

Other Thoughts on 9/11

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A vibrant discussion is in the ongoing comments to Ray Camden's [recent entry on remembering 9/11](#). Ray makes a great parallel as to how 9/11 is, to our generation, what the Kennedy Assassination was to our parents. He also tells an interesting, and troubling, story of personally experienced (by his wife and son) xenophobic backlash in it's aftermath. 9/11 will be a day remembered for many generations to come, in many different ways by everyone.

Ray and I often share opposing political views, which is one of the fantastic things about living in our great nation - the fact that we have the right to actually have opposing views, much less express them openly (that's one point I think Ray and I can agree on). I want to preface this by saying that I am not posting this in total disagreement with his post, but rather in counterpoint to some of the comments generated from his post (and some content, but hey, we can do that). If you are easily offended then stop reading now, as I have stated before that I am not, nor will I ever be, Politically Correct.

As a former soldier, having been around the globe a few times, seeing things many here will never see, my perspective is tainted (or enhanced) by my experiences. One comment to his post spoke of the personal liberties we are losing to our government, forgetting that many people in many countries have no personal liberties at all. There are so many things that we, as Americans, take for granted in our lives that we fail to see things from the other perspective.

I've heard people bitch about the fact that they can't take a soda on a plane, or a lighter, or their hair conditioner or shaving cream. I've been to countries where the citizens will never ride a plane, because they will never be permitted to leave. While shopping with my wife and daughter I noticed a skirt for sale that would barely cover a woman's womanhood, yet the women of many middle eastern countries can not even show their face until after they are married (if they are permitted to leave their home). They remove the ten commandments from a courthouse's steps because it offends an atheist, yet in some extremist countries a man will be beaten for missing prayer. I drew an interesting parallel once that a few WWII vets probably made; If the Dixie Chicks had been German, during the Nazi era, and spoken out publicly in another country against Hitler the way they did about our President, do you think they would have survived the Concentration Camps once they returned?

Some people continue to ask whether we should be imposing the ideals of Freedom and Democracy on other nations? "Maybe they don't want it." I wonder if Lincoln ever

asked the same question about slaves in the Confederate States of America? Or if Roosevelt asked the question of the Jewish who were being led to Auschwitz? To say that any man, woman, or child does not want to be free is to go against the nature of man, even if that man has been whipped so much, for so long, as to no longer realize it for himself. All children begin with free thought, they are taught to be slaves to conformity. Free thought is the great blessing, and curse, given to us as our birthright from our Creator. Like it or not, everyone wants to be free.

Have we done enough in Afghanistan? Probably not. Have we done too much in Iraq? Maybe so. I don't know the answers to these questions. They aren't the ones I ask myself each day. The question I ask is the same one I asked myself while I served in the Army; What price are you willing to pay for freedom? I am comforted by the knowledge that, unlike many instances of conflict in our nation's history, every man and woman serving in our military today volunteered for the job. They knew what they were doing, and made the decision themselves. They ask that question of themselves everyday, just like the other heroes we honor today: The Police, Fire Fighters, Paramedics, and many others. They all answered the call to stand on the wall and protect us "from all enemies, foreign and domestic". I know that we have lost fewer men and women in our "War on Terror" during the last five years than we did in the first five hours following the first plane hitting the World Trade Center.

A wise old friend once told me that it's not always easy, or popular, to do the right thing, but it's always the right thing. Was going after Saddam the right thing to do? I think so, but I've seen some things. Is continuing our "War on Terror" the right thing to do? I think so, but I've seen some things. Are we going about all of this the right way? I think that remains to be seen. I do know that I'm not the only one keeping a close eye on our civil liberties, as should we all. Should we all be talking openly about our opinions, and discussing the various changes we see around us? Absolutely. Thank God (and America) we have the right to do so.

Just remember, Freedom isn't Free. What price are you willing to pay for freedom?