

Freedom's Burden

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History teaches that nations fail in two ways: either to external forces or to internal ones. There is a long-standing axiom that the greatest nations fall from within. There is ample historical evidence for that, for the greatest nations can withstand the external force of a military invasion. The axiom, however, is no longer quite as relevant as economic and cyber warfare techniques have been developed. The next wave of development is underway now as social warfare arises through the orchestrated activities of civil disruption and streaming "refugees."

Nations which fail under pressure from internal forces are most often the victims of revolution; others are victims of evolution. Government, in whatever form it had taken, can become unacceptable to enough people that the people replace it violently in the form of a revolution. In most cases, the replacement wasn't much better but it was perceived to be an improvement because whoever ended up in charge ended the most heinous practices of the predecessor. Government may also fail to the forces of evolution. A government constructed as perfectly as any can be, can also be nibbled at by the selfish desires of those unwilling to bear the burden of freedom. As government responds to the demands of these few, those who value freedoms benefits along with its burdens concede these small intrusions as being insignificant or too small to make a fuss about.

America's economic and military might serves well to protect our nation from external forces. Our rights to free speech and a democratic republic as our form of government serve to allow for internal change without requiring a revolution. Those same assets, however, also make America vulnerable to the lesser-known internal force of evolution.

The banner of freedom has been the mainstay of America for more than 200 years. While, in the early years, not all people were free, the movement towards universal freedom began with the American Revolution. It has been a long and painfully slow process, but it has been an ongoing process which may now be in jeopardy.

As America evolved into a nation of fully free men and women, we have also evolved into a nation of less free men and women. That sounds contradictory, but it isn't. As civil rights blossomed and both women and minorities were acknowledged as

equals who could and should vote, civil freedoms were being buried in regulations and requirements. These actions served to constrain the freedoms of all men, all women, and all ethnicities. Many government programs, such as going to school, being vaccinated, paying into government run retirement accounts and government run medical accounts are not optional. Case Law replacing legislated law eliminates the possibility that any citizen can understand what is legal and what is not. Prosecutorial Discretion serves to treat two criminals in different manners. The practice of seizing assets of an accused person who is not yet convicted serves to reduce the ability of the accused to mount a defense in court. Currently something called Qualified Immunity is in the news. The most remarkable fact regarding it is that it was invented by a court and is in direct opposition to the original legislation.

Over the years, what has occurred is what is known as mission creep. An original idea arises, it is expanded by the bureaucrats and slowly engulfs other tasks. Power is aggregated in larger agencies. A ruling class of career politicians develops. Regulators are appointed, not elected. Judges insert personal opinion into legal opinion. All of this happens because no one has stopped it. Everyone seems to think that someone else will take care of it. Having government take up our personal problems has relieved us of the burdens of freedom, but has also eliminated many of the choices of how we wish to exercise our freedom.

To be fully free, we must, as a people, accept the burdens of self-reliance, self-determination, and self-discipline along with the freedoms of choice and will.