

The logic of revolt

By [David Heim](#)

January 26, 2011

It

used to be that the defense of Second Amendment rights was linked, at least rhetorically, to the rights of hunters and outdoor enthusiasts, who worried that gun laws might deny them their hunting rifles or the chance to engage in target practice. That concern--always farfetched--has come to look rather quaint. Gun lobbyists have lately touted gun ownership as necessary for citizens' self-defense against criminals and lawless hordes.

Thus the defense even

of assault weapons. As Erich Pratt of Gun Owners of America [says](#), "Having lots of ammunition is critical, especially if the police are not around and you need to be able to defend yourself against mobs."

But

Washington Post columnist E. J. Dionne [points out](#) that in the past few years the self-defense argument has been dropped in favor of an incendiary political argument: citizens need guns, we are told, mainly so that they can offer armed resistance to a tyrannical federal government.

Here,

[for example](#), is Texas Rep. Ron Paul:

The Second Amendment is not about hunting deer or keeping a pistol in your nightstand. It is not about protecting oneself against common criminals. It is about preventing tyranny. The Founders knew that unarmed citizens would never be able to overthrow a tyrannical government as they did.

Let's

see: If citizens need guns so as to be able to mount an armed overthrow of the U.S. government, don't they need something more than pistols and rifles? Don't they also need rocket grenades and tanks? What about cruise missiles? They'll probably also need aircraft carriers and tactical nuclear weapons.

People

will feel a lot safer then.