

Faith in the Future

How do we answer the outrages of September 11, 2001? I have neither cruise missiles to lob, nor any Special Operations troops to deploy. But I do have an answer.

On October 19, 2001 at 2:37pm, my wife, Debbie, gave birth to our son, William Ian Prevor.

He showed up a few weeks earlier than expected and weighed in at 6 lbs and measured up at 19 inches. He didn't have an easy entry to this world but showed a tough and resilient fighting spirit that will surely serve him well throughout his life.

And now, as a first time father for all of 12 hours and 11 minutes, I sit in a hospital room, my darling wife finally asleep, my newborn son gently gurgling by my side, and I try to make sense of it all.

How amazing it is, what great force of nature or God must be summoned that I can love so much this total stranger? How is it that I can sit in the hospital room reading literature on pre-paid college programs so confidently planning for events decades hence?

How much this child makes me hate those terrorists. It is one thing to inconvenience me or to cause me to make adjustments in my life. It is simply unacceptable that such evil men should place limitations on the life of my newborn son, and so I will support any effort to root out and kill anyone capable of such monstrosity.

But in the end, I think that for all the murder, damage and havoc they cause, the terrorists are more pathetic than fearsome.

Some years back Francis Fukuyama wrote a famous article entitled "The End of History." In it he explained that history had always been a battle between competing visions of how to organize society — monarchy vs. republic, capitalist vs. communist, etc.

Fukuyama's insight was that with the collapse of Communism, these arguments had been settled. There was simply no longer any competing system to the democratic/capitalist society represented by the western democracies today.

This is not to say that from time to time, some alternative couldn't be established and, due to circumstances or a charismatic ruler, some particular country could become a Monarchy or Theocracy or something else. It is simply to say that none of these alternatives will sustain any viability as an alternative system to democratic capitalism.

And so it is. Whatever the Taliban might offer, it is not a viable alternative as a way to organize society. It is a recipe for misery that likely couldn't win support even in Afghanistan if put to a vote.

Terrorism is an enormous problem because it is relatively easy and inexpensive to destroy very expensive creations. So without spending a half million dollars, on September 11 the terrorists cost our society over a hundred billion dollars plus the loss of so many good people.

But the fact that they can blow up buildings doesn't mean that they are capable of building them. Or of building a society that creates the wealth and expertise needed to sustain them. To do that, you

need faith in the future and not a fearful retreat into medieval times.

October 19th seems to be an auspicious date for launching great things. Not only is October 19 my newborn son's birthday, but it was on October 19, 1985 that we launched PRODUCE BUSINESS magazine.

The creation of both reflected a faith in the possibilities of tomorrow and a determination to be part of doing great things.

We have always worked hard to fully develop PRODUCE BUSINESS magazine, and we are gratified that from that small dream has

sprung not merely a worthy industry resource but, indeed, a whole company. Yet, we feel certain the potential is unlimited.

Now, with young William, we have much work to do. But it is joyous work indeed.

Perhaps with bombs dropping in Afghanistan, Anthrax attacks on the home front, economic decline and countless other miseries detailed in the daily papers, these are not the best of times to run a business or have a son.

But both PRODUCE BUSINESS and my son have the inestimable good fortune to be born here in the United States of America. One does not have to be a great expert in history to realize that there are few burdens indeed that could outweigh the benefits of that blessing.

Not only is October 19 my newborn son's birthday, but it was on October 19, 1985 that we launched PRODUCE BUSINESS magazine.

James F. Prevor



**William Ian Prevor
and his proud father.**