
Will the United States Be a Serious Country?

Newt Gingrich

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I want to start ecumenically by citing a book by an Al Gore speechwriter—a bright young man named Andrei Cherney, who, at twenty-one years of age, was a speechwriter for Vice President Gore. At twenty-five, he wrote a book, which I recommend to all of you, called *The Next Deal: The Future of Public Life in the Information Age*. He is now running for the California state legislature as a Democrat. I'm sure that

on a number of issues, he's far more liberal than I am, but this book is a brilliant introduction to the way in which the rise of the modern industrial corporation shaped the rise of professional bureaucratic government in the twentieth century, and he asserts that the rise of new technologies that allow greater individual choice will also be translated into government policies in the first half of the twenty-first century.

I happen to think he's right, and the book is worth your reading and thinking about as an introduction to the future by looking at the American political past.

Let me give you some examples of the scale of change we're going through and the process of increased individual choice.

How many of you get cash out of automatic teller machines? Virtually everybody here. How many of you have not written a check for cash in the past six months? More than three-fourths of you. I recently spoke to about seven hundred college interns at the U.S. Capitol, and when I asked that question, about a third of them didn't raise their hands. I turned to a young person and said I was amazed that so many people had written a check for cash. No, she said, that wasn't it. They didn't know what "write a check for cash" meant.

Let me carry it a step further.

How many of you have gotten cash out of automatic teller machines outside the United States? Almost 70 percent of you. How many of you have ever found yourself getting impatient waiting for the money? This is central to the future of public policy. You're in a foreign country. You put a piece of plastic into a machine and punch in a four-number code. The machine reaches out six thousand miles across international borders, finds your bank, identifies your account, verifies that you have enough money, translates it at a slightly bad exchange rate into the local currency, and pays you. When I did it in Zurich recently, it took thirty-one seconds. In

thirty-one seconds, you begin to get impatient.

I first used this example when I was talking to the Health Insurance Association of America—the people who pay the primary bills for health care. I stopped after all these people had admitted to getting impatient in thirty-one seconds and said, "Does this give you a hint why taking 103 days to pay a health bill probably is not going to last very long as a cultural pattern?"

ATMs are also astonishingly accurate. There's a manufacturing term, six sigma—which means .999999, six nines—that indicates the highest level of manufacturing accuracy. ATMs are vastly more accurate than that. We just assume they're right. There are eighteen ATMs at the Mall of America. Imagine trying to have bank tellers twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, at eighteen spots at the mall. You couldn't afford it. It's a perfect example of modernization being more accurate, faster, more convenient, and less expensive.

Gas Pumps and Bureaucrats

Here's a second example.

How many of you pump your own gasoline at self-service gas stations? Almost all of you. New Jersey and Oregon are the last two states where it is illegal for you to pump your own gas. The gas station owners have convinced the legislators in those two states that citizens would set their cars on fire.

I'm serious: I went back and read the original debates in 1968–69, when Maryland became the first state to allow self-service gas stations. The

number-one argument against legalization was that somebody who was stupid, or drunk, was going to set the gas station on fire, and it would blow up an entire neighborhood. Should we allow citizens to destroy neighborhoods?

Let me carry it a stage further. How many of you pay with your credit card at the machine to avoid talking to the gas station attendant? Over half of you. You'll notice the women's hands went up faster. John Naisbitt said many years ago in *Megatrends* that the Information Age would be high-tech and high-touch. A manicure is a high-touch moment; getting to know your gas station attendant is not on the high-touch list of desirables.

How many of you no longer get a receipt from the gas pump? About half. This number goes up every time I ask this question.

Now imagine that it's 1950 and you're explaining to your grandparents about gas pumps that let you pump gasoline, record accurately how much you pumped and what the price is, and charge it to your credit card with such accuracy that you don't even ask for a receipt. Your grandparents couldn't have imagined it.

Compare that accuracy rate with that of, say, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which used to be called the Health Care Financing Administration. It's a bureaucracy with 200,000 pages of regulations. Last year, a group of ninety-year-old women in a hospice in upstate New York, dying of cancer, got letters from the federal government notifying them that they were

under investigation for fraud. Medicare will pay for you to be in a hospice for six months when you're dying of cancer, and they had lived too long—clearly a sign that they were trying to take advantage of the government. This is a true story.

It's utterly irrational that we tolerate centralized bureaucracy in an age when gas pumps are smarter than federal bureaucrats.

Travelocity for Health Care

Now let me give you a third example. How many of you go to the computer, to the Internet, in order to pull up something like Travelocity, in order to make travel plans or reservations? About half of you. It's a free site that has up-to-date, real-time airline information. You pick a destination and a date, and it pulls up for you the best flights, in order of priority, and allows you to make a reservation and now, in many cases, to choose a seat.

Often there are a number of different prescription drugs you can take for the same condition. We could have the equivalent of Travelocity for drugs: you and your doctor could look at all of them and know the price range. In a study done two years ago in New York City, it turned out that the range of prices from the cheapest drugstore in New York City to the most expensive one was greater than the difference between New York City and Canada. And, as you would expect, the most expensive were all in poor neighborhoods. For the cost of a subway token, you could cut the price of your drug by

as much as 80 percent. But that would require that you had this information.

Imagine that you had the equivalent of Travelocity to find the thirty best places in America—the best outcomes and the lowest prices—for kidney dialysis. Very often, the best outcomes are associated with the lowest prices because they're the places that have the fewest medical errors, the least hospital-induced illness, and the highest number performed.

Sustaining and Disruptive Technologies

For an idea of how big the coming changes are, I recommend Harvard business professor Clayton Christensen's *The Innovator's Dilemma*, in which he develops the idea of what he calls disruptive technologies and sustaining technologies.

Here's an example of a sustaining technology: IBM builds mainframe computers and decides to build a better mainframe computer. The odds are very high that they'll do it well because they're sustaining a technology they already understand. But when the first personal computer was invented at Xerox Park in 1973 and IBM, which knew about it as soon as it was done, went out to its mainframe customers and said, "How would you like to have a slow, small computer with limited memory?" they all said no.

Eleven years later, Apple introduced the first personal computer—a disruptive technology. Christensen argues that the real disruptive breakthroughs almost always come from

small companies that are inventing a new market. A new technology almost always needs a new market.

This is particularly hard for government. The bureaucrats at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services are decent, honest, hardworking people trapped in a really dumb system, so their behavior looks dumb. If you pluck them out of there and put them in a place that's smart, they're dramatically more productive within three hours. And if you take people from a place that's smart and drop them in the right bureaucracy, within about a week they've learned to be not very productive. The system shapes their behavior.

It's very hard for the government to make changes. It's an area of great opportunity for people who want to dramatically improve local, state, or federal public services: to think about how to apply technologies that are 24/7, totally freestanding, Internet-based, very convenient, extremely low cost, and stunningly accurate to things that historically we thought government should do.

Disruptive School Technology

The Gingrich Group works with a firm called NetSchools (netschools.com) that gives every child in a school a laptop computer, and the kids take them home. The kids can learn all weekend, all summer, over Christmas vacation. In Towns County, Georgia, which is Appalachian rural north Georgia, it turned out that parents who would not go to an adult education program will use their child's laptop. They had a

62 percent increase in the number of adults passing the GED high school exam within a year of when the laptops went home. Now *that* is a disruptive technology: it doesn't fit the state curriculum, it doesn't fit the traditional model of teaching, it doesn't fit the way we think (we want kids to use a computer two hours a week in a classroom), and it doesn't fit many people's idea of children.

In order for children to get NetSchools laptops, their parents have to come to a seminar, and all the parents do. The company is in seventeen states, and they've never had a parent or a guardian fail to show up for the seminar. And they've never had a computer stolen and sold for cash; if the computer is offline for more than seventy-two hours, the screen lights up and says, "I have been stolen, call this 800 number." They have over 50,000 educational sites. If you want to know the best site about Africa for a third grader, you can get to it. It's an integrated, thought-through system of change.

My point is this: this model of the future is disruptive. It requires capital investment, and almost no public school has capital. It requires that teachers become mentors and coaches, that teachers themselves get used to using laptops. It requires allowing kids to learn at a pace that's totally different from that mandated by the state curriculum. As it turns out, the kids learn faster and they learn differently, and they pursue their own interests. It's a dramatic example of a disruptive technology.

Monitoring the ICU

Let me give you a second example of disruptive technology.

A firm called VISICU, founded by some people at Johns Hopkins, started with the simple premise that the most expensive place in medical care is the intensive care unit, so they set out to wire intensive care rooms. Every piece of data you get down at the end of the hall—where somebody monitors information coming from all the rooms—can be put on a wire, and then you can take it a long way. They have three hospitals wired with cameras that can be turned on in an emergency and an office where, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, an intensive care specialist is monitoring the data and talking to the nurses. If there's a crisis at two in the morning, they don't have to wake up a doctor at home to try to remember which patient they're talking about. They're talking to an intensive care specialist who has exactly the same information the nurse has, and who is able to actually turn on a camera to watch the room.

Pretty rapidly, they began to notice things they didn't notice before. One example is hospital-induced illness, particularly pneumonia. If you lie flat on your back, the odds are very high that you'll get pneumonia. If, on the other hand, you lie at a thirty-five-degree angle, the odds of pneumonia drop dramatically. To turn you over or to change the sheet, the nurse is going to lay you flat. The monitoring doctor noticed that nurses often forgot to raise patients back up to thirty-five degrees.

An extraordinary decline in hospital-induced illness has resulted.

This is a totally new model. It's an integrated care model, it's information-rich, it uses computers and the Internet and a relationship between the doctor and the nurse. It has two big virtues: it saves lives and it saves money. It will be interesting to see how long it takes for those virtues to overcome its liabilities: it's new, it's different, and it's a different kind of structure.

A Serious Country or a Comfortable Country?

When we deal with terrorism, we need to embed it in the model I just described. Americans are brilliant at entrepreneurial, high-technology, capital-intensive solutions. Let me give you an example of what we don't do well.

The argument about whether we need a federal airport screening force or a private force inspected by the feds is the wrong question. Hiring nine ill-trained people to replace three badly trained people just lengthens the wait. One of the biggest challenges we face in the next fifteen years—in education, health care, the environment, national defense, safety—is this: Are we going to be a serious country or a comfortable country? A comfortable system, whether it's a country, a military force, a corporation, a school, or a hospital, says, "I will do anything new that doesn't require me to change."

Watch the Defense Department: a lot of senior generals are brilliant at explaining why you need an aircraft carrier; whatever you tell them, that's

why we need an aircraft carrier. It's like Teddy Kennedy and big government: he's not sure of the question yet, but he knows that the answer is big government.

A serious system—whether it's a serious country, a serious corporation, a serious educational system, or a serious hospital—looks at reality, defines its values, lays out a strategy, and then changes itself as much as necessary to get the system to work.

People talk about Jack Welch because he changed General Electric in a systematic, decisive way into a new kind of company doing a new set of things. People in the twentieth century studied Alfred Sloan because he invented in General Motors in the 1920s a new model of corporation that was focused on pleasing consumers. People studied George Catlett Marshall because he invented a new army, a new model, a totally new approach. And in the process, by the way, he retired six hundred senior officers between September 1939 and Pearl Harbor Day in December 1941. They didn't get it, and he wanted people who understood the emerging new world because he thought our national survival was at stake.

Let's talk about airport security since September 11. I've always thought the question "Did you pack your own bag?" was incredibly stupid and demeaned the process of thinking seriously about security. Once you stipulate suicide bombers, the question is utterly irrational. How can the question have any possible meaning? I

believe it can be traced to one woman on one airplane who did accept a bomb. To have asked this question three million times a day for twenty years because one woman was truly, sadly dumb is a bureaucratic model.

In Colorado Springs, the computer pulled my number up and a very nice lady took all my baggage apart. When she got to the golf bag, she opened it, looked in, said, "Gee, those are golf clubs," and zipped it back up. She didn't check to see if there was anything in the golf bag, which, of course, was full of metal—my clubs. If I was really up to something, that would be the place to put it. I didn't mind doing it, but I couldn't help but think that a security system that thinks a fifty-eight-year-old former Speaker of the House is a plausible suspect has zero capacity to focus resources.

At Logan Airport in Boston—and I don't mean this to be disrespectful to public safety people—standing near the security gate has become the best alternative to walking a beat. The last time I was at Logan, seven policemen were standing there. In Phoenix, three National Guard people and two police officers—five people—were manning the security system. A person started to go through security, panicked, and ran away, and they didn't catch him. It would be one thing if we had ironclad security and they caught them in the first twenty feet, but they didn't catch him at all.

What I'm worried about, having lived through [the shootings at] Kent State, is if you have enough National Guard with enough weapons, some-

body at some point is going to do something really foolish, because the truth is, we don't train people to do these things. And I don't, frankly, expect in the current environment that your average everyday member of Al-Qaida is going to try to break through the security line. That's not how it's going to happen next. It may happen in luggage. It may happen in a truck. It may happen in a rental plane. It doesn't have to be a big commercial airliner; there are lots of corporate jets.

We ought to be more serious. I believe we ought to use a biometric system that measures either your retina or your iris, which literally means that a picture would be taken as you walked through. But we shouldn't do it on a mandatory basis. We do not need a national identification card. That gets into a civil libertarian argument. We need to make driver's license data bases interchangeable. When you get a driver's license, which is a voluntary activity, we take a thumbprint or a retinal scan, and we make the data bases interchangeable so whatever state you happen to be in, security people there can access the information.

If you are not an American citizen, we have every right to get a retinal scan as you come through immigration. The CIA told the FBI there were two terrorists in the United States six weeks before September 11, and in six weeks, the FBI could not get the information through the FAA to the airlines. Two of the terrorists at Boston got on the plane, using their own names, six weeks after we'd been warned that they were in the country.

That's a crazy level of lack of seriousness. A computer system could have done that automatically.

We have a right to know, if you are not an American citizen, who you are. I don't like identification cards because it's so easy to get a phony one. They're not practical unless they are attached to some kind of identity system.

We also ought to have a serious identification system for people who work for the airlines and people who are in public safety jobs. We have a right to say that as a condition of employment, we need to know who you are. When a mechanic goes onto the airfield, we need to know that it's not somebody who just picked up a uniform and put on a tag and is pretending to be that person.

And we ought to have two lines at the airport. A retinal scan line would move at the pace of walking and issue you a ticket as you walk through: we know who you are, we've identified you, you don't have to slow down. The other line, for people who do not want to share information, would resemble the current line. If you're willing to share who you are, we make it easy. The goal is a high-speed, high-efficiency, high-security system.

We don't want speed at the expense of security, but we also don't want security at the expense of the economy. If we start inspecting every truck that comes across the Canadian border, we will break down the world economy.

Threats to Our Security

The world is no more dangerous today than it was on September 10. It's

just that we were horrified by the vividness with which the dangers were driven home. President Clinton and I created the Hart-Rudman Commission in 1997 to look at U.S. security through 2025. The commission reported in March 2001, unanimously, that the greatest threat to the United States is a weapon of mass destruction going off in an American city, that we need a homeland security agency, and that we need to focus intensely on antiterrorist activities, including preemptive strikes, if necessary. At the time, it was considered both very bold and not very important, although a number of members of the House and Senate and a number of members of the Bush administration asked us about it and got briefed on it. After September 11, the news media found it to be dramatically more important.

The second-greatest danger to America is our failure to invest enough in science and to reform math and science education. All fourteen members of a bipartisan commission unanimously agreed that the threat of inadequate math and science education is greater than any conceivable threat of conventional war in the next twenty-five years. As a national security conservative, I say that we must find a way to dramatically improve the amount our children are learning. If we don't have much higher standards for math and science, we will be incapable of sustaining our economy and our leadership around the world. It is literally that big a crisis—and it is a national security crisis, not just an education crisis.

September 11 proved that we have real enemies, that they hate us, and that they are happy to kill us. This is an important thing to understand. This is not a communication problem. This is not a need for us to understand bin Laden better. I have zero interest in the members of Al-Qaida explaining to me in a compassionate and charming way why their worldview justifies killing innocent Americans. This is about war. This is not a criminal act. In my judgment, it is not about justice, it is about victory, and they are very different phenomena.

My biggest fear is that—despite the president's extraordinarily correct language and a series of speeches, especially his speech to the joint session of Congress and his speech in Atlanta—the natural weight of the bureaucracy and the natural weight of many of our so-called allies will lead us to back off before we get the job done.

Three Opponents

We have three opponents that we have now been warned to pay attention to. September 11 was a warning, not the big event. It's like the precursor to a heart attack, not the heart attack itself. The heart attack is a nuclear weapon or large chemical attack or a biological event that affects half a million or a million people. Remember, four people died of anthrax and a total of seventeen were infected, and it almost paralyzed our system. We can't even imagine what a serious anthrax attack would be like, with a hundred thousand or more people infected, or what a smallpox or an engineered ver-

sion of flu would be like. The world is dangerous, and we should be systematically determined to make it safer.

To do that, there are three places we have to win. We have to win first against international terrorism, of which Al-Qaida is the most famous but not the only organization. We have to establish the principle that the British navy established in the seventeenth century when it declared that piracy was illegal and in the nineteenth century when it said that slave-trading was illegal—and then enforced those decrees by sinking ships and hanging pirates, which turned out to be a remarkably effective educational campaign.

We have to take seriously making international terrorism as unacceptable as piracy, and we have to systematically root it out and destroy it wherever it exists. We have to make it clear to countries like Somalia, Syria, and Iran that they have two choices: you are with the terrorists, in which case you and the Taliban will be part of history, or you are prepared to get rid of the terrorists, in which case we do not have a fight with you. We are not going to be told by any country that it has the right to sustain terrorism after thousands of Americans were killed in our own cities.

The second enormous threat we need to confront immediately is dictators with weapons of mass destruction, and there I would focus on North Korea and Iraq. This is a very different problem, but it is equally dangerous. Saddam Hussein has been trying to get nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons for over twenty years. I interviewed the head of the Iraqi nuclear

program, who defected in 1994. At that time, they had over seven thousand people working on the program. Saddam Hussein has endured 100,000 casualties in a war with us. He used chemical weapons against Iran. He used chemical weapons against one of his own cities. He has, for ten years, been willing to suffer from sanctions imposed by the United Nations rather than give up building weapons of mass destruction.

A person who is that dedicated and that serious is telling us something. We should recognize that this man is the closest parallel to Adolf Hitler we have seen in our lifetime. Franklin Roosevelt said, in 1941, in a nationwide radio address after the USS *Greer*, an American destroyer, had sunk a Nazi submarine, that if you are standing next to a rattlesnake, you do not have to wait for it to bite to decide that it is dangerous. We should take the same position. It's simple: either Iraq allows U.N. inspectors access twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week to anyplace they have any question about, or we need to replace the dictatorship with a government that is acceptable to us and that will not have weapons of mass destruction.

The third problem we're faced with is medieval Islam. Let me be very clear. There are many, many Muslims in the modern world who want their children to have a better future, who believe that women do have rights, who are committed to prosperity, who have no interest in killing those with whom they disagree, and who do not agree with terrorism.

On the other hand, Islam is a very large religion—a billion people—and a very small portion of it really does want to recreate the Middle Ages. Their schools recruit young males who take a course in which they learn no marketable skills; they don't learn math, science, or business. They're told that when they graduate, they will be frustrated, because of the West and America, and that they have the moral right to kill the people who are frustrating them.

We have to decide to take on medieval Islam, to close down those schools, to actively encourage Muslims who are moderates, Muslims who are committed to modernity. We cannot passively sit by and allow five or six million young males a year to be graduated into programs that are breeding terrorists and the fanatics of the future. We have to take on that deep cultural struggle.

We ought to be blunt about women's rights and say that it is not tolerable to make people live their entire lives hidden, unable to drive, to work, to go to school. The Taliban killed women who went to school. The United States took a courageous step in deciding that being human included African Americans, and then we took that a step further and said that in South Africa, it includes Africans. We understood it at the level of racism. But for a variety of reasons, we have tolerated a level of oppression of women that should be utterly unacceptable.

As we move toward victory in Afghanistan, I have no interest in the United Nations' getting the same

group of tribal leaders, out-of-touch figures, corrupt politicians, and posturing ethnic warriors to gather in Kabul to decide how to divide up the country. We ought to stand for a modern Afghanistan—with roads. Don't tell me about the Afghan winter. I will bet you there is not a road in Afghanistan we couldn't keep open with volunteer engineers from the guard battalions in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Alaska. We know how to do this. We know how to reinstall telephones. We know how to rebuild mosques. We ought to use the money we impounded from the terrorist groups to rebuild mosques to prove that we're not anti-Muslim, that we're in favor of people having places to worship, and they have the right to pick the religion.

But we did not defeat Japan to reestablish Samurai warriors and a medieval hierarchy, and we did not defeat Germany to reestablish the Junker aristocracy in Prussia. In both cases, we supported modern societies where people have rights. Our Declaration of Independence doesn't say we believe that men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights except for Afghans or Saudis. That means we have to have the courage to say to the Saudi princes that we actually believe Saudi women ought to have rights, too. If that's meddling, I don't see how, after September 11, you can argue that we're all going to live on a single planet and not occasionally meddle. I'd rather meddle there and have happy people living in prosperity than have unhappy people come here.

Following his talk, Newt Gingrich took questions from his American Experiment audience.

How does missile defense fit in?

Look at the damage done in New York and imagine that that was a missile that took twenty-seven minutes to cross intercontinental boundaries and delivered a hydrogen or nuclear warhead, and then ask yourself what it is worth to us to avoid that happening. It's certainly worth building a missile defense that would defeat a country the size of North Korea, Iraq, Iran, or that would defeat a random missile fired by somebody who had run amok, which is a greater danger than people think. Missile defense by itself doesn't solve everything, but in the next twenty years, we're going to want to have a missile defense system—not just for the United States, but a global one. I want to know that if American troops are in the Persian Gulf, we can knock down missiles aimed at them. I want to know that if somebody is trying to hit Paris or London or Tokyo, we can knock down those missiles.

If you look at the mathematical possibilities of a world that has dangerous weapons and a dramatic proliferation in missile availability, it's hard for me to understand how anybody could argue against a thin screen designed to stop somewhere between one and twenty missiles, which is very different from the idea of an impenetrable shield that would stop three thousand Soviet warheads. This isn't designed to stop a first strike from Russia. It's designed to stop a much more likely danger.

Do you think that, after Afghanistan is defeated, the United States will continue to fight the war on terrorism by going on to Iraq, Iran, and Syria?

The president has said that Afghanistan is only phase one of this campaign. Based on what I know of Secretary Rumsfeld's planning, he certainly believes it is probably going to extend far beyond that. But I worry that the natural momentum of the State Department bureaucracy, the natural momentum of many of our so-called allies, who are pretty lukewarm, and the natural momentum of the news media will all be designed to slow it down, declare victory, and encourage us to go home. That would be a tragic mistake that would set the stage for future disasters.

How do we convince the American people that we must "meddle" in other countries who are our enemies?

First realize that there are very few people who are our enemies. Did you see the scenes of happiness in various cities in Afghanistan as the Taliban left? This was not like the Russian invasion of 1979. People there were not saying about the Americans, "Oh my God, here come the foreigners." People were glad to see the Taliban go. They were shaving their beards and turning on the music. Women were walking around with their faces uncovered. These were things—a man not having a beard, a woman showing her face, anyone playing music—for which the sentence was death. Now, that's a repressive society. President Bush had it right all along: we are on the side of

the Afghan people against repression. Saddam Hussein has five different secret police forces. In most of the world, we are the natural allies of the human beings who want peace, prosperity, safety, and a better future for their children, and we are the natural enemies of the ruthless, predatory, corrupt dictators.

Would you comment on the U.S.–Israeli relationship after the September attacks?

Let me say, first of all, that the United States should be for a peaceful Middle East in which both the Palestinian people and the Israeli people can live in safety, prosperity, and freedom. The region will never be peaceful if the Palestinians think they have no future. At the same time, it won't be peaceful if the Palestinians don't agree that Israel has a right to survive.

I wrote to Secretary of State Colin Powell when he failed to include Hamas and Hezbollah in the original list of terrorist groups because I think it is profoundly wrong to suggest that we're going to be selective about terror. Remember what terror is: the deliberate killing of civilians for the purpose of creating terror as an instrument to get policies changed. We have to be against all terror. We should be for the creation of a Palestinian state that is prosperous—and free. Palestinians ought to have legal rights. Arafat is a corrupt dictator with a group of thugs who kill people, not a democratic figure. The notion that we ought to accept Arafat as the symbol of Palestinian moderation is nonsense.

We ought to say that we hope, in the not-too-distant future, that young Palestinians will live in a society ruled by law, with the right to private property, the ability to be prosperous, a chance that their children will live a better future, and that in that world they will be too busy becoming prosperous to want to kill Israelis. At the same time, we have to say to Israel that they have to have some significant accommodations with both Jordan and Palestine. Keeping small settlements in the middle of Gaza is an irrational policy that guarantees anger and hostility—all you have to do is look at a map. I am for real security for Israel inside Israeli borders, but that means some accommodation with the people of Palestine.

The rapidity of the apparent collapse of the Taliban suggests that they were without popular support. The Russians failed with 100,000 troops; the Afghans seemed invincible. Was it the lack of popular support now, or is there a difference between the United States and the Russians?

There are a lot of differences.

If we attempted to go in there with American infantry and had 100,000 troops running up and down the roads, and we decided to impose our particular faction, within two years there would be a guerrilla war. Remember, the Afghans were never going to win that war with the Soviet Union on their own. All this mythology about how the Afghans drove the Russians out; the Afghans took enormous casualties, they had enormous courage, they were funded by Saudi Arabia and the

United States. In the end, it was our provision of Stinger missiles that drove the Russian helicopters out of the sky. The Russians probably could have won the war if they had been willing to pay the price. They decided it wasn't worth the economic and manpower and morale cost. So, I think there is a certain exaggeration there.

Second, we are fifty to a hundred years ahead of the Russian army of 1979 in our ability to apply firepower. Once we began to insert special forces, any Taliban unit that stood and fought was going to get killed. Our firepower is so massive that once we start applying it with accuracy, a force like the Taliban just can't stand up against us. If they could go into big cities, it would be different: big cities are hard for us, and we don't do them very well. But out in the open—a mountain, a desert, someplace where we can come after you with heavy firepower—nobody on the planet can stand up to us, and certainly not a group like the Taliban.

In addition, as a number of us said all along, the Taliban is an imposed outside force. The Taliban was financed by the Saudis and the Pakistanis. It is Pashtun, the southern ethnic bloc, which is the largest single bloc but less than half the country, and it was strengthened by Arabs. It is important for us to remember that nobody who killed Americans on September 11 was from Afghanistan. They were overwhelmingly Saudi Arabian, with one Egyptian. This was a Saudi Arabian fanatic operation, housed in Afghanistan.

The average Afghan wasn't saying, "Let me go kill Americans." The average Afghan was saying, "I hope the U.N. will get food here before we starve to death." There's no evidence from their relationship with the relief workers that average Afghans are rejecting foreigners. They recognize that they are desperate for food, clothing, heat, electricity, public health, you name it. I think you'll find a general desire on the part of the Afghan population to work with foreigners to create a better Afghanistan as long as we're not trying to tell them how to run their lives.

Should we be doing more, and doing it quickly, to stem immigration and visas from the twenty or so countries that harbor terrorism?

No, not in my judgment. As I said earlier, I think we need a system of biometric registration so we know who's coming into the country. I favor a guest worker program: I'd rather have everybody who is willing to work come into the country legally and be tracked than have a million people a year slide into the country illegally for the purpose of going to work.

Of the Saudis who come to the United States, 99.99 percent are, in

fact, relatively wealthy, relatively educated, and we're glad they're here. The random nut who shows up is a function of terrorism, not of Saudi ethnicity. I don't want to start blocking people from coming to the United States based on where they happen to have terrorists. If the next group of terrorists is going to be based in Britain, do we cut off anybody coming to the United States from Britain? It's an impractical solution. Let's target the terrorists.

I am for executing terrorists: you want to kill us, we will take you out first.

How do you think things may play out over the next few years in terms of security? How serious can we be, and how serious can we stay?

If the president articulates clearly where he thinks we have to go and explains why we have to go there, and if we are reminded on occasion of the price we paid on September 11, I think certainly for the next three to five years, most Americans, though not all Americans, will be committed to doing what it takes. I think we can be a mature, adult people if we have a mature, adult leader who tells us the truth and who rallies us. ■