

October 9, 2001

The CIA has a budget of over \$30 billion. The FBI has a budget of \$3 billion. In addition, \$10 to \$12 billion are specifically designated to fight terrorism. Yet, with all this money and power, we were not warned of the events that befell us on September 11th.

Since the tragic attacks, our officials have located and arrested hundreds of suspects, frozen millions of dollars of assets, and received authority to launch a military attack against the ringleaders in Afghanistan. It seems the war against the terrorists, or guerillas if one really believes we're in an actual war, has so far been carried out satisfactorily, and under current law. The question is, do we really need a war against the civil liberties of the American people? We should never casually sacrifice any of our freedoms for the sake of perceived security.

Most security, especially in a free society, is best carried out by individuals protecting their own property and their own lives. The Founders certainly understood this and is the main reason we have the Second amendment. We cannot have a policeman stationed in each of our homes to prevent burglaries, but owners of property with possession of a gun can easily do it. A new giant agency for Homeland Security cannot provide security but it can severely undermine our liberties. This approach may well in the long run make many American feel less secure.

The principle of private property ownership did not work to prevent the tragedies of September 11th, and there's a reason for that. The cries have gone out that due to the failure of the airlines to protect us, we must nationalize every aspect of aviation security. This reflects a serious error in judgment, and will lead us further away from the principle of property ownership and toward increasing government dependency and control, with further sacrifice of our freedoms. More dollars and more federal control over the airline industry are not likely to give us the security we all seek.

Industrial plants in the United States enjoy reasonably good security. They are protected, not by the local police, but by owners putting up barbed wired fences, hiring guards with guns, and

requiring identification cards to enter-all this without any violation of anyone's civil liberties. And in a free society, private owners have a right, if not an obligation, to engage in "profiling" if it enhances security. This technique of providing security through private property ownership is about to be rejected, in its entirety, for the airline industry.

The problem was that the principle of private property was already undermined for the airlines by the partial federalization of security by FAA regulations. Airports are all owned by various government entities.

The system that failed us prior to September 11th not only was strictly controlled by government regulations, it specifically denied the right of owners to defend their property with a gun. At one time guns were permitted on airlines to protect the US mail, but for more than 40 years airlines have not been allowed to protect human life with firearms.

Some argue that pilots have enough to do worrying about flying the airplane and have no time to be concerned about a gun. Yet why do we allow drivers of armored vehicles to handle both? Why do we permit more protection for money being hauled around the country in a truck than we do for passengers on an airline? If government management of airline security has already failed us, why should we expect expanding the role of government in this area to be successful? One thing is for sure, we can expect it to get very expensive and the lines to get a lot longer. The government's idea of security is asking, "Who packed your bag," or "Has the bag been with you since you packed it?" and requiring plastic knives to be used on all flights while taking fingernail clippers from the pilots.

Pilots overwhelmingly support their right to be armed, with some even threatening not to fly if they are not permitted to do so. This could be done quickly and cheaply by merely removing the prohibition against it, as my bill HR 2896 would do. We must not forget that four well-placed guns could have prevented the entire tragedy of September 11th.

This is a crucial time in our history. Our policy of foreign interventionism has contributed to this international crisis. How we define our enemies will determine how long we fight and when the war is over. The expense will be worth it if we make the right decisions. Targeting the forces of bin Laden makes sense, but invading 8 to 10 countries without a precise goal will prove to be a policy of folly. Indefinite war, growing in size and cost in terms of dollars and lives, is something for which most Americans will eventually grow weary. Our prayers are with our president, and we hope that he continues to use wise judgment in accomplishing this difficult task- something

that he has accomplished remarkably well under very difficult circumstances.

But here at home it is surely a prime responsibility of all members of Congress to remain vigilant and not, out of fear and panic, sacrifice the rights of Americans in our effort to maximize security.

Since the President has already done a good job in locating, apprehending, and de-funding those associated with the September 11th attacks while using current existing laws, we should not further sacrifice our liberties with a vague promise of providing more security. We do not need a giant new national agency in order to impose a concept of homeland security that challenges our civil liberties. This is an idea whose time has not yet come.