



Obama's Inaugural Address: Second Amendment Obsolete

President Obama derided the Second Amendment as obsolete in his [second inaugural address](#), claiming that “when times change, so must we” on issues like citizen gun ownership.

We have always understood that when times change, so must we; that fidelity to our founding principles requires new responses to new challenges; that preserving our individual freedoms ultimately requires collective action. For the American people can no more meet the demands of today's world by acting alone than American soldiers could have met the forces of fascism or communism with muskets and militias.



Obama [added](#) an explicit reference to the Newtown, Connecticut, massacre. “Our journey is not complete until all our children, from the streets of Detroit to the hills of Appalachia to the quiet lanes of Newtown, know that they are cared for, and cherished, and always safe from harm.”

Obama's second inaugural address was otherwise designed as largely a [Rorschach test](#) of sorts for its listeners; most will hear what they want to hear. In recent years, inaugural speeches have featured only glittering generalities, and Obama's speech was little different. Obama even threw one sop to the political Right, [claiming](#), “Through it all, we have never relinquished our skepticism of central authority, nor have we succumbed to the fiction that all society's ills can be cured through government alone.”

But on both sides of Obama's perfunctory invocation that — as Bill Clinton once more [succinctly stated](#) that “the era of big government is over” — Obama [advocated](#) an ever-larger series of broad and vaguely defined government initiatives.

More Federal Education Spending: “No single person can train all the math and science teachers we'll need to equip our children for the future, or build the roads and networks and research labs that will bring new jobs and businesses to our shores. Now, more than ever, we must do these things together, as one nation, and one people.”

More Federal Infrastructure Spending: “Together, we determined that a modern economy requires railroads and highways to speed travel and commerce; schools and colleges to train our workers.”

More Federal Social Welfare Spending: “Together, we resolved that a great nation must care for the vulnerable, and protect its people from life's worst hazards and misfortune.”

On foreign policy, an area where presidents have greater constitutional flexibility than on fiscal issues,



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on January 21, 2013

Obama [pledged](#) that “a decade of war is now ending” even while he pledged perpetual U.S. military engagement on every corner of the planet. “America will remain the anchor of strong alliances in every corner of the globe,” Obama stated while at the same time claiming “enduring security and lasting peace do not require perpetual war.”

Part of America’s engagement means regime change in the furthest reaches of the globe, meddling in those nations’ internal affairs and giving potentially massive transfers of foreign aid. “We will support democracy from Asia to Africa; from the Americas to the Middle East, because our interests and our conscience compel us to act on behalf of those who long for freedom. And we must be a source of hope to the poor, the sick, the marginalized, the victims of prejudice — not out of mere charity, but because peace in our time requires the constant advance of those principles that our common creed describes.”

Obama’s second inaugural address included an [explicit reference](#) to climate change: “We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations.” But, interestingly, his speech omitted reference to the greatest threat to America’s children and future generations: the structural budget deficit and growing national debt. The inaugural address did not contain the words spending, deficit, debt, or budget, and contained no reference to them. The closest reference Obama made to spending was a remark that “we reject the belief that America must choose between caring for the generation that built this country and investing in the generation that will build its future,” which implied endless deficit spending.



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