

The Militia: Is It Time to Fight? — A View from 25 Years Ago

by Franklin Sanders

This article first appeared in *The Moneychanger*, and was reprinted in *Contra Mundum* in 1996.

God armeth the patriot. —Jane Porter, *The Scottish Chiefs*

Until nine months ago I never even heard the word "militia." In the past few months, more and more people are asking me about it. Is their own rashness about to trap well-meaning people in a wicked government provocation? Whenever the popular media focuses on any controversial topic, it always makes me edgy, because the media operates a propaganda machine for the government and the Establishment. Ominously, two militia-related articles have appeared in national news magazines of late.

Militia In Montana

The 8 / 1 5 / 94 *US News & World Report* carried a gem entitled "The rise of citizen militias." The piece *shredded* the naive folks involved as it laid out their current concerns.

According to *USN&WR* extremist militia organizers claim that "a secret cadre of leaders hopes to rule the world through one global government" and are planning a takeover of the US with UN troops. Unmarked black helicopters have been spotted all over the country, part of a mysterious and secretive *Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force* (MJTF). Gurkhas and Royal Hong Kong Police are training in the Montana mountains. Observers have spotted hundred-car freight trains filled with UN equipment and Russian trucks. Urban black street gangs are being recruited and trained as shock troops to search house to house for guns under New World Order officers.

Local militia groups of 150, 300, even 800 are turning out in western Montana. "Some gun-toting extremists are planning to go to Washington in mid-September to put 'traitors' in Congress on trial before a 'citizens' court'."

Opposition to gun control, *USN&WR* tells us, is the catalyst for the militia movement. Two incidents — at Ruby Ridge (Idaho) where Randy Weaver's wife and son were shot dead by government agents, and at Waco where over 80 Branch Davidians were incinerated courtesy of the US government — have left many of these people feeling they might be next if the government took away their guns. Whoops! Don't forget, these people are all conspiracy nuts, conservative Christians, homeschoolers, homophobes, white supremacists, neo-nazis, and anti-Semites — and they are *dangerous*.

“Almost Heaven” In Idaho

The 9 / 5 / 9 4 *Newsweek* article sported the headline "Bo Gritz Builds His 'Heaven.' **Separatists:** Preparing to fight the Feds." As if that weren't enough, *Newsweek* used the ancient, worn-out *New York Times* trick of guilt-by-layout-association. Right next to Gritz's picture a headline screamed: "Tracking a Serial Rapist." It had nothing to do with Gritz, but the subliminal message was there.

Ex-Green Beret Gritz (pronounced "Grites") ran for president in 1992, and has a real knack for supplying quotations tailor-made for the New York propaganda mill. After the campaign, Gritz says, he had a vision: "I observed a pouring out of virtuous people from the metropolitan centers into the hinterlands. I beheld covenant communities standing separate from a tyrannical government It was Armageddon. Millions of massed soldiers —both men and women, were slaughtered, but the homeland was spared."

Gritz is building a 200-acre development in central Idaho called "Almost Heaven." The thirty lucky families who buy there, Gritz says, intend to live off the land and are prepared to fight the federal government, if necessary, for "our families, homes, [and] Constitution."

Your five-year old could predict the propaganda in the rest of this article: tax protesters, gun nuts, fundamentalists, and white supremacists. Quoth *Newsweek*:

Tax protesters will also find company. Gritz doesn't file a return Some human-rights organizations are also alarmed. The Portland based Coalition for Human Dignity charges Gritz is intent on forming "armed enclaves of white supremacists." Last year he did a series of paramilitary preparedness seminars called SPIKE (Specially Prepared Individuals for Key Events).

Resistance

There are times when armed resistance to tyranny is both lawful and proper, but *Oh, how careful we must be*. Your course must pass the minute scrutiny of theology and prudence. The Scriptures, the history of Christianity, and our own history offer examples.

One of the most stirring and tragic is the history of the Scottish covenanters who refused to accept the rule of a restored Stuart king over the church. Faithful to the National Covenant of 1638 and the freedom of the church, they resisted the Stuart monarchy from the time of Charles 11's restoration in 1660 until the Stuart's overthrow in the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

All covenanters elected to fight, some with arms and some with preaching. Almost all who took up arms were killed. So were most of the preachers.

The Theological Basis

The theological basis for Christian resistance was most thoroughly worked out during the Reformation when Reformed Christians came under government persecution. In Holland, France, Germany, England, Spain, and Italy they faced a choice: conform to what they believed was false religion, or die.

Are you ready to lead a resistance to ungodly government? Have you read Rutherford's *Lex, Rex*? Buchanan's *De Jure Regni Apud Scotos* (Concerning the Rights of the Crown in Scotland)? Have you read Knox's *History of the Reformation in Scotland*? His *First Blast of the Trumpet Against a Monstrous Regiment of Women*? The radical marginal notes to the *Geneva Bible*? The French Huguenot work, *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (Vindications Against Tyrants)? The story of Beza's struggle for the

church in France? The history of the Dutch War for Independence? Are you ready to see soldiers bury your wives and children alive, while their only defense is to sing Psalms?

Have you even read your *Bible*? Are you ready like David to suffer unjust oppression and risk your life while you deliver a faithful witness? To suffer in jail like Joseph? To be forced to serve your oppressors like Daniel? To suffer imprisonment and ridicule like Jeremiah? Are you ready like Christ to learn obedience through suffering? Or is all the talk of resistance just cheap chinboogey that will instantly evaporate when the heat comes on?

The Biblical basis of resistance to ungodly government is first of all patient, confident trust in God. We are only allowed to disobey those commands which are contrary to the law of God. We are to rebuke wickedness as long as rebuke is possible, whatever the consequences. When rebuke is no longer possible, we are empowered to flee. At the last, the very last, we are authorized to fight, but some lesser magistrate, some duly constituted authority, must lead that resistance, or the door is opened to anarchy. At all these stages we are carefully to weigh to weigh the circumstances with all prudence. Who is with us? Can we win? Is there another less costly way to accomplish the same end?

Instant Cures

What bothers me most about this militia talk is that it proposes the false hope of an instant cure. The notion of taking up arms and setting the rascals straight may appeal to our impatience and emotions, but it would be disaster in our present circumstances.

There is no instant cure for what ails America today. It took American history's most devastating war (the War Between the States) and over 100 years of steady apostasy to get us here, and we won't get back on the right road tomorrow. For over 100 years individual self-government, Biblical morality, and the foundations of Christian government have been undermined. The social, cultural, theological, and intellectual capital accumulated through hundreds of years has been annihilated, not just in society at large but in the hearts and minds and behavior of the American people.

Even if, God forbid, you could erase every wicked judge and legislator and bureaucrat tomorrow, from where would the Christian men come to lead the country? Who has taught them how to govern? What do they know of obedience to godly authority? The answer is a dead silence, or worse yet, the spectacle of 50,000 men in a stadium chanting "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus" in affirmation of their manhood. Christian people are not now fit to take over government. It took a long time to destroy the foundation. It will take a long time to rebuild it. Maybe we won't see that in my lifetime, or my children's.

Fighting

That you don't fight with guns doesn't mean that you don't fight. The Biblical principle, however, is that you must first prove yourself faithful in little things, before you are entrusted with great things. Americans, and particularly American Christians, have yet to prove themselves faithful even in the little things. *Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice*. If you are looking for a monument, look around you.

In The Wilderness

When they arrived at Canaan's border, the Hebrews who had come out of Egypt were still slaves in their hearts and minds. They were all hot to fight the Canaanites until they saw them, and then they could only see giants. Once they got a glimpse, they all wanted to hot-foot it back to Egypt to talk to Pharaoh about cutting a new deal. God sent them back into the wilderness to mature, and a whole generation had to die before the Hebrews were ready to take the Promised Land.

Gradualism

Gradualism, it seems, is God's way. The gospel works like leaven — the tiny lump that eventually leavens the whole loaf. The Kingdom of Christ begins as a tiny mustard seed before it finally grows into a tree large enough to shelter the birds of the air.

God told Israel that he would leave the Canaanites in the land until the Hebrews had conquered them all, lest the wild beasts overrun it. As bad as the Canaanites were, God left them because a bad government at least offers some *stability*, some semblance of godly order preferable to the anarchy of wild beasts.

Yes, it's true that there are Biblical examples of societies changing suddenly. After the reign of wicked King Ahaz, Hezekiah ascended the throne, and a sudden reformation took place. But notice how it is described: "And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that *God had prepared the people*, for the thing was done suddenly." (I Chronicles 29:36) Even while Ahaz was enthroned, God was preparing hearts for reformation in Judah.

In *Heiland* I dealt with this question of when resistance is lawful. In that novel of the future (written in 1986) a Patriot Revolution in 1993 failed, precisely because the people worshiped false gods: Liberty, the Constitution, Individualism, America, Free Enterprise. These means may be valuable in themselves, but not outside the goal of our submission to God. What was the result of a false revolution? A whole generation had to live in bondage to learn how to govern themselves, to learn to resist in *God's way*.

The battle has been the same holy warfare since the beginning of time. The enemies are the same. The battle is for the rule of Christ, to establish the righteous rule of Immanuel, and to vindicate the justice and goodness of God. The weapons change with the ages. In some ages, at some times, we are called on to fight with the Word of God only; in others the bodily sword as well. (*Heiland*, p. 227)

Resistance to evil is *always* our duty, but those who fail to resist in *God's way* are resisting *him*, and *he will resist them*. Look at the book of Judges or Kings or Chronicles. Evil rulers are a providential punishment from God. He will remove them when men remove the reason for the punishment.

Gun Control: The Final Straw

Many of these arguments for militias and armed resistance revolve around *gun control*. The federal government has engaged in many forms of tyranny, I am told, but the last straw will be when they come to get our guns. (Nobody ever explains to me why confiscatory taxation was not the last straw. Or *fiat* money and the Federal Reserve monopoly. Or the Wheat Police. Or social security. Or compulsory public education. Or any one of a number of foreign military interventions. Or the United Nations

Participation Act. Or exalting perversion to an "alternative life-style." Or abortion on demand. They weren't ready to shoot their way out of those, but gun control is ... *different.*)

Certainly, tyranny's purpose in gun control is to disarm its victims in advance. This is not new. Remember when Israel had no smiths, but the Philistines did (I Samuel 13:19)? They kept the Israelites from developing iron weapons, until David finally broke the Philistine's stranglehold and turned the Philistines into the vassals of Israel. (Even with spear and sword control the Israelites occasionally kicked the Philistines silly. Samson even killed a thousand with the Clintons' favorite weapon.) Is gun control the worst thing that can happen? What about other countries under gun control? Is the only alternative to shoot now and hand out questionnaires later?

As bad as gun control is, it's not the end of the world. Think about strict gun control societies like the former USSR. After more than 70 years of the world's strictest gun control, the communists still couldn't hang onto power. Without any guns to fight the mighty Soviet army, the Baltic peoples still revolted and broke away, and not by shooting up government offices. When the Berlin Wall fell, there were no pitched gun battles.

But *England* is another society with strict gun control. Until recently the British police didn't even carry pistols. Still, the English have proven themselves one of the most bloodthirsty nations on earth, and shown beyond gainsaying in countless wars that they know how to fight. In spite of the gun control, there is still order and stability there. English socialism may oppress many, but there are no death camps as there were in the USSR and there surely would be here under a homegrown American totalitarianism. (The camps, rumor says, are already built in old military facilities, and I don't doubt that's true.)

Why do some gun controllers bloodily oppress and some do not? The residual influence of the gospel. In America, even after the devastating War Between the States there were never roving bands of armed bandits, unless you include the limited activity of the Klan. And more often than not, gun control just doesn't work. In Israel, the Jews have all the guns, but since the Intifada the Arabs have control.

So what is the answer? The only answer to every need of sinful humanity: the gospel. The hearts of America must be changed, and the nation brought to obedience to God. All other changes, including gun-toting militias, are merely cosmetic.

Agents Provocateurs

Sophisticated totalitarian governments always use agents provocateurs to smoke out resisters. They send undercover agents into resistance groups to provoke them to violence, so that they can use that violence as "proof" of the need for greater tyranny.

Make no mistake: our American totalitarians are very sophisticated in controlling the public. I once heard something in an Establishment hanger-on's speech that I never forgot: *It is easier to exert influence than to exercise control.* This is the credo for today's totalitarians who abhor the crude, heavy-handed methods of Milner or Rhodes, Stalin or Hitler.

This is identical to an earlier strategy used by Colbert, the notorious minister to Louis XIV, in a discussion about taxation. Someone protested that perhaps he wanted to raise some tax too high, and

had over-estimated the submissiveness of the French people. Colbert replied coolly, "The art of taxation is like plucking a goose. You want to collect as many feathers as possible with the least amount of squawking."

A Big Crisis which galvanizes the public against the government is the very last thing the Insiders want. If a crisis emerges, the Insiders will have precipitated it themselves, so that they can impose their already-prepared "solution."

I have watched our government handle protest movements. Prosecute the *leaders*, and the *sheep* are scattered. They know too well that if a resistance is left to grow, at some point it becomes too numerous for them to prosecute. Better than crudely rounding everybody up and shooting them, *terrorize* them by destroying their leaders through the normal process by which they destroy all their enemies: *through the courts*. That destroys job, career, subsistence, family, marriage, liberty and eventually, the man. Those who look on miss not the message. It is easier to exert influence than to exercise control. The iron hand must remain in the velvet glove, never crude enough to arouse a general opposition.

The Latest Provocation

Now lately Indiana attorney Linda Thompson has appeared on the scene. She put together a video which launched some theories about government oppression at Waco. All well and good, but now she has appointed herself "acting Adjutant General, Unorganized Militia of the United States." Her alert says, All militia units will convene at 8:00 A.M., Monday, September 19, 1994 in Washington D.C., armed and in uniform [sic] to deliver the Declaration of Independence [of 19941 to the Whitehouse [sic] and to enforce the ultimatum. The militia will arrest Congressmen who have failed to uphold their oaths of office, who then will be tried for Treason by Citizens' Courts."

If you are sufficiently moronic to obey this call, you will deserve what you get, namely, a long vacation in Leavenworth. Worse yet, *everybody else* will get what you deserve, for the press and the government will have a high old time turning this militia exercise into 24-karat proof that they *must* disarm the American public. And the credulous public will believe them, because they will have seen news clips of you gun-toting nuts trying to arrest congressmen, right before you are all shot rat-dead by the Capital Police SWAT team. The Feds would love nothing better. The people who issue these calls, and those who answer them, are playing right into the tyrants' hands. Whether they act as idiots, or as agents provocateurs, who can say?

I may not always be certain what the best positive approach is in a particular situation, but the longer I keep thinking about guillotines, gulags, and other tools of official terrorism, the more I know that armed resistance is not now the way to go. We can easily predict how the government will respond. Are we ready for that? Is that what we want?

Consider The Possibilities

For a moment forget all the theological principles, and just consider things from a prudential standpoint. At this moment, you cannot win with armed opposition. Maybe after 30 more years of government intrusion and oppression — after Christians with a well developed view of self-government have helped society understand, and through writing and speaking and preaching have gradually built up a community willing and able to stand against tyrants — maybe then we will be

ready. But by then we won't need armed resistance, because there will be enough people on our side to VOTE them out. In any event, we are not there yet.

The Enemy Within

But there is a worse danger. Where will these ungrounded "patriots" end, if they take power? With a reign of terror and Robespierre. That is the exactly the point of the movie *Cromwell*. At the end, faced with a recalcitrant parliament, Cromwell contemptuously throws the parliamentary mace on the floor. His former comrade in arms Pym remarks, "We have killed kings for that." Cromwell, from their own midst — the midst of their own *militia* — has become as the king they killed, and no doubt with the best of intentions. I fear those rash, thin-veneered Christian "patriots" would only replace one tyranny with another *and worse*, because they have no biblical foundation.

What Is The Foundation?

Precisely this Biblical foundation distinguishes the French from the American revolution, and explains their vastly different outcomes. The Biblical mindset and social consensus, the framework of a Biblical Christian approach to government, arose from hundreds of years of English and American experience — and hundreds of years of hammering out the relation of church and state. Although not all the American founders were specifically Christians, not one had the notion that they should separate government from Christianity, but rather the American federal state from an established national church. That Christian understanding of law and government was the foundation of the American experience, just the opposite of the French Revolution. *Necessarily*, one ended with a constitution and Washington, the other with a reign of terror and Napoleon.

The American View Today

And how do Americans view the law today? We have a Reign of Terror view of law, a majoritarian view. Whoever can muster 51% in the streets has the power *and the right* to put the heads of the other 49% on pikes and parade them down the street!

America no longer enjoys a Christian consensus, but without it we cannot begin to rebuild. Yes, it will take years. Yes, many may die, many go to jail, churches will be closed, the innocent will suffer. I know that and am sorry to see it, but it won't be the first time it has happened, or the first time God has used the blood of the martyrs as the seed of the church to overthrow tyrants.

Remember how gradually these things work themselves out. Consider the English Puritans. They started as a tiny few at the end of Elizabeth I's reign. As a small, persecuted minority they kept on warning the rest of England: If they take away our religious liberties, they can and will take away your civil liberties. The more the government jailed and persecuted Puritans, cut off their ears and branded their foreheads, the more they pushed a Biblical foundation of law. The more the tyranny increased, the more the public sympathized and then began to agree. Eventually it came to civil war. It took some 80 years to lay that foundation, and that was only built on an additional foundation of 1500 years of Christian experience. It took another 100 years to lay the foundation of the American revolution.

Yes, there are Biblical examples where a reformation change occurs *suddenly*, e.g. Hezekiah. What we're not seeing, though, are God's quiet 7,000 — those people who "don't pay attention to anything the

courts say" (as the Federal prosecutor accused us in our trial) — those who keep right on faithfully building the Kingdom of Christ every day. If we act like they're not there and just start blasting, we set back the whole kingdom of God.

Biblical Examples

There may not be any immediate emotional satisfaction in maintaining we have to be patient and build gradually, but that is God's way and we have no choice but to obey and to like it. Consider the Biblical examples.

Elijah. There are plenty of people today whining around with Elijah complexes: "I'm the only one left, nobody else cares, so I'm the court of last resort and I'm getting the guns."

Nothing could be further from the truth, and nothing good ever comes from that sort of thinking. It assumes God is not in control. Whenever we act because "God's not doing anything," we assume we care more than God does, and we're going to get into trouble.

What did God tell Elijah? *I've got 7,000 people you know nothing about who have never bowed the knee to Baal.* More than that, he told him to anoint Elisha his successor, Hazael king of Syria and Jehu king of Israel. He said, whoever Hazel doesn't kill, Jehu will kill, and whoever Jehu doesn't kill, Elisha will kill. The church begins the work of judgment, the civil magistrate continues it, and the church finishes it. Elijah, though, never saw that end. He just anointed.

Consider also Moses. Tired of waiting for God to act, he started his own militia, so to speak. He went out and began killing Egyptians. To temper his fury by obedience, God sent him out into the wilderness for 40 years.

Look at Abimelech, Gideon's illegitimate son (Judges 9). He went and asked the men of Shechem if they were looking for someone to take charge and run the militia. All the productive people said, We're too busy, so the basest man they could find did it and he was GLAD to rule. The result was tyranny and disaster.

If The Foundations Be Destroyed

It annoys me to hear how often Christians misinterpret Psalm 11. They quote its despairing plea – *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?* — as if it were the hopeless cry of the Psalmist.

Read it again. David is rebuking the person who asks that. "In the Lord put I my trust," he begins, "How say ye to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain?" Because I put my trust in the Lord, how can you say to me such nonsense? Look, you, "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven." Do you think the wicked are going to get away with this? Do you think God has lost control? No, "upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness."

God holds out to us a mystery. We must act, but only depending on him. "He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." (Psalm 147)

With their fear of him, first of all, *God armeth the patriot*. Swords and spears come later.

Twenty-five years ago Franklin Sanders said: “At this moment, you cannot win with armed opposition. Maybe after 30 more years of government intrusion and oppression — after Christians with a well developed view of self-government have helped society understand, and through writing and speaking and preaching have gradually built up a community willing and able to stand against tyrants — maybe then we will be ready. But by then we won't need armed resistance, because there will be enough people on our side to VOTE them out. In any event, we are not there yet.” Have “Christians with a well developed view of self-government have helped society understand” anything? Apparently not. But things have not stood still. Now the vote has been taken away, and even the option that Sanders envisioned is gone. Whatever candidate the globalists want will be declared the winner of election, and the media will agree to say “What fraud?”

How did the globalists manage all this? They first corrupted the courts. *Roe vs Wade* was the end of justice as the goal of the courts, and all judicial nominees were made to bow to it. And once they accept murder, they will accept anything. This done, the rule of law, in the sense of justice, was destroyed, and no one could count on finding justice under the law when confronting the interests of the power behind the state, the globalist elite.

We are now seeing all the play out very vividly. The state organizes mobs, and whatever they do is treated with the greatest leniency or with no legal response at all, but the full weight of the courts comes down against those who try to defend themselves against the mobs. Or take the case of January 6th Washington protesters. They were set up by the federal government agencies, in order to be abused and prosecuted as an object lesson, that the enemies of the state now have no rights or recourse. The fact that President Trump, who surely knew this was planned, let it happen should also give us pause.

One additional problem, in the United States, is the tradition of support for the police, who are viewed as a local force, that is part of the people. But it is clear that they now see themselves as a paramilitary group that is an extension of the state, and will follow whatever orders that they are given. In places like France there is actually more effective resistance, because of their cultural tradition of violent protests.

At present, early August 2021, various sources with the most reliable analysis, suggest that the State in the United States is trying to provoke another wave of resistance, but at the national level, to justify a final suspension of civil liberties. Remember that January 6th was entirely non-violent, except for the actions of the Capitol Police, and of units embedded by the state consisting of Antifa and of FBI agents. Yet we are told that it was the greatest threat to the United States since the Civil War. We should expect more of this scenario, but on a national level and multiplied by a hundred.