

Rethinking the Second Amendment

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As we struggle to bring Americans together from across the political spectrum, to form substantial and committed institutions that will support the battle for freedom and equality, the struggle against slavery and corporate governance by the billionaires, the Second Amendment of the Constitution, the right to bear arms, keeps coming up as a point of contention, of division, in our discussions.

Although there are real differences of opinion, some based on profound philosophical divergences, the crux of the issue has been intentionally obscured by the corporate powers who have manipulated the public for their own benefit and who block any serious debate about the nature of this amendment to the Constitution from seeing the light of day.

We are drowned in incomplete arguments on all sides about the Second amendment that mislead us and that confuse us.

On the one hand, we have those (largely, but not exclusively, people we call progressives) who point to the horrific levels of gun violence in the United States, and who compare the number of gun deaths in the United States with those in just about any other country, thus demonstrating that the United States has a run-away problem with guns. They then suggest that this problem originates with the Second Amendment which the conservatives have misinterpreted as giving the citizen a carte blanche to possess weapons and to use them.

This side of the debate advocates strict regulations on the possession of guns as Federal policy as the best way to end this nightmare.

On the other hand, we have those, for the most referred to as conservatives, who hold that citizens have the right to bear arms as guaranteed by the Constitution, and who hold that 1) if firearms are made illegal then only criminals will have firearms; 2) arming of the citizens is necessary to resist the tyranny of the government.

Both sides of this argument have been distorted and misused by powerful corporate interests who control the message that is put out in the media and who create needless conflicts and unnecessary misunderstandings as part of their strategy of confusion.

That is no surprise. The corporate sponsors of these defending the right of the citizens to bear arms and of those calling for its restriction have their own agendas.

Part of that agenda is forcing citizens to support either the Republican Party or the Democratic Party in order to move forward. This intentional misdirection of political power towards the whores of the corporations is a big business in itself. But corporations have other reasons for wanting to create this conflict, and to encourage it, as I will detail below.

Let me also tell you how I feel about the Second Amendment. I felt that the unlimited sales of firearms and the culture of guns had created untold tragedy in the United States and that the mindless loyalty of certain Americans to the broad interpretation of the Second Amendment was responsible for this sad state of affairs. I supported gun control measures and also wanted the end of the glorification of gun culture (which I still do).

The growing institutional and political chaos that I witnessed in the United States over the last twenty years, however, which has taken an ominous turn for the worse over the last two years, led me to reconsider the Second Amendment. I came to realize that the steady state of accountable governance in the United States was far from certain and that the tyranny that the founders of the United States feared is now knocking at the door.

Is necessary to have local militias in place to defend us against a rotten Federal Government possessed by the globalists, the minutemen of our age?

The Federal Government that played a vital role in the fight against slavery under Lincoln, in the fight against fascism under Roosevelt, and in the fight against racial discrimination under Truman and Kennedy has vanished and in its place stands a lumbering monster, supported by multinational investment banks, military contractors, real estate speculators, and energy monopolies, a monster that is leading us to our doom.

There are quite a few good people still left in that Federal Government, but the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and local and state police have been deeply corrupted as the institutions of the United States decayed following the 9.11 incident, COVID19, and other on-going crimes.

Let us read the Second Amendment, and read it carefully. None of those talking heads, branded “progressive” or “conservative,” actually does so.

I am not reading the Second Amendment for you because I assume it is sacred, or because I assume the Constitution is perfect.

Rather, just as was the case in 1860, it is critical in this moment of chaos that we start from our philosophical and moral foundations. The Constitution forms common ground and it defines what is, and what is not, government. Interpreting the Constitution in a manner that addresses the current crisis is the best way to form consensus. It does not mean that we cannot modify the Constitution, or the Second Amendment, in the future.

“A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.”

Like psalms, so much meaning is compressed in this short phrase.

The emphasis of the passage is not on the right of anyone to own any weapon and shoot it off at will for his or her pleasure. The right of the citizen to “keep and bear,” to own and to employ, arms is protected in that it is related to a larger, more critical, project.

The violence porn, gun worship, and the horrific promotion of violence in the media that has encouraged such broad ownership and use of firearms is not a product of the second amendment. It is a byproduct of the military industrial complex and the cult of war promoted in a decadent empire.

The fortunes made by the gun manufactures who sprinkle money on the National Rifle Association to promote a reckless vision of the American dream are the result of the pursuit of profit at the expense of the citizen.

Let us read that text again.

“A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.”

The first part is clearly the primary clause that necessitates the right to keep and bear arms mentioned in the second part.

“A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state” resonates for us in this age of chaos.

There are three elements missing in the United States of America today that are mentioned therein. Let us consider each one.

The first is “a well-regulated militia.”

The current militia, the military, is an unregulated monster that has merged with criminal forces around the world and has devolved into a mercenary power which strives to extract wealth for the rich and powerful through the use of force, and to generate revenue through the sale of weapons, the enforcement of sanctions, and other services for pay.

Such a “militia” is not well regulated; it is suicidal.

The second word is “security.” The current military, industrial, financial, intelligence, medical, trade complex has nothing to do with security for the citizens of our nation. Of course there are groups in the military who are serious about security, who remain loyal to the Constitution and to the people of our nation. But they are not the dominant force.

We need a system for national and regional security that is focused on real security, not threats made up for profit. If we do not have such a system, then the current military is a clear and present danger in that it grants multinational criminal operations access to the full range of weapons, starting with mass psychological manipulation, while the citizens are left unarmed.

The third phrase is “a free state.”

It would be hard to call the current government of the United States, a toy of multinational corporations and billionaires, a “free state.” For that reason alone, addressing the question of who will have the right to bear arms is pressing.

We are looking at a collapsing empire with a military out of control. There is no Republic left—although one could be established again.

To promote guns and the culture of guns for profit, either profits for gun manufacturers or for police and private security corporations, is horrible and must be stopped.

On the other hand, to leave the citizens unarmed if they face a predatory Federal government is also unacceptable.

The stress in the second amendment falls on keeping the military accountable to the people, and not on the sale of weapons to citizens for profit.

Thus, our primary concern must be with getting back to a democratic, participatory, and transparent system for security that includes the citizens and that assures that a tyranny cannot emerge from the military or from the police, one taken over by private interests, one that uses the state's weapons to oppress the citizens of the nation, the citizens with whom sovereignty rests.

The answer is to end the mercenary military.

We should not be so naïve as to think that eternal peace is possible. Militias and police are necessary. But standing armies that are not composed of the citizens doing their service, but of men and women who are paid to fight, forced to fight to survive economically, who report to generals who then report to corporate CEOs, such armies are threat to us all.

We must create an accountable military that is linked to us, the citizens, at the local level. If the government is to exercise deadly force, then citizens must know what those weapons are and how they are used.

If deadly force is used, it should be used by trained citizens who are trusted by their neighbors, and not by strangers who are distant from us.

But what if there is a war? You ask.

First, note that the United States is full of weapons at every level that are held in a non-transparent manner by government agencies whose actions are classified so as to make them unaccountable.

That unaccountable military and police are already at war with us.

The next war may not be like the wars we prepared for. It may be a world war, or a civil war, or something hybrid, a matching of likes with likes around the world.

That could mean that you, the citizen, must be armed and ready to defend yourself.

I think that it was such a crisis that the founding fathers imagined back then. They did not adhere to the cult of guns, the sick culture that surrounds weapons today. But they knew that no political system will be stable forever and it is a mistake to have the state in control of all forms of deadly force.

It is also clear that many of the efforts to promote gun control in recent days are fundamentally different from what came before.

Today much of gun control legislation is not about reducing the deaths from gun violence, but rather about extending the authority of the Federal government to do whatever it pleases to citizens without accountability. I watched, sadly, this shift over the last twenty years.

We need to simultaneously combat the sick culture of guns and to reduce the number of guns on the street while at the same time raising the understanding of weapons on the part of citizens, and creating a military that is participatory and that is run by citizens, one committed to the long-term interests of our nation. We need citizens who can handle weapons and who can participate in the local militia while condemning the cult of guns, while being committed to peace.

There will be no room for military contractors, for investment banks, or for the promoters of the cult of guns in such a vision for our country.

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