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Freedom and Liberty

By Tom Holbrook

FREEDOM and LIBERTY! According to "*Webster*" these words are pretty much interchangeable and mean, "*the absence of hindrance, restraint, confinement, repression,*" or "*connotes past or potential restriction, repression, etc....*" Since our military involvement in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq began several years ago I have read and heard those less informed ask the question, "*Who voted and made the United States the savior of the world?*" Actually, the same questions were being asked during our sojourns into Lebanon, Grenada, Somalia, Haiti, and a myriad of other hotspots around the world. We went into all these far flung geographic locations for the same basic reason— to bring freedom to those being oppressed.

Regardless of the feelings and opinions of our world neighbors and the usual fringe element of our citizens, the United States has been, is now, and hopefully will always be the most generous and compassionate nation on this orb called Earth. The most visible part of that compassion is our propensity to reach out to the unfortunates in far flung lands who are being oppressed and suppressed by their leaders. These people do not know what its like to have liberty or consider themselves free, in the true sense of the word. It is not unnatural that we wish for other countries that which we enjoy for ourselves in America. American citizens are born with that feeling within and up until the time "*political correctness*" became cool, that credo was taught and encouraged in our educational institutions. Liberating the downtrodden is not something that sprung up over night since it has been part of us from this country's beginning. Even if the current "*hate America*" attitude seems to be all pervasive in Europe and the other developing nations it is nothing new and should not be thought of as a Bush or Republican "*right wing conspiracy*" to distance the United States from the rest of the world.

"The same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe: the belief that the rights of man come not from the

generosity of the state, but from the hand of God." These are great and profound words of wisdom which President Bush has embraced and expanded upon several times, however the thought didn't originate with President Bush. One of the most renowned Democratic presidents, John F. Kennedy, spoke the above words in his 1961 inaugural address and continued with these: *"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty."*

Columnist Jeff Jacoby advises us that President Kennedy was preceded years earlier by President Harry Truman who claimed the same right of freedom for every citizen of the world by saying: *"We believe that all men have a right to equal justice under law and equal opportunity to share in the common good ... We believe that all men are created equal because they are created in the image of God. From this faith we will not be moved ... Our efforts have brought new hope to all mankind. We have beaten back despair and defeatism. We have saved a number of countries from losing their liberty. Events have brought our American democracy to new influence and new responsibilities. They will test our courage, our devotion to duty, and our concept of liberty. But I say to all men, what we have achieved in liberty, we will surpass in greater liberty."* If we didn't know these words were spoken in the 1940s we could almost apply them to our situation in the Middle East couldn't we?

Another Democrat who occupied the White House had something to say about this issue as well. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in two separate speeches, let everyone know where our country stood on spreading freedom and liberty. In 1941 he said, "Democracy alone, of all forms of government, enlists the full force of men's enlightened will. In the face of great perils never before encountered, our strong purpose is to protect and to perpetuate the integrity of democracy. For this we muster the spirit of America, and the faith of America." Four years later he spoke again, *"Our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations far away. We have learned that we must live as men, not as ostriches, nor as dogs in the manger ... Almighty God has ... given our people stout hearts*

and strong arms with which to strike mightily blows for freedom and truth. He has given our country a faith which has become the hope of all peoples in an anguished world."

This desire to bring freedom and liberty to all mankind is neither a Republican nor a Democrat issue, folks. It's an American tradition and responsibility that we take these gifts to the whole world. Gifted by God and protected by the United States of America. Let us not shirk our duty to our fellow man nor lose sight of whom we are and why God has blessed us so abundantly.

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