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The Growing Triumph of the Second Amendment

by James Ostrowski

Something happened in Buffalo recently that contradicts the propaganda of those who support “gun control” — the control of law-abiding people who wish to own a gun for protection against the assorted nefarious elements in this world. A citizen actually used a gun, a shotgun, to defend his home and his family against armed intruders. No, his gun was not taken from him and used against him. No, his gun was not stolen. No, he did not have time to wait for the police, though they did arrive moments later. Yes, he was able to get to his gun in time. Yes, he did point and aim and hit the evil target.

According to the propaganda, people rarely if ever use guns in self-defense.

Gun control is one of those notions that seem to make sense on the surface — that reasonable people are initially inclined to accept — that seem to offer an easy solution to a difficult problem. That is the problem with gun control. It is wishful thinking: simplistic, naive, even juvenile. It is typical liberal thinking: social problems can be solved by putting words on paper in state and federal statute books.

No word on paper ever changed human nature. There are bad people out there who will prey on good people. They will not be deterred by words on paper in any state capital or in Washington, D.C.

Good people, however, wishing to obey the law, will be deterred. That is why muggers, rapists, and murderers know that in gun-control havens such as New York City and Washington, D.C., citizens are virtually helpless against them.

Alas, the powerful gun-control lobby is losing its war. The general public always believed what the Constitution said, that “the right of the people to bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” The liberal legal establishment said the opposite: the right of the people to bear arms actually means that the people do not have the right to bear arms. It turns out the people were right. An ever-increasing number of judges and legal scholars, even liberals, now acknowledge what should have been obvious. Americans have an individual right to bear arms. Among these liberals are Harvard law professors Alan Dershowitz and Laurence Tribe and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which stated in *U.S. v. Emerson* (2001): “It appears clear that ‘the people,’ as used in the Constitution, including the Second Amendment, refers to individual Americans.”

A major book highly touted by such gun controllers as Gary Wills, *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture*, by Emory University professor Michael A. Bellesiles, has been

thoroughly discredited as based on shoddy scholarship, and the author has been forced to resign his professorship.

Bellesiles tried to contest conventional wisdom and argue that in colonial times Americans had few guns and many did not work. He didn't seem to be aware that the American Revolution was sparked by an attempt by British gun controllers to seize American guns at Concord. At Lexington and Concord, these allegedly poorly armed Americans somehow managed to inflict 273 casualties on the best-trained army on earth, the Redcoats.

A good antidote to Bellesiles's book is *Guns and Violence*, by Bentley College history professor Joyce Lee Malcolm, published this year by Harvard University Press. Malcolm argues that in England the rate of violent crime had been declining for centuries as more guns became available, and only started to increase with the passage of stricter gun control laws.

Finally, we found out on September 11, 2001, that the entire, \$400 billion security apparatus of the federal government, could not protect us from catastrophic terrorism, but a few handguns in the cockpits, long discouraged by federal policy, might have saved the day.

The primary purpose of the Second Amendment is to provide the citizenry with the means for resisting governmental tyranny. In the 20th century, many governments around the world murdered millions of their own unarmed or disarmed citizens. This occurred in the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, Communist China, Nationalist China, and elsewhere. It did not happen, and could not happen, here, where 70 million Americans own firearms.

Fortunately, the Second Amendment, the amendment that provides Americans with the means to protect all the others, is here to stay.

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