

PAR FORCE IN THE MAINTENANCE OF A LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

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Overview

The objective of this paper is to introduce the idea and function of par force – a new way to look at implementing the Second Amendment and its role in enabling private citizens to maintain the liberal democracy which the Founders intended us to enjoy. We begin with a look at collectivism and its evolution into the most powerful tyrannies of the 20th century, specifically that this ideology gave rise to governments that became the biggest killers of their own citizens. Then we make the case that there is an alternative to collectivism which imitates the natural world in its organization and distribution of information and control. The alternative is a liberal democracy that embraces free-market principles in its generation and allocation of wealth. We then re-visit the Founders' prescription of the distinct means – boots, ballots, bullets - by which the free citizens of a liberal democracy should always be able to 'vote'. And finally, we arrive at the notion of par force in the hands of ordinary citizens, and what form and function it should take in maintaining a waning liberal democracy in the land they call home.

Background

Beginning in the 19th century Communism sought to attain the most humanitarian of goals through scientific principles of centralized social order and government. In the last century, with the support of intellectual and progressive spirits worldwide, it descended on unhappy peoples and countries giving rise to empires and hegemonies exceeding that of ancient Rome. During this expansion newly assimilated people were always told that some limited period of deprivation would be required before the blessings promised by Marx could be realized. William Pfaff succinctly summarized the historical reality of these promises.

“Marxism over the past 75 years has produced more suffering (and more lies, and moral corruption) than Nazism and fascism could possibly have produced. More people were arbitrarily murdered in communism's purges and the deliberately instigated famines of the agricultural collectivisations than in the Nazi camps. The ideological massacres of China's Cultural Revolution and Cambodia's Khmer Rouge have no parallel in modern history. More were sent senselessly to camps and prisons, more ruined in their consciences and hearts, by Marxism than by any other political force humanity has yet experienced. In sum, communism's documented toll of human misery exceeds the wildest estimates of the sacrifice that would have been required to bring it to a more timely end before the advent of ballistic missile delivered nuclear weapons.”

For today's democracies the question illuminated by communism's trail of death and despair is how to prevent the next scientifically sanctioned humanitarian creed from repeat-

ing history, albeit this time with the force and totality secured by modern technology turned Orwellian. Due to our deteriorating educational system, we in the United States are more subject to monolithic quick fix ideologies that may rise in the name of a new utopian society. Recall that the educationally innocent czarist peasants in semi-feudal Russia embraced the sermons of the startled Lenin while they were concurrently rejected in capitalist western Europe.

In spite of Communism's current death throes, the surviving themes of centralized control are already being repositioned in the ideology markets. Within the backdrop of world population growth and the linking of economies, more sciences will be cited to again sell these ideas. With this backdrop centralization will continue as the rallying cry for leveling philosophies that seek to install unconditional wealth redistribution and impose a low common intellectual starting line for all.

The Natural Alternative to Collectivism

The demonstrated working alternative to collective control has been the wide distribution of power and individual opportunities - the very essences of a sustainable democracy. Indeed, the system sciences offer no hope for successful centralization. Three fundamental reasons help to clarify this.

First, a real socio-economic system is technically too complex to model - i.e. to discover a useful collection of inputs (controls) and causally related outputs (responses). As with today's personal computer spreadsheets, such a model would be used to answer the necessary 'what if' questions required to formulate any sane policy. However, without a reliable model it would be foolish to impose large scale or piecemeal controls on a complex dynamical system (such as a country full of people) that is currently not in crisis. Yet every day Congress seeks to do just that.

Second, even if we posit the existence of such a reliable socio-economic model - assume one emerges from a distinguished university in the land - we will still be stymied. The model can only predict how certain quantitative attributes of our society will respond to public policies, natural events, foreign machinations, etc. Collectively these attributes are known as the 'state' of the socio-economic system and could consist of items such as prime interest rate, gross national product, energy consumption by county, death rates by cause, proportion of women in upper management, and so on. But bear in mind that any central control policy comprised of comprehensive and coordinated legislative programs and administrative processes must be predicated on some widely held and specifically defined national goals. In other words, given our current state, what is a 'good' goal state to achieve and through what intermediate states should we pass to get there. This is known technically as the optimization problem. But here we are hopelessly stymied since, as a people, we have no demonstrated means of collectively agreeing on any specific goals beyond the very general, qualitative ones prescribed in our Constitution, and, as today's headlines demonstrate with increasing frequency, we don't even share those.

Third. Finally, even if we do somehow collectively agree on an optimum state of national affairs, we will not be able to discover the right inputs (i.e. determine and apply the correct sequence of public policies and procedures) that will permit us to guide our well understood, goal oriented, socio-economic system to the desired goal. This is due to the fact that any worthwhile socio-economic model will be tremendously more complex and computationally unwieldy than, say, a model for predicting weather or the stock market. This says that our model would also be technically termed as 'chaotic' in that small input errors (e.g. current unemployment rate) would cause a large error in the predicted future state of our socio-economic system. For all practical purposes such a 'national model', if one could even be built, would not be computable.

Nature 'understands' these arguments and has maintained its wondrous complexity through means which only rely on distributed knowledge and application of broadly distributed controls. The leaf on a tree knows nothing of the other leaves, or the trunk, or the roots, but simply does its job with only its own knowledge and means. Such local actions combine with those of other leaves to make the entire tree (system) work and thrive in its environment.

A more complete compilation of the scientific arguments against erecting centralized social control policies and their resulting command economies go significantly beyond the highlights summarized above. But fortunately, history also shows us examples of workable alternatives to government by detailed, voluminous directives from a distant city. The best known and much maligned workable solution is a liberal democracy (classical definition) implemented through widely distributed (i.e. local) control policies practiced within a minimal matrix of national constraints. Such a minimal matrix is one that establishes, in widely understood patterns, individual actions that reward cooperative enterprises not based on altruism. The scientific strength for this comes from an individual's ability to develop a workable personal reward model, define a socially acceptable optimum condition (state) for his/her actions, and then manage the heuristics (rules of thumb) of working within this limited model in a dynamic environment filled with other people who more or less share the same goals and means. Writing from the delivery room of socialism in 1848 France, Fredric Bastians taught that to achieve this less-than-perfect yet perfectly suitable state of affairs, the government should stray little from providing for the personal safety of the citizen, guaranteeing individual liberty, and providing equitable means for acquiring and preserving private property. In the opinion of many of us, the governments that have strayed far from these fundamental precepts have wreaked havoc on their people.

How do such intrusive governments come about? A constant in human affairs is that when shared traditions and values wane among a people, then each subgroup still retaining their own traditions and values will seek to achieve its ends through the perversion of government to its benefit. And to the degree that the government has already made its citizens wards of the state through centralized appropriation and redistribution of a nation's wealth, these groups will alternately succeed in their parochial contentions for ever larger fractions of the inevitably shrinking pie. This is the biggest danger facing the people of every multi-cultural democracy.

A nation ignorant and free; that never was and never shall be. - Thomas Jefferson

This situation is further aggravated when the level of popular knowledge is low. Here, abetted by the twin blights of illiteracy and innumeracy, the ingredients for dramatic change are in place. At this point society achieves a condition technically known as self-criticality during which a catastrophic event becomes very likely. Indeed, recently published scientific evidence demonstrates that in complex systems (e.g. the United States), the probable consequence is that heralded on prophetic bumper stickers – ‘S__t Happens!’. And the repercussion from one of these ‘happenings’ may be the end of the republic. Consider the following factors.

Social stability in a democracy - There are no guarantees, but two ingredients critical to stability and harmony in a people have been 1) a widely disseminated base of existing knowledge, and 2) the freedom for individuals to use that knowledge to their own benefit.

Education - The survival of democracy should be the main impetus for an effective educational system (see Jefferson’s dictum). However changing the current educational system is a long term process which will not be uniformly supported by diverse interest groups in an emerging multicultural society that has misplaced its celebrated ‘melting pot’. Nevertheless, non-ideological education (consisting of the basic literacy, numeracy, and vocational skills) that imbues what surviving American traditions and values can still be shared should be our highest priority.

Individual expression of preference - Ultimately a democratic union can only be maintained if there is a critical mass of cohesive ideals which can be freely expressed. In the end, franchised citizens casting their secret ballots is the lowest common denominator of such expressions.

Voting in a liberal democracy

In a liberal democracy there are three basic ways a free person should be able to vote. (We here dismiss ‘voting your dollars for the politician of choice’ as a somewhat cynical contribution to a stable democracy.) These voting alternatives are –

With the ballot - In a working democracy the ballot box is and should remain the universally accepted method of expressing all political and (some minimal societal) preferences. Under this alternative we include all the lawful activities that a citizen can undertake to educate his/her fellow citizens on the candidates or issues. In an educated electorate it will be hard for unscrupulous special interests to pervert this voting process. With an uneducated electorate the ballot box simply does not work (see [The Myth of the Rational Voter](#) by Bryan Caplan).

With their boots - If a person sees no acceptable future in remaining a citizen of a democratic country, he/she should have the state guaranteed right and every opportunity of leaving the country with his/her lawfully acquired wealth. These unfortunate individuals

have totally given up on their country, preferring to risk pursuing their freedoms elsewhere.

With their bullets - Finally, when a citizen or group feels that their government has already been perverted beyond normal remedy, and needs to be radically and/or summarily changed in order to regain the ‘blessings of liberty’, then the use of force against governmental authority must remain an available option. Individual force is the last, desperate, and very costly resort of the citizen still hoping for a better life in the land that he lives. Based on the experience of the American Revolution, our Founders provided for that specific remedy in our Constitution. But what function, form, and larger purpose should such personal force assume? It is instructive to examine this question keeping in mind the historical precedents unique to America, Switzerland, and other fiercely free countries.

Par Force - its function and form

The defining principle of par force is that each franchised citizen of a democracy should possess force, in sufficient degree and as a last resort, to guarantee the public airing of his grievances so that others may hear them and, on their merits, individually pass judgments. And if another judges such grievances to be warranted, he should also have the ability with similar force to cast his lot with the first and thus increase the cry. Then if enough citizens find merit and join in the protest, the government will have no choice but to listen and either correct the grievance or bring to bear its greater force to put down the dissidents. But if enough citizens rally to the now visible cause, the uncompromising government will be overcome by revolution or, by prevailing, clearly state its tyrannical intention. The corollary here is that no liberal democratic government would neither seek to nor actually deprive its citizens the abiding and spontaneous means to topple such government by popular revolt.

Nietzsche – “...only an armed man is truly free.” The form of these abiding means reduces down to the universal availability of par force by each and every franchised citizen. This force must be on a (par) level such that an individual can hold the local constabulary at bay sufficiently long to accurately broadcast the underlying grievance, and give time for a reasoned response at the grass roots level. If no fellow citizens respond, then the state will quickly bring to bear sufficient force to remove the unpopular cause. However, if the broadcast grievance is compelling, it will attract others equally willing to risk their lives in its cause. It matters not how the par force stand-off is resolved. By every precept of justice in a popular democracy, the precipitating issue of such a confrontation will receive a full public hearing and debate under the existing (or new) due process. And the original aggrieved citizen(s) will be judged in the light of that due process to be hailed or hanged. Hence contemplating the exercise of par force should always be a most serious decision.

The universal possession of force on par with local state authorities should be sufficient to prevent such perverted authority from quickly snuffing out or ‘containing’ the grievance. In its just function par force should gain the aggrieved citizen time and opportunity

to disseminate the contended issues - we all understand the scenario of a favored journalist admitted into a house surrounded by a SWAT team that harbors the beleaguered dissident(s) in order to broadcast such issues. Thus the form of such force need not be excessive to the point of allowing the individual(s) to cause mass destruction or overcome an army. Assuming that par force is in the form of a weapon, then its destructiveness need only be at a level to prevent the local police department from quickly ending the confrontation. And if several citizens join to bring their efforts to bear, then the summed level of par force would require the state to assemble more formidable power with all the added time, visibility, and beneficial citizen scrutiny that such an effort would entail.

The inevitable arguments against par force

There are those gentle souls in whom the concept of citizen par force will strike terror. In its implementation they will see an explosion of random violence and crime, and argue that that itself will be the downfall of the republic. In America, many of these same people have already been working on a deliberate process of disarming the citizenry under the guise of lowering crime rates, outlawing hunting, and so on. However all of these idealists adhere to the common belief that if our currently benign state were the only legitimate possessor of force, a social utopia would surely be at hand.

Without much examination, the people of the United States have historically promoted par force, and to a large degree our government still permits it. Because the American citizen today still retains the constitutional right to par force, its current societal cost can be readily calculated. No liberty comes without its price. From retaining the benefits of par force we suffer a relatively small number of casualties considering we are a culturally fragmenting society with a diminishing number of commonly held beliefs and totems. And these casualties result overwhelmingly from the criminal element immune to any legislation that would restrict par force or any other prerogative for that matter. In more culturally defined countries such as Switzerland, par force has been the national policy for centuries. Elsewhere the onset of renegade and totalitarian governments has been unequivocally preceded by draconian decrees proscribing par force.

The question comes down to whether the true measure of a civilized social order is one that is secure enough to allow its members the freedom to support or change it, by force if necessary; or one in which our lives are regimented by a state over which we have no power at all. People forget too soon that borders can be closed and the ballot box can quickly become a sham.

Finally there are those who argue that in today's America the question is moot because 1) we cannot afford the cost some would attribute to maintaining par force, and 2) our submission to some enlightened collective wisdom from there (or somewhere), will then, perhaps 'after some hardship', bring us to the social perfection for which we are all supposed to yearn. This well-worn siren song has been rearranged and sung by the likes of Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao, Pol Pot, Saddam Hussein, Kim Jong Il, Castro, ... and is still number one on the socialists' hit parade. All this in spite of the fact that in the last century's aftermath there are the mountains of death onto which, during times of peace, gov-

ernments have hurled their own people in numbers many times those counted in all the wars (for example see [*Death by Government*](#) by R.J. Rummel, [*Black Book of Communism*](#) by S. Courtois et.al., and the recent [*The Whisperers*](#) by Orlando Figes). And these human tragedies have always been in the service of yet another 'new' ideology to unify and direct its altruistic acolytes.