Gun Control Quiz:

What's your score?

Gun control is a very hot topic at present, leading to irrational exchanges in which neither side of the argument is listened to by the other side and in which sometimes the desire to use a gun on one's adversary is provoked. [That was a joke.] Part of the cause of this vehement disagreement is the difficulty in interpreting the meaning of the United States Constitution's 2nd amendment. Rather than try to parse that debate I choose instead to accept the status quo regarding the interpretation of the second amendment by the Supreme Court in recent years and focus instead on weapons in general as they have evolved through military use over the many years since the second amendment was first contemplated (1791). The quiz below is about weapon control rather than merely gun control. Hopefully this broadening of the context will illuminate the obvious.

I pose the quiz questions in the form: *do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* X? X could be gun or something else.

1] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* atomic bombs?

2] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* surface to air anti-aircraft missiles?

3] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* remotely operated missile loaded drones?

4] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* nuclear submarines armed with nuclear warhead missiles?

5] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* Howitzers?

6] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* bazookas?

7] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* Claymore mines?

8] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* hand grenades?

9] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* automatic assault rifles?

10] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* semi-automatic assault rifles?

11] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* hollow-point bullets?

12] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* automatic handguns?

13] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* semi-automatic handguns?

14] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* small bore single, or a few, shot rifles?

15] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* single, or a few, shot handguns?

16] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* archery equipment (long bows, crossbows, etc.)?

17] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* slingshots (surgical tubing style)?

18] *Do you think individual citizens have a right to own and use* peashooters?

Perhaps this is enough to make the point. How many yeses and how many noes did you answer? Which answers did you give for the assault rifles? What about the handguns? These questions are where the public debate is now focused.

Once you are satisfied about the correctness of your answers make this change to the questions: *Do you think your neighbors have a right to own and use* X? Would you really like having a neighbor who owns a bazooka? Especially at 3 am when your dog is outside barking? The issue isn't only what you should be allowed to have but is also about what makes you feel safe if you neighbors have the same thing.

At the level of nuclear weapons and nations, the idea was that *mutually assured destruction* (*mad*) would be a powerful deterrent created by amassing nuclear weapons. This notion required that nations were sober enough not to act rashly. Read about Vasili Arkhipov to find out just how close the world came to the *assured destruction* part of *mad*.

Ronald F. Fox
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Proof that I am not a rabid anti-gun advocate is provided by the certificate I earned January 30, 1962 from the Director of Civilian Marksmanship in the Department of the Army. I qualified as a Smallbore Rifle Marksman. Colonel John K. Lee Jr., a former official of the NRA, signed my certificate.