

## The second amendment of the US Constitution

Henry Kaminer. June 25, 2022

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

What does this mean? Not, what does this mean to you today, but what did this mean to the men who drafted these words and who voted to adopt this amendment. The thinking, the reasoning, and the wording were all Carefully thought out by the men who wrote and ratified the constitution. The meaning has been grossly distorted by various fanatics to suit their own desires.

The Supreme Court in its most recent interpretation has totally ignored the first clause. The purpose of the Second amendment amendment is to ensure that the newly independent nation would be able to defend itself from External enemy nations. The 13 colonies were loosely united by the articles of confederation and were fighting against the army of great Britain. They had no organized means of raising money and no organized means of raising a national army. Our founding fathers did not imagine that we would have a large standing army. The term militia meant an organized force of trained soldiers available on short notice to respond to an attack on the nation or on some part of it

Remember that in 1776 the colonies were over 150 years old. There were large cities, harbors, factories, small towns, and many small farms. Just like similar cities and towns in England, the people had no weapons. This is because there was no use for them, no need for them. Pistols especially were and very expensive. They were used by the rich upper class in duels, which was against the law. At the edge of the colonies, at the frontier, the settlers had muskets or rifles that were used to hunt game for food and to repel attacks by Native Americans. The vast majority of the Americans had no firearms and no need for firearms. The framers of the constitution contemplated a Society in which the government could call up eligible men who would be available as an armed force. This is much like the army reserves or the National Guard. Our original constitution did not specify any ways to fund a standing army. It was not clear how the new government would raise money for its ordinary peacetime expenses. This was gradually worked out over the succeeding years.

The second amendment describes a situation similar to modern day Switzerland or Israel. In these countries, the standing army is a small but all able-bodied men are in the reserves. That you have at home a personal weapon, a military rifle kept ready for national emergency.

The right of the people to keep and bear arms means that the citizen can keep a weapon ready for service and can

learn to use it. It does not mean the right to Carry it, loaded, into every public place. It does not mean the right to conceal a small but deadly pistol on one person at all and any time.

When did all this excitement about personal weapons erupt on the public scene? Very recently, in the 1960s. At this time there was growing awareness of very harsh discrimination against African-Americans, especially in the deep South where lynchings were not unusual. The black power movement arose on the west coast and much of white America was shocked by the Appearance of firearms in the hands of the black power movement. Actually the firearm to appeared mainly in the speeches of the movement. Nevertheless, there was a reaction on the part of many People. A long-standing organization devoted to encouraging marksmanship and gun safety, the NRA, switched abruptly to encouraging gun ownership for personal protection. The rest is history.

There was never a great push for a gun ownership in the United States. We do have a national fantasy that we come from a race of independent cowboys and frontiersman who defended themselves with pistols against evil doors and vicious Native Americans. This fantasy is based on total nonsense. The scenes of the shoot out at noon time are the stuff of movies, Not of historical fact.

When United States found itself on the brink of war, in 1917, we had a very small standing Army and we had to create one in a hurry. We drafted many young men, recent immigrants and several Americans, and very few had any experience with firearms. After the war, the government encouraged the National rifle association to begin an educational program to teach young men about rifles... Not about pistols and not about machine guns. They stress safety precautions and the proper way to aim and shoot rifles. The government thought this would be helpful in case of any future need to raise an army.

I remember, as a young boy, reading booklets from the NRA out of curiosity about rifles and such. It was very low-key with No appeals to God given rights to carry Loaded pistols everywhere. The abrupt shift came in the 1960s and was linked to a great surge in profits for the American firearms industry, particularly pistols that could be carried on the person.

If we listen carefully to the demands of the people who want no impediment to their possession of weapons, we see a major shift in emphasis. Whereas originally the second amendment was put in place to ensure the Redding availability of an armed force to protect The nation as a whole, the emphasis now is on Army the individual for protection against a government which is perceived as oppressive and dangerous. There is also the implication that we cannot depend on our social

institutions such as the police. We each need to defend ourselves against lethal attack at all times. This is a bizarre and perverse reversal of the whole concept of the role of firearms in a civilized society.

It is amazing to me that America is so much out of line with the rest of the civilized world. I think the civilized world is equally amazed and dismayed.