

The American Constitution is one of the most recognizable documents in history. The Preamble is universally known to be an initiator to a document of equality, justice, and freedom with its iconic words, “*We the People, in Order to form a more perfect Union*”. As the oldest constitution still in power in world history, it serves as a model to the constitutions of numerous other countries in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. The Constitution is often quoted as being a “living document”, however, there is much debate as to the exact degree of its vitality; some people think that the Constitution should be interpreted just as it was written 231 years ago (known as *originalism*), while others argue that it should be interpreted in present-day terms with present-day situations. The so-called “originalist versus non-originalist” debate has raged through the courts, the White House, and the minds of everyday Americans, with every event ending in its own ruling, different each time. However, the logic is clear: the Constitution is not fit for the current times, for the circumstances of 1787 were very unlike the circumstances today.

Nuclear weapons, also commonly referred to as atomic bombs, are defined by Britannica as “devices designed to release energy in an explosive manner as a result of nuclear fission, nuclear fusion, or a combination of the two processes”, and are considered widely to be the most dangerous weapons of our time. The first hostile nuclear bomb was detonated in 1945, more than 150 years after the signing of the Constitution. The science was unthinkable and the technology unfathomable at the time of our Founding Fathers, so there is no way they could have predicted the rise of the weapons of mass destruction. Though the Constitution outlines the duties of the executive branch of the federal government, it refrains from explaining what must be done in the severe case of weapons that could decimate every soul on Earth. Jimmy Carter once famously reflected, “When I was in the White House, I was confronted with the challenge of the Cold War.

Both the Soviet Union and I had 30,000 nuclear weapons that could destroy the entire earth and I had to maintain the peace.” He, and every President after him, had to take the situation into their own hands and essentially improvise their take on nuclear weapons, for there was no sort of historical precedent in the Constitution for these weapons. This situation also applies to the controversy surrounding wiretapping. The fourth amendment in the Bill of Rights affirms that “the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against *unreasonable* searches and seizures, shall not be violated”; this is impeded on through the USA PATRIOT Act - federal agencies can wiretap conversations with probable cause, but without a warrant. This highlights another gray area in the Constitution: what is *unreasonable*? Perhaps it is knocking a door down for a minor offense; perhaps it is listening in on a telephone conversation for information on terrorist activities. The PATRIOT Act, signed as a response to the September 11th attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Centers, authorized warrantless wiretapping so authorities could identify potential sources of terrorism and crush their efforts before any civilian was harmed. The reason for wiretapping was genuine, and its results invaluable, but in the process, it crossed a boundary the Founding Fathers had set very clearly - a line which protects privacy at the expense of safety. The new age of technology and science previously inconceivable has dawned, and it is imperative that the Constitution adapts to it.

The Pew Research Center reported in 2018 that the majority of Americans, 55 percent, view that the Supreme Court should “base its rulings on what the Constitution means today”. The intriguing thing is that both major political parties have a growing population of non-originalists, with Democrats rising 9% more non-originalist, to a total of 78%, and Republicans rising 11%, to a total of 30% non-originalist, since 2016. In a perfect world, the law-makers, Presidents,

Justices, and politicians of America would agree to change the Constitution so it is truly a document of the present, but I am not that naïve; there are too many conflicts. For one, what would we change? Would we add new amendments and repeal others? How many? For another, who has the authority to write such a change to the document our country is based on? Even if we did miraculously change the Constitution, the whole political climate of America will still be that one party must oppose the other. If the Democrats control the White House, then the Republicans in Congress will do anything and everything to align themselves with the inverse of the ideals of the Democratic president. At least, with our current Constitution, everything is arguable, and nobody is in control. If the Constitution were to change, so would the control, and people forget that the problem at hand is that of modernization, and not of partisanship. It would not matter what happened. All that would matter is how the people in power interpret it to serve their own needs, because regardless of political party, undying loyalty to one's own needs will always override the needs of the country, and subsequently, the world.

There is still no clear answer to the enduring debate of reworking the basis of the American democratic system: the Constitution. Penned hundreds of years ago by James Madison, it framed the American government, the American way of life, and the American ideals into a document that although sits quietly in the National Archives, controls more than the three branches of government combined. However, what happens when the world spins out of the Constitution's power is a problem that needs to be addressed urgently. The Constitution must be adjusted to attend to the needs of a modern United States - one with modern people, modern technology, and modern ideas.