

The Dilemma of Gun Ownership in the United States

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Adopted on December 15, 1791, the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution rules that the possession of firearms and ammunition for the purpose of self-defense is legitimate and legal under US law.

This amendment, which was ratified along with the rest of United States Bill of Rights, emphasizes the right of people to keep and bear arms.

According to a 2006 Gallup survey, some 34 percent of the citizens of the United States possess firearms. Thus there seem to be more than 200 million firearms in private hands.

Based on the statistics released by Reuters, from 1993 to 2000, the United States was the leading supplier of conventional arms to the developing world. In 1999, more than 4 million firearms were manufactured in the United States for domestic sale or export. The Reuters' report added that more than 300 US companies produce arms and ammunition annually; a fact that is incredible and mind-boggling.

What drew the attention of the international community to the issue of gun ownership in the United States once again was the heartrending murder of the assistant principal of Millard South High School, Vicki Kaspar, who was mortally shot by Robert Butler, a 17-year-old student of Lincoln (Nebraska) Southwest High School on January 5. The student was earlier suspended by Ms. Kaspar for driving a car across a Millard South athletic field. After killing the assistant principal, Butler committed suicide as he had previously announced.

The death of the 59-year-old Kaspar marked the latest lethal attack by a student on the staff of a high school in the United States a crime, which is seen with increasing regularity in American high schools.

However, the deadliest massacre of this type in the United States took place 4 years ago when Seung-Hui Cho, a South Korean senior-level undergraduate student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, killed 32 people and wounded 25 others in a shooting rampage, which was described by the media as the bloodiest mass murder of university students and professors in US history.

Over the past ten years, more than 30 school shootings have taken place in the United States, claiming the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians, including students, professors and academic staff, alike.

These incidents, which have caused widespread controversy and fear throughout the United States, bring to light the subtlety and sensitivity of the issue of gun ownership in this North American country.

The government of the United States allows its citizens to carry firearms to show them its attention to their civil liberties and social freedoms. But let's contemplate for a moment: is carrying firearms for the purpose of self-defense essentially a liberalistic gesture? Does the US corporate government prevent the commitment of organized crime and infringement of human rights by allowing its citizens to carry ammunition and firearms?

It's worth mentioning that, according to the Disaster Center statistics, 15,241 cases of murder, 408,217 cases of robbery, 806,843 cases of assault and 2,196,971 cases of burglary took place in the United States in 2009.

Who can assert that the freedom of gun ownership guarantees the safety of citizens while everybody is unrestrictedly free to carry out criminal action by resorting to the gun ownership law?

It's better to say that the freedom of gun ownership results in chaos, anarchy and confusion rather than securing the safety of the citizens and safeguarding their civil liberties.

When a 17-year-old student is able to carry a handgun to his former school and kill a principal in broad daylight, then it would be impossible for the government of the United States to claim that it endows its citizens with freedoms, which cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

It's basically apparent and obvious that as far as one's freedom of action violates the freedom of other people, the result would be disorder and turmoil. Freedom is not an absolute concept and those who misuse this value for their own ends are doomed to failure.

US statesmen and politicians usually boast about giving freedoms to their people that are universally matchless and unparalleled; however, these freedoms are simply instruments used to paint the United States in a favorable light rather than real freedoms, per se. They're mere propaganda to brainwash other people and convince them that the United States is, indeed, a "beacon of freedom."

However, the United States' history of censorship, violation of the rights of ethnic minorities, suppression of opposition media and incarceration of political dissidents paint a different picture. Thus, American politicians and statesmen need to come down from their ivory towers and face ground realities. They cannot demonstrate that they've created a free society for their citizens by allowing them to carry firearms and ammunition, when other factors indicate something entirely different. What they are actually doing is harming their citizens and endangering their lives — nothing more.

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