

*and* Security? (19-Jul-02)



"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains; it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

—C.S. Lewis

19-Jul-02

## **Freedom *and* Security?**

Is it possible for this nation to have full measures of both individual freedom and national security?

Judging by the heat-speaking missives aimed at the government by the mainstream and alternative media in the aftermath of the 9-11 attacks, such a scenario is an obscure dream.

Various government agencies have been publicly flogged for not being able to predict and protect. Yet, when they have taken steps to beef up national security, they have been flayed alive by the words of civil libertarians who see an Orwellian society around every corner. The same outspoken voices that blame the government for an "intelligence failure" squawk in protest when the government goes about trying to collect the intelligence that could aid the cause of national security. Government and citizens alike have contributed to the blamestorming that continues to reverberate throughout the nation.

Some declare that an armed population will solve the problem. While bearing arms is a right guaranteed by the United States Constitution, it is not the solution. As a deterrent to crime, it is only as effective as the character of the citizens involved—and character is not one of this nation's strong points right now.

Some assert that racial profiling is the answer. We know that 100% of the successful terrorist attacks on commercial airlines for the past 20 years have been committed by Arabs, so why not round up all of the Arab males between the ages of 18 and 40 and ship them back to the Middle East? Alternatively, perhaps the government should resurrect the internment camps of World War II?

This will not work for a number of reasons. First, the current intifada against Israel shows that young females are not opposed to homicide bombing—suddenly the size of the net doubles. Second, if the Arabs in question are U.S. citizens, they are protected by the laws of the land—they are innocent until proven guilty. Third, Arabs are not the only perpetrators we are concerned about. [Peace](#) will not

be restored to [the world](#) if we lock up all the Middle Easterners because the United States is not engaged in a war on the Middle East.

In fact, the United States is not even engaged in a war on terror. "Terror" is a tactic, a means to an end that involves directly targeting civilians. Governmental rhetoric aside, terrorism is not something that one can declare war on, any more than one can declare war on, say, surprise attacks, sniping, or the use of artillery. What everybody seems to understand, but nobody really wants to say, is that this is a war on "militant Islam." They have declared *jihad*—holy war—on the United States and Israel, and the U.S. has responded by declaring war on . . . their tactics?

Why can the United States not declare war on Islam? Aside from the outcry from the international community, it would be a direct violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . ."

I am not advocating gun control or defending Islam, the bloody tactics its radical leaders are employing, or anybody linked to a group that promotes militant Islam. What I am illustrating is that the debate of individual freedom versus national security is not one that will be easily solved. In fact, our enemies have highlighted the weaknesses in this form of government.

No, the crisis the United States now faces can only be resolved by a change in the character of the nation. The "blessing and cursing" chapters (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28) show clearly that when a nation is obedient to [God](#), He is faithful to provide personal freedom and abundance, as well as national security—both in full measure. When a nation is disobedient, however, these blessings are removed:

Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. . . . The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language [culture] you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. . . . They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you. ([Deuteronomy 28:45](#), 49-50, 52)

Freedom and security are not mutually exclusive. But they come at the price of very great personal sacrifice: submission to God. Unless this nation is willing to make this sacrifice, maintaining both individual freedom and national security will continue to be an obscure dream.

- David C. Grabbe

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Divine Warning](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

In this special address following September 11, 2001, John Ritenbaugh warns that America, like

ancient Israel described in Amos 4-5, has drifted so far from God's way that they do not have a clue as to what to repent of. Tuesday morning, the leadership of America (both political and spiritual) essentially absolved itself from any culpability, refusing to acknowledge that our national collective sins were at least a contributory cause for this horrible occurrence. This tragic disaster, hideous as it was, provides a wake up call to the nation, but more importantly to God's church (Joel 2:17) to provide a witness.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Is God to Blame?](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The September 11 bombings were certainly tragic and terrible. Some have since asked, "Was God involved? Is He to blame?" John Ritenbaugh soberly answers some of these tough questions, concluding that God certainly allowed them to occur for our ultimate and eternal benefit.

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