate the vest.

Anyway, +P ammo is more than enough power out of a SMG or carbine; you don't have to go looking for special SMG

ammunition. If you can get full auto, that's one nice feature to have but is not worth it if you are on a tight budget. If you can get it, it may come in handy someday. Full auto SMGs are giving police in my country a lot of headaches. A criminal with little or no training can keep 3 or 4 cops armed with pistols and shotguns on their toes, just because of the sheer volume of fire these high capacity 9mms deliver. In a notorious case, a bad guy stood in front of a patrol car full of cops stopped at a red light. He pulled his 9mm SMG out of his coat and emptying it into the police car on full auto. The cops didn't have a chance; he killed them all. The car looked like Swiss cheese with forty 9mm holes all over the vehicle.

Sound Suppressors

All I'm going to say on this subject is have one if you can. That's it. I'll leave the rest of it to your imagination; don't make me say it. Today it may seem like a "nice to have" feature... after the SHTF, it may be an "O God I've got to get a suppressor"! I'd buy a good suppressor before purchasing an ultra high dollar scope like the ACOG. Buy a good quality scope, but don't spend a fortune on it, and use the rest of the money on a suppressor. If you are serious about preparing for TSHTF, you'll thank me one day, just trust me on this one. The 9mm and .45 rounds suppress quite well. Not as well as .22, but there is much more power on the big bore ammo. Combined with a full auto SMG, the possibilities are much greater. Sometimes it's just better to go unnoticed, especially in a SHTF crisis.

Body Armor

Dear God! Buy body armor PLEASE!! It's dirt cheap in USA. Preferably, get the police concealable kind (class II) then upgrade it to class III A military armor. Buy some rifle plates too. Start purchasing body armor when you begin buying your weapons. You'll end up with 2 or 3 sets of armor, which are great to have for

family members and spares. Just so you know, I got so desperate about body armor I ordered it from USA through Internet (bulletproofme.com), I ended up paying a total of nearly 600 USD for body armor that costs 200 USD in USA. Buy it while you still can.

When the SHTF you'll end up wearing it, believe me. I don't wear mine all day long but I do wear it when I have to go some place dangerous, deal with people I don't trust, or when I have to go teach Architecture Representation late at night, and must travel over dangerous road at after midnight.

The End