Security versus Freedom

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Date

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# **Introduction**

The debate on freedom and security is an ongoing notion in the United States. There have been many thoughts surrounding both the notions because regardless of the balance that America has tried to create, there are still significant issues that cannot be avoided. Both security and freedom carry substantial weight. There are two schools of thought in the United Nations presently; there are people who would do anything for the sense of security and then there are individuals who will give everything up for freedom. The notions provide the concept that they are mainly due to the minds and perceptions of the general public. It can be clearly seen that the laws that are ruled by the Government of the United States are both in favor of security and freedom. In accordance with the Press, NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll ensuring freedom is essential for 54 percent of the populace. This was decided post comeback of dreadful terrorist acts. Security might be important because of the short-term concerns regarding the state formation and how it provides for the needs of various individuals regardless of the effects that may emerge afterward but freedom has its own standing as well. This paper will give an in-depth look into the notion; what does American society need more today; freedom or security?

**Discussion**

National security might carry great importance because of the ongoing terrorist activity in the world but freedom also carries a significant position[[1]](#footnote-1). Things took a great turn after the event of 9/11. The government started to prioritize security, but that undermined the voice of many groups of people. There was amplified security on the airport; the borders were regulated more than before and various security acts were getting approved. The government had to take measures to ensure the security of the general public but that did not mean that they infringe the American freedom, which the country fought so hard for amid the revolutionary war. The idea was not to suffocate the nation but to make them feel safer[[2]](#footnote-2). Then came the USA Patriotic Act in 2001 which allowed law enforcement to look into the call records, personal records and e-mails of the general public. This fact caused a great privacy issue and the sense of freedom decreased on a great deal.

Certain aspects of the USA Patriotic Act are essential but some facets can be avoided. The Fourth Amendment guarantees, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures." Looking into the e-mails and cellphone records of the general public is not going to make America safe. It will only infringe on the freedom that is guaranteed under the Fourth Amendment[[3]](#footnote-3). Unfortunately, the intelligence analysts of the United States were asked to keep tabs on the phone call records regardless of there being any need for the unnecessary measure. A linguist working in the National Security Agency Facility at Fort Gordon claimed, "There were times that we came across benign conversations of groups like ‘Red Cross’. Regardless of the communication being harmless, we were still asked to keep tabs."

It is a fact that American freedom is being forgone to provide security. The idea was to keep a balance, but facts make it evident that freedom is getting avoided on a significant level. In the initial days, the United States of America invested in freedom but it all changed as time passed. The current circumstances of the country are screaming for some freedom but everything seems to be controlled and mechanical. There is no sense of freedom even on social media. There is specific type of content that the individual has to remove because of the sensitivity factor. Freedom is more enduring and fundamental than security regardless of how much importance both the notions carry.

Many individuals claim that America is one of the most powerful countries in the world and there are many threats that the state faces. However, that does not mean that security is prioritized over freedom. In fact, it is time to give security to the little bit of freedom that the citizens have. If the government takes the freedom away completely, they will be risking the country even more[[4]](#footnote-4). A country without any freedom is what the terrorist groups actually want. The main idea that most terrorist groups have is to suppress America and terrorize the citizens, this fact needs to be avoided at any cost.

In crisis, there have been measures taken to put security over freedom. An example of such a crisis is the Espionage Act that came forth in 1917[[5]](#footnote-5). There was also the presence of the 1918 amendment which is known as the Sedition Act. These Acts were created at the peak of World War 1. The main reason why the Espionage Act was created was to succeed in the espionage laws. The main chunk of the Act was designed to do that. When it comes to the other parts of the legislation, there were restrictions made on the First Amendment. So, the right of having freedom of speech was hampered under this act. However, it did not go far enough to deeming an individual a criminal for making a statement, which was done by the Sedition Act. In accordance with the Sedition Act, an individual was not even given the right to speak a word against America. In the time of the war, this act choked the freedom of speech adversely.

These various acts that have been emerging in America over time are supposed to make people feel safe instead of garnering fear in the general public. The reason for mentioning these acts from the time of World War 1 is to show that the debate on security and freedom has been around for centuries. People of the country have been suffering ever since it first came into existence. The retelling of the past is important to prove that citizens need a country that functions on balance. Security is important, but there are occasions where freedom is more essential. Yes, some people want security but under no means does anyone want to lead a restricted life especially in this time and era.

There are many religions and communities that are present under America and there needs to be a realization for it. After the attacks of 9/11, many communities were stripped of the freedom that they once had[[6]](#footnote-6). This was unfair because, given their national status, they had the right to live their life freely like every other citizen of the United States. These certain aspects prove that there is an obvious need for freedom. In fact, the lack of freedom is making people feel unsafe.

It is ironic how both freedom and security are inter-related. People can feel unsafe if they are not given the needed freedom. That is why both freedom and security need to be given equal attention. The imbalance in both the notions is creating issues in the jobs and careers of many people. Glass ceiling effect is being created for people of various ethnicities when they reach a certain rank and it is being deemed a security measure. People also want freedom because this notion is associated with happiness. Living freely is what every nation strives for. Yes, security is important but that does not mean that people need to sacrifice their happiness for it. There are many occasions that the freedom of speech of young students in schools is hindered. This is just unfair as the government is conditioning people to live a restricted life from a very young age.

Either schools, households, business or politics, they all need the ground of freedom to prosper[[7]](#footnote-7). If the government restricts their freedom there are going to be issued in the long-run. Security should not be given priority today, given that every other individual wants to speak out. It is a right that everyone was born with regardless of color, race, and gender and it needs to be given the maximum amount of protection just like security.

**Conclusion**

The above debate proves that the notion of security and freedom is as old as time. People have suffered over time because of the evident misbalance. Yes, everyone wants to lead a safe life but not at the expense of freedom and privacy. In fact, it is safe to say that the notion of freedom needs protection presently. The United States of America has become more inclusive which means that people need freedom to live their lives more than ever before. There are many communities among one singular America and all of them need the liberty to express themselves as they please. Be it Jew, Christian, America, gay, transgender or lesbian, all these religions and communities need a chance of self-expression. If there are going to be so many restrictions, America will not be able to live up to the claim of being inclusive. Everyone needs a sense of freedom even if it is at their homes while they use their phones and watch television.

End Notes

Wilson, John K. Patriotic correctness: Academic freedom and its enemies. Routledge, 2015.

Trump, Donald J. National security strategy of the United States of America. Executive Office of The President Washington DC Washington United States, 2017.

Baker, David, Simon Bronitt, and Philip Stenning. "Policing protest, security and freedom: The 2014 G20 experience." Police Practice and Research 18, no. 5 (2017): 425-448.

1. Wilson, John K. Patriotic correctness: Academic freedom and its enemies. Routledge, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Baker, David, Simon Bronitt, and Philip Stenning. "Policing protest, security and freedom: The 2014 G20 experience." Police Practice and Research 18, no. 5 (2017): 425-448. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Trump, Donald J. National security strategy of the United States of America. Executive Office of The President Washington DC Washington United States, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Wilson, John K. Patriotic correctness: Academic freedom and its enemies. Routledge, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Trump, Donald J. National security strategy of the United States of America. Executive Office of The President Washington DC Washington United States, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Baker, David, Simon Bronitt, and Philip Stenning. "Policing protest, security and freedom: The 2014 G20 experience." Police Practice and Research 18, no. 5 (2017): 425-448. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Baker, David, Simon Bronitt, and Philip Stenning. "Policing protest, security and freedom: The 2014 G20 experience." Police Practice and Research 18, no. 5 (2017): 425-448. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)