

Les Cochran, *Estero*

Who controls gun control?

The gun-control debate has barely begun.

And the National Rifle Association has fired the opening round. It has alleged that "any" change in national policy will be an infringement on the Second Amendment — the right to bear arms.

"Any?" Hold on a minute. I've not heard of any group, corporation or politician questioning the viability of the Second Amendment. No one has ever proposed a constitutional amendment.

The issue is not "either/or." Rather, it's a matter of "to what extent."

Can you have pistol or a concealed weapon? Sure! Can you have a hunting rifle or shotgun? Of course; why not?

And, can we agree that you can't build or fire a nuclear weapon? You can't fire a missile? You can't own a rocket launcher or a bazooka? And that you can't fire a cannon?

"To what extent" remains the issue. Should a citizen have the right to own/use an assault weapon? Should your neighbor be allowed to have a weapon with magazine capacity? Should security checks be required for all individuals purchasing guns? Should the government be authorized to conduct research on the impact of firearms?

Industrialized nations worldwide have answered. Our firearm-homicide rate per 100,000 is 10.2. The combined average for Canada, France, Germany, Israel, India, Italy, Japan, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom is 1.1. That means we're 10 times more likely to die from a gunshot than people in these countries. The totals for Scandinavia (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) are no different.

Who's in control of gun control?